



FROM PANDEMIC TO HARMONY: AN ESSAY

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From pandemic to harmony: an essay

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CONTENTS

Covering letter

Prelude: Paths on the horizon

PART 1 The return to home and the eternal return of time

1. Back to the inner home

The haunted house and

2. Back home. Home, sweet home?

3. The return to the common home.

4. The return to the cosmic home:

Little piece of sea

PART 2 From inside home to the crossroads

5. Back to the community village (ayllu)

6. From ayllu to ayni.

7. The false dilemma between economics and Life and the proposal of the economy of Francesco

8. Biopolitics, globalization, the Phoenix State, and human rights in dystopias

9. From human rights to Mother Earth's rights: Towards Utopia with the Manifesto Harmonia

10. The conflict behind conflicts: the crossroads between life and death

Afraid of dying or afraid to live?

EPILOGUE: the path from pandemics towards harmony.

Acknowledgements

References

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

TECHNICAL FILE

NOTAS

*In honor of **Bia Perlingeiro** and the
fatal victims of COVID-19, and those
who suffer with the pandemics.*

Covering letter

Chácara Bromélia,
surroundings of Brasília,
in the late afternoon
of June 9, 2020

Dear Germana,

I don't know you very well, but I know you're like a soul sister. So, instead of presenting myself, which you don't deserve because of the importance of your essay I decided to write an intimate message to establish a more affective and, maybe, intimate dialog.

I am deeply identified by that part of your text: "*Harmony is the art of gathering people and things together...*," as the pandemic inspired me to create a virtual catalog *Poetic Quarantine*, in which I gathered more than 40 artists and poets who wrote from March this year. Many of them were sad and became happy after my invitation.

This is how I work since the 1970's, when, still in Fortaleza, I started writing about art in a newspaper and curating exhibitions. Even in such an adverse situation, I do not want to stop. So, this catalog will have newer editions.

More than being difficult, the most challenging moment, because for me, life without a challenge is not funny at all, is how we will reinvent ourselves to be more supportive with ourselves, with our neighbors and with the social movements that help the populations of the slums and indigenous villages throughout the country.

For this reason, I created the *Arte para quem precisa de solidariedade* [Art project for those who need solidarity], when I send to some people my artistic and poetic production and that of others, day in and day out, for a month, and, throughout the artistic and

poetic posts, I send to the project participants the proposals of the people who need it, and they deposit directly into the bank account of the organizations, slums and villages.

By all this I mean that we need not only to reinvent ourselves as human beings who have entered a deep crisis, not only of ethical values, but also of spiritual ones, and these are much more serious because they compromise the whole existence of our soul, which is the only thing really eternal and the only one that really exists, as well as the real sense of love, which is to love unconditionally. In fact, either love is unconditional, or it's not love.

We came here on earth with a great purpose in life: to learn to love, because the only reality is love. That says the ascended Master Rowena, and said John Lennon, in a song that says that love is real.

The pandemic teaches us a lot about “being lonely like a tree and sympathetic like a forest,” as our friend Carlito Maia told us. To live a solidarity that we had been forgetting, in the struggle for such survival and in an urgency to live everything at once now, consuming what we could not even consume from the Earth, which will no longer support our fierce voracity.

Then, everything on Earth stopped and will continue stopped, because the healing of the planet will only come with a change of planetary consciousness so that, maybe with a quantum leap from that consciousness, one will find a path of healing. A cure not only for the invisible virus, for we are the visible virus. The planet wants to heal itself or get rid of it in any way so that it can get back on its feet and bear fruit naturally.

It is said that to reach God, you have to be more human. Too human to be divine. And, when being human and divine in symbiosis, without separation from Nature, without the split between science and art, culture, and Nature, we will achieve what as a thinker we seek: harmony between polarities and without dualities.

Who knows, the “Middle Way so as not to be in the middle of the way,” as I was already saying back in 1991, in the book *Ser* (Being), launched by Editora Vozes, in which, they say, was the first edition on Ecology of Being in the country, even before Leonardo Boff, which you quote in your speech, a theme that Leonardo Boff later exposed in his books in such a marvelous way that made up our minds.

Now we need to reinvent ourselves as a human being in the midst of many creative joys and the pain, because it seems that only with it we learn to love and transmute negative energies to positive alternatives of living.

I believe that survival is an unworthy state of life for those who deserve and have worked to have respect for all forms of life, which have never left us and with which we are the Divine Oneness, as the Aborigines of Australia and many other original peoples say. These people kept the wisdom of a real life permeated with balance so that the sky would not fall on their heads, as David Kopenawa warns us in his fundamental book with Bruce Albert, *The Fall of the Sky*, and those Celtic madmen from the Gaul village in Imperial Rome.

This is the reflection for those Brazilians who think they don't deserve such a bad government in the midst of such a cruel pandemic: do you think we have nothing to pay for the indigenous

genocide, the poorly resolved slavery until today and the environmental devastation of our own external and internal Nature?

Your essay is yet another warning to the unadvised people, and I hope that its seeds will not fall on the stones of the insensitive, but will blossom on the consciousness of the people of Mother Earth in an attractive, beautiful and fruitful way, so that the path of healing may be found not only physical, but also mental, emotional and spiritual.

May humanity, still in its adolescence as a human being, continue in this primary school to live on this planet of such rare beauty throughout the universe!

I leave an almost finished *hai-kai* as my thanks for the trust you had in me and for your marvelous research and writing work:

When you cross
the tunnel of the obscure
don't forget the luminous soul.

Greetings Art always at start!

Bené Fonteles

Prelude: Paths on the horizon

Today I woke up to an imposing question: can I still do something for humanity after so many farces? What? Make brooms, pianos, open cacimbas in remote villages, clean the waters of the Pajeú stream... I thought, I thought... I thought. I couldn't answer. I know we're half philosophers, looking for solutions for the world, us at home. And isolation is a friend of philosophy.

Ana Miranda, *Diário da vassoura sentimental*
[*Diary of the Sentimental Broom*].

“We who are at home,” isolated in times of the Covid-19 pandemic, yes, “we look like half philosophers,” as Ana Miranda says. Memories emerge and serve to unblock this tendency to “philosophize” or, at least, to regain friendship with wisdom.

When we see so many people suffering and dying from breathlessness, we are reminded of the question asked when we were climbing the high, arid mountains of the Andes on pilgrimage, under a freezing temperature below zero. - After all, why should we go on a pilgrimage?... Now a deeper understanding of the response is revealed. We go on pilgrimage, we climb mountains, we face altitudes, we overcome difficulties until we breathe the rarefied air... We even almost lost our breath... Panting, with the lack of air, we suddenly find ourselves with an uncontrollable desire to continue on the ascent... Indomitable will to go on living: *le dur désir de durer*, by Paul Éluard. Life becomes important when we lack the air... Life that comes to us by the breath and can so quickly fade with the lack of it... We pilgrim to give value to life, to awaken to the wonder, the beauty, and the harmony of life!

In times of new coronavirus, one realizes how, before him, humanity ran so much until it ran out of air, to the point of almost breaking with life. With the Covid-19 pandemic, the vertiginous increase in the gradual break with life has been opened up, and the evils and conflicts generated well before the pandemic are revealed before our eyes.

Today's Pandora has a new form. It took the form of the new coronavirus, which generated Covid-19's disease. It no longer appears, as Hesiod described it, in the beautiful form of a woman, created by Hephaestus and Athens to please human beings. She continues, however, to reopen the box where the ills of humanity are kept. The Covid-19 pandemic is tearing the last veils that cover up the collective hypnosis of humanity. Like Pandora, it reopens the box of evils increasingly covered up today by daily distractions.

Pandora, with the mask of the new coronavirus, emerges at the moment when, trying to reach God, humanity was inclined to choose the path in which they would neglect their human condition. We didn't want to hear the shamanic song, *Ábrete Corazón*, written by Rosa Giove, healer of the Amazon. Humanity seems indifferent to the message that the beautiful song has: "To reach God, we need to learn how to be human." Humanity was inclined (and can thus, inertia, continue to incline) to dehumanize itself more and more by the distorted use of digital technology and artificial intelligence, to the point of trying to restrain the free expression of the "senses" through digital monitoring and hyper vigilance, and to delude itself with the existence of life beyond Nature. In times before the pandemic, there was already a strong disdain of the infinite potential of life and intelligence as a condition of being human, with the capacity to "read

between the lines”: to understand, discern and make conscious choices.

The Covid-19 pandemic, Pandora's new mask, highlights the most hidden conflicts of human existence. It forces us to return home. To the inner home; to the home where we live; to Mother Earth, our common home, and to our cosmic home. It shows us the paths that lead to our ancestral roots and to life in community. It heralds the triumph of brotherhood, cooperation and solidarity over selfishness and competitiveness. It brings issues such as the need of the State, combined with the limits of its sovereignty and social organization in community. It places us at crossroads that we do not want to see, such as between self and others, between nationalism and globalization, up to the point of revealing the conflict underlying the conflicts: the choice between Eros and Thanatos, between life and death.

This conflict becomes more evident in the false dilemma between economy and life and in the drama of Sofia's choice, experienced by health professionals, compelled to select which patient will receive medical care, insufficient for all: an ICU bed becomes worldwide a priority object of greed for the sick.

With the unveiling of the buried conflicts, the *coronaworld*, a new Pandora's box, also brings with him the hope, that he cries out for free... Hope that, in the future, every being and humanity may awaken from the veil of illusion, which disguises us as zombies. May we, in the present pandemic, free ourselves from the world of various enclosures in which we had chosen to live before the pandemic and trust to follow new and more human paths. Social isolation represents the ends of this self-created world. It highlights

deep disruptions and shows the possibility of a *reset* in lifestyles and the co-creation of a new world, where all beings can live in harmony. A post-Pandemic world where the conflicts uncovered by it can be overcome by humanity, where every being can reach life in fullness and all beings, human and non-human, are subjects of law. The pandemic of the new coronavirus, by provoking a sudden stop in the world, allows many people to establish it as a milestone for a life in harmony with Nature, as advocated by the United Nations Harmony with Nature program (www.harmonywithnatureun.org). The current harmony, forgotten and unnoticed in the simple and frugal acts, remembered by Ana Miranda as “making brooms, pianos, opening cacimbas in distant villages, cleaning the waters of the Pajeú stream.” Redirecting, with confidence, the coronavirus' attention towards “harmony” as the guiding star of humanity can be the first step to do something for it and for life. On the horizon, paths of progression from pandemic to harmony are revealed...



PART 1 The return to home and the eternal return of time

1. Back to the inner home

The physical body and the house taken over twice

*Before I left I felt terrible;
I locked the front door
up tight and tossed the
key down the sewer.
It wouldn't do to have
some poor devil decide
to go in and rob the house,
at that hour and the difference
with the house taken over.*

Júlio Cortázar,
A casa tomada [House Taken Over].

On March 11, 2020, Tedros Adhanom, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), announced the Covid-19 pandemic, a disease caused by the new coronavirus (Sars-Cov-2). The biggest concern was the high degree of contamination. The new coronavirus is a highly contagious pathogen: it spreads through the air, according to studies at Imperial College in the United Kingdom, and has the potential to affect 80% (eighty percent) of the people in all nations, regardless of fictitious physical, social or political boundaries.^[1]^[2] The mortality rate is higher among the elderly and the chronically ill. Shortness of breath is the cause of death. It reminds us that it is first by the breath that we connect to the atmosphere of Mother Earth and the cosmos and that we depend on them. It takes away the breath and the life of many. It acts, like life itself, by the absurd way... Very absurd! The virus contaminates the airways. The main form of contagion of the new coronavirus is contact with an infected person, who transmits the virus through coughing and sneezing. According to data from the World Health Organization (WHO), on June 10, 2020, 7,145,539 cases were

confirmed (105,621 more than the previous day), including 408,025 deaths (3,629 more than the previous day).^[3]

By April 2020, four months after the first notification of the disease in December 2019 in the Chinese city of Wuhan, the new coronavirus was already present in almost every country in the world, which means at least 170 (one hundred and seventy) of them.^[4]

With similar voracity to that with which it affects the infected physical body, the pandemic affects the body of humanity as a collective being. The physical body is doubly affected: the body of each human person and the body of humanity.

Gradually, scientists and health professionals around the world are discovering and learning how to deal with the patients of Covid-19, while most leaders of international organizations and national states, in the herculean attempt to save lives, face the challenge of making choices to ensure a higher level of efficiency of health policies.

The coronavirus disease, Covid-19, is an infectious disease caused by a new virus, the novel coronavirus. This virus causes flu-like respiratory problems and symptoms such as coughing, fever and, in more severe cases, difficulty breathing.

Most of the world's leaders have decided to listen to the scientific community and, like the enigmatic character of Julius Cortazar, in the tale "The house taken over," he chooses "to lock the front door up tight."

To prevent the body, the home of each person's spirit, from being affected by the new virus and to prevent the pandemic from

further advance, forced or voluntary measures are adopted all over the planet to restrict freedom: from detachment to social isolation, or, in the most serious cases, the lockdown is decreed, a policy “with high short-term cost,” according to economist Jeffrey Sachs, because “daily life and the economy are put on hold,”^[5] and during the lockdown period, “income, jobs, tax revenues and businesses may collapse.”^[6]

The successful experience of the Chinese city of Wuhan, the first place in the world to adopt confinement to prevent the spread of the new coronavirus, has influenced decision making in many places around the world.

Some countries that were reluctant or slow to adopt these measures were ranked in the top five of coronavirus infection notifications, as of June 10, 2020, updated in real time by Johns Hopkins University: United States, Brazil, Russia, United Kingdom and India.^[7] Some of them, at some point, were or are the epicenter of the pandemic in their regions: The United States, today and since the beginning of the pandemic, in North America; the United Kingdom alternated with Spain and Italy in Europe; Russia is now the epicenter in Eurasia; and, in Latin America, Brazil has always maintained the status of epicenter; and the situation, as of June, is worsening in India.^[8]

In East Asian countries such as South Korea and Singapore, as a result of cultural, historical or political reasons, sanitary measures were quickly adopted, such as washing hands, applying tests and monitoring the infected persons, and the infection rates remained much lower than those in the US and Western European countries. Most likely, because after the impacts of the Sars outbreak

in 2003, they implemented more effective health system projects. What is impressive is the relatively low figures for Africa, the second most populous continent in the world, with 1.2 billion people. This continent has a record of just over 2 thousand deaths by May 8,^[9] and by June 10, 2020, 3,493 deaths (141 more than the previous day).^[10] In relation to India, the second most populous country in the world, the strictest restrictive measures of freedom were adopted, and in April 2020 it was noted that mortality rates in the main Indian cities are inexplicably lower compared to the global epicenters of new coronavirus.^[11] On June 10, 2020, according to WHO data, there were 276,583 confirmed cases and 7,745 deaths by Covid-19 in India.^[12]

At the beginning of April 2020, according to data from the news agency *France Presse*, more than half of the world's population (52%) was in quarantine, a total estimated by the United Nations at 7.79 billion people. More than 4 billion people, forced or encouraged, were in social isolation to fight the spread of the new coronavirus.^[13]

The threat of the physical body being invaded and destroyed by the virus, when most national states do not guarantee the minimum health treatment required, the confinement at home, the cities emptied and marked by real or virtual policing of compliance with the necessary health policies restricting freedoms and the challenge of reconditioning daily habits, in many places, make up a scenario that, for some, resounds apocalyptic or more like a haunted house, hard to bear.

The haunted house and the eternal return of time

*Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time
future,
And time future contained in time
past.
If all time is eternally present (...)*

*Human kind cannot bear very
much reality. Time past and time
future
What might have been and what
has been
Point to one end, which is always
present.
T. S. Eliot*

At the beginning of May 2020, some countries began gradually suspending a costly but indispensable lockdown policy. Even so, the still recent and vivid memory of the surprising quarantine scenario of more than half of the abruptly halted world raised the fear that the key to the house itself would definitely be “tossed down the sewer.”

China and South Korea are examples of countries where, in May 2020, a second wave of Covid-19 dissemination began, after the reopening of commercial activities, and where surveillance and digital control of people intensified. It is feared that the incorporation of compulsory life of gathering for health reasons will be perpetuated there and elsewhere.

Ironically, the confinement at home, compulsory or not, created and still creates, for some of us, conditions, including that of having free time, to travel a way back to the inner home. A propitious time for the outbreak of conflicting feelings and reflections.

Surprised, on the one hand, by the cruel clarity of the reality of threat to health and life and, on the other, by the uncertainty about the future, so that the house itself does not become a haunted house, psychologists, psychiatrists, therapists, sages are called upon to take care of mental health. They are called upon to assist in the painful crossing of fear and other feelings afflicting human beings during this period of pandemic. It seems as if each human being, each individual were challenged to rearrange his inner house; to confront his internal or external conflicts, to face his problems, real or imaginary; to scare away his ghosts, to review his beliefs, to finally, during and perhaps after the pandemic, reorganize his daily habits.

Christian Dunker explains that it (the plague) “speaks of the real transmission of a virus from body to body, of the symbolic passage of culture between natives and foreigners, but also of the imaginary mixture of good and evil within us.”^[14] For Christian Dunker, “the disease is the ideal pretext for activating prejudice, invoking ghosts, and revitalizing childhood complexes. It feels as if we are faced with the possibility of death, with the unacceptable lack of meaning in life and against this we respond with our unconscious beliefs.”^[15]

Suddenly, it was no longer necessary to go out in search of the wasted time, so demanded in art and in life. Time makes itself excessively present in our lives. The excess of time compels us to see that, with it, life itself also empties from our hands, in exchange for other excesses and exaggerations, those of work, consumption, travel, in short, insatiable, and endless desires.

With the eternal return to the present time, in view of the survival alert, possibilities of enjoying and delighting life with senses,

consciousness and affections return. The delight in preparing your own meal, in choosing with what you will nourish your body, in making meals with family or friends. During quarantine, for many people, these possibilities are reduced, with the limitation of physical space. The lack of affection and tenderness, when one accepts impermanence, can be a shortcut to detach oneself from so many excesses that they begin to collapse in front of each one of us.

In retreat, in the enclosures of our homes, we can free ourselves from the time that had been taken away from us for tasks, which imprisoned our being as it was no longer up to us to choose how to handle with it... Little is said about this loss of freedom previously consummated or about the current possibility of recovering this original freedom...

Fortunately, the seclusion during the pandemic allows us to live the time of reconciliation with ourselves, with our affections, with our “humanity” and with the present time.

As the indigenous leader Ailton Krenak warns, “if this tragedy has any purpose, it is to show us who we are. This is for us to reflect and pay attention to the meaning of what really comes to be human. [...] We're on hold. Let's see what happens.”^[16]

This suspension of humanity and the gathering of many can bear good fruit... With the Covid-19 pandemic, the three great ruptures of modernity diagnosed by the Cuban philosopher Raúl Fornet-Betancourt were exposed: the rupture with Mother Earth, the rupture with the cosmos, with spirituality, and the rupture between the human being and the community... Once these fractures are exposed, let's hope we move forward in the search for healing.

Despite the attempt not to break with modernity, with the advent of Deep Ecology, from which intrinsic values of Nature were admitted, the restoration of those fractures had already begun. With ecological philosophy, the paths to the connections of the human being with Nature that were lost during European western modernity, as well as those between the human being and “the infinite, the transcendent and the sacred” and, consequently, between him and the human community, have been reopened. As Raúl Fornet-Betancourt says, we are legatees “of the false pre-comprehension of Nature as a sphere of reality to which man does not belong, or said from another perspective, of a false understanding of man as a subject detached from the natural order, which is reflected in a separation between man and nature and/or between nature and society and blocks an integral understanding of reality.”^[17]

The reunion with one's own essence in the homes can serve to strengthen faith and reconciliation with the spiritual dimension of the human being. Time in the home can be dedicated to contemplating the omnipresent Nature; to caring for people and other living beings; to solidarity with the most vulnerable; and also to prayer, meditation. Let us wash our hands, but let us also cleanse the impurities of our minds and hearts... May we clean the evil thoughts and negative emotions that hover like heavy clouds over us...

What's ahead? We don't know. What will the future be? We don't know either. Rigorously, we never knew it... The illusions are shattered. We're faced with unpredictability. With the lack of control. We find the mysteries again...

Ironically, hand in hand with the mystery of the sudden pandemic that stopped the world, the truth appears brutally naked before us all: hunger, inequality, selfishness, sickness, of body and soul, of people and societies, and diseases of Mother Earth stand before our frightened eyes...

“Humankind cannot bear very much reality,”^[18] T.S. Eliot would say. “The past time and the future time. What could have been and what was tend towards an end, which is always present.”^[19]

2. Back home. Home, sweet home?

*Eyes set into the ridgepole,
the house peers down at the man.
Now and then the ears tremble,
Such sensitive, discerning walls:
love one minute, invective the next, then fist-
pounding panic.
God is touched by the house the man has
made. God whose eyes peer down from the
ridgepole of the world.
The house begs mercy for its owner
and his fantasies of good fortune. Seeming
impassive, it suffers.
The house is alive and speaks.*

Adélia Prado,
Domus. "May Oracles."

*On one occasion, my father painted the
whole house a brilliant orange.
We lived for a long time in a house,
as he said himself, eternally dawning.*

Adélia Prado,
Luggage.

In April 2020, our present-day, almost half the world's population returned home and could not leave for a certain period. People were quarantined by the Covid-19 pandemic. Compelled to social isolation, we returned to our corner of the world, to our first universe, to our true cosmos. As philosopher Gaston Bachelard would say, home "is our corner of the world. It is, as they often say, our first universe. It's a real cosmos. A cosmos in the full sense of the term."[\[20\]](#)

During the quarantine, when travel was suspended, it became almost impossible to continue living as if the world were the extension of one's own home. The world has been reduced to home. However, a not always sweet home. With the forced coexistence,

relationship conflicts arose between couples, between parents and children and with the elderly. In some cases, these conflicts were aggravated by work at home. In more drastic cases, conflicts were intensified by unemployment.

The chaos of the pre-pandemic world comes to the surface, struggling for organization, so that the home becomes “a true cosmos.” To become a mirror of the harmony of the universe, cosmos “in the full sense of the term,” a space ordered according to its own laws and regularities.

In many homes, there was no light. The light of dawn was missing. Without proper laws or regularities, violence takes over the house. With the pandemic, it is no longer possible to bear or hide domestic and family violence against women. The rates of violence have soared. So have those of divorce. Fathers and mothers began to notice how they were totally transferring the education of their sons and daughters to the schools. The elders and the grandparents began to feel helpless and abandoned. Family members began to discover that they no longer knew how to live with each other. With the outbreak of the new coronavirus, it was no longer possible to postpone the meeting with the loneliness itself.

During the idolatrous anthropocentrism, criticized well before the pandemic times of Covid-19 by the Cuban philosopher Raul Fornet-Betancourt, the three solitudes he pointed out, derived from the ruptures of the human being with Nature, with the cosmos and with the community, are revealed in the solitude inside the *domus*, fruit of the rupture with the microcosm, which is the home, the dwelling house. It is inside the home that the three solitudes meet. Forty, sixty, or maybe a hundred days of solitude undermines the

home. Of those who live alone and, even more, of those who live, because of the breakdown of dialogue, solitude in family.

“Loneliness,” as Alceu Valença sings, “sister of the hours, cousin of time, makes our clocks walk slowly.”^[21] The slowness of the clocks, for those who are in the process of living more in closed houses, can ease the healing of these solitudes, can encourage the reopening of dialog, can lead to the practice of reciprocal care. In times of new coronavirus, love knocks on the door of the house and asks for shelter. Finally, loneliness, as unbearable, can transmute into empathy and favor the reordering of the house, with the law and the restoration of the orders of love. According to the German philosopher Bert Hellinger, creator of a new approach to systemic psychotherapy, for love to work, there must be something else beside it.

There must be the knowledge and “recognition of a hidden order of love.”^[22] Bert Hellinger, in his guide to work with family constellations, highlights as one of the three orders of love the balance in exchange, next to the order of precedence of those who arrived first and belonging.

Those who live alone, “walled,” as Rimbaud would say, to escape “from the trapped look between their four stone walls,” in their escape from loneliness, take refuge in the ethereal virtual setting. As, for instance, in the seasonal meeting of artists from all over the world, musicians, poets, painters and others from the movement “Theater of Solitude in Solidarity.”^[23] In that virtual space, moved by the common aspiration of a next face-to-face encounter, they exchange their experiences, successes and pains, in form of art.

In the real world, many are forced to live at home without a dialog, without care, without love. With that, violence finds shelter next to them. As Adélia Prado would say in her poem *Domus*, “love one minute, invective the next, then fist-pounding panic.” God is touched by the house the man has made.”^[24]

In recognizing that “for many women and girls, the threat seems greater where they should be safer: in their own homes,”^[25] UN Secretary-General António Guterres launched during the pandemic a global appeal against the increase in domestic and family violence against women and girls.

In virtual settings, women from various countries are in search of mutual support and care. The cold computer screen has not prevented the feeling of being in the virtual circle of Latin American women of which I am a part. The tiredness of the wounded soul, stamped in the face and overflowing in the testimony of Maria, a resident of the Mexican city Juarez, first in the world in violence against women. Her pain was shed in tears held during a life as gray as her faded white hairs, worn out by her companion's aggressions over time.

Another undesirable effect of the restriction on the freedom to leave home is the closure of schools, by virtue of which 87% of all pupils in the world, more than one and a half billion people, in 165 countries of the world, were unable to attend classes by April 2020.^[26]

In April 2020, the Global Coalition for Education published an article in Time magazine, signed by Angelina Jolie, special envoy of the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR), and Audrey Azoulay, director general of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and

Cultural Organization (UNESCO), which draws attention to the opportunity to reconsider the education of the future in view of the situation. Many problems arise with children staying at home without classes. With the schools closed, the present life and future of many children have been affected. Concerned about this, the authors point out that

[...] education is much more than just classroom learning. For millions of children and young people, schools are an opportunity for salvation and also a shelter. Classrooms offer protection – or at least postponement - from violence, exploitation, and other difficult circumstances. [\[27\]](#)

They point out that in several countries, including the United States, millions of children “depend on school to have a hot meal to take them out of hunger.” [\[28\]](#)

Parents not always do have time to educate their children, because their time is divided on a daily basis between hygiene and health care, the fear of contracting the virus and dying of Covid-19, domestic chores, concern for the future, the uncertainty of the economy and teleworking done at home. When they have time, they need to be teachers, and then difficulty appears. A consequence of this reality is a message that quickly became widespread on virtual networks of a child saying that “the school is what the family lacks the most” during the pandemic, “because it is very difficult to be a student of mommy.”

This difficulty increases when the house, besides serving as a place of school, also becomes the place of work. Nevertheless, teleworking is considered to be one of the trends in the post-Pandemic world. The home office was already a reality for many people. The expectation is that this way of working will grow even more.

During the pandemic and because of it, companies of different sizes are starting to organize to adopt the home office

lifestyle. ^[29]

With no time or space for the reciprocal care of loved ones, the hearts of grandparents, parents, friends, lovers really hurt, because of the lack of fellowship, coexistence and contact with each other... We are not born for solitude...

The elderly are the most vulnerable to illness. Even so, there are cases of elderly people abandoned by their family in shelters. When they remain at home, far from their family, they resent the lack of coexistence with their grandchildren and children. The older generations, our grandparents and our parents, the elderly are the preferred targets of Covid-19. In the world, most of the victims of Covid-19 were over 60 years old; the mortality rate is higher than 80.

^[30]

There is still time, in this pandemic moment, to redouble the care of the elderly, our wise people who bring to the present a bridge between the past and the consequent future. It may be that many young men will regret, perhaps late and in vain, the carelessness of their living ancestors.

The elders act as guardians of memory, reminding us of what happened in the past so that we can prevent ourselves from repeating the same mistakes in the future.

It is their wisdom, that of their elders, wise as the father of Adélia Prado, who paints “the house a brilliant orange,” ^[31] so that one can live for a long time in a house “eternally dawning,”^[32] where all can love and care in reciprocity.

3. The return to the common home. Mother Earth breathes

*The poem is in Nature, mother of
prodigal breasts, wife that never
deserts, oracle that always
answers, poet of a thousand
languages, magician that makes
understand what she does not say,
consoler that fortifies and dams.*

Jose Martí,
Niagara's poem.

The wise men are reading the message sent by Mother Earth through her youngest son, the new coronavirus. Among them, thinkers and poets, like the Cuban José Martí, see Nature as “the oracle that always answers.”^[33]

The Brazilian philosopher Leonardo Boff sees the new coronavirus pandemic as an ultimatum to change our relationship with Earth to a relationship of more care and more love. According to him,

Either we change the relationship with the Earth, and we have more **care**, more love and more respect to the limits of Nature itself, which gives us everything to support and carry on with our life, or we can face barbarism, a dramatic situation for the future of life and the future of the living earth itself.^[34] (author's emphasis).

The eschatological understanding of the pandemic also seems strong in the reflections of indigenous thinker Ailton Krenak. He had already been warning humanity of the imminence of the last days, with the instigating message of the book *Ideas to postpone the end of the World*. We may be in times of ultimatums, in the field of some last things, witnessing last sighs. There is still time, however,

to postpone the end of the world. The last breath that is announced is not life. On the other hand, you can announce the rebirth of a new world, of a new life in harmony. In interpreting the Covid-19 pandemic, in the book *O amanhã não está à venda* [Tomorrow is not for sale], Krenak makes it clear that he is not a preacher of the apocalypse.

Although I'm not sure “if next year everything is going to keep happening like nothing has changed”^[35] and don't know if “we're going to come out of this experience the same way we came in,”^[36] he hopes this does not happen and tries to “share the message that another world is possible,”^[37] in place of the “civilizing abstraction that suppresses diversity, denies the plurality of forms of life, existence and habits,”^[38] For Ailton Krenak, “what we are experiencing may be the work of a loving mother who decided to make her son shut up for at least an instant.” Not because she doesn't like him, but because she wants to teach him something. ‘Dear, silence.’”^[39] The Earth, says Krenak, “is so wonderful that it is giving humanity an order of silence,”^[40] which, for him, “is also the meaning of recollection.”^[41]

For the philosopher Enrique Dussel, today Mother Nature (a metaphor he now considers adequate and certain) rebelled and gave a checkmate to his daughter, humanity, by means of an insignificant component of Nature, of which the human being is also part and of which he shares reality with the virus. According to Enrique Dussel, “it is Nature that questions us today: —Either you respect me, or I destroy you. It manifests itself as the final sign of modernity and as the announcement of a new Age of the World, after this superb modern civilization that has become suicidal.”^[42]

Maybe from the crisis caused by the new coronavirus, the turn to postmodernity is actually in course. Maybe it will force us to change the lenses that are already obscured and cloudy, changing the perception of life and reality and encouraging us to recreate the world. The Covid-19 pandemic looks like a world revolution. In fact, it is not. It arrives, however, abruptly, as if it had been. It invites human beings and humanity to revolutionize themselves. It requires sudden and profound changes in psychological, social, ecological, political, economic, and spiritual processes.

As Slavoj Žižek explains, “the coronavirus epidemic itself is clearly not only a biological phenomenon that has affected human beings.”^[43] Slavoj Žižek says that to understand the spread of Covid-19, “one must include human culture (food habits), the economy and global trade, the wide network of international relations, the ideological mechanisms of fear and panic.” ^[44] To properly understand the link between these phenomena and these ideological mechanisms, Slavoj divides the horizon pointed out by Bruno Latour and chooses the path he showed of “assemblage.”

Assemblage, according to Bruno Latour, means

[...]to give a step further towards a kind of planned ontology and conceive how these different levels can interact on the same ontological level: viruses as agents are mediated by our productive activities, by our cultural tastes, by our social trade.^[45]

Based on Bruno Latour's thought, says Slavoj Žižek that

[...] it is not enough to introduce here the notion of different ontological strata (as bodies, we are organisms that host bacteria and viruses; as producers, we collectively change

the nature around us; as political beings, we organize our social life and engage in the struggles in it; as spiritual beings, we realize the achievements in science, art and religion; etc.).^[46]

“To tackle the imminent ecological crisis,” ^[47] Slavoj Žižek says it is necessary

[...] a radical philosophical change, much more radical than the usual platitude of emphasizing how we human beings are part of nature, one of the natural species of the Earth [...] The challenge is to describe this complex interaction in its detailed texture: the coronavirus is not an exception or a disturbing intrusion, it is a specific version of the virus that was operating from the threshold of our perception for decades, viruses and bacteria are always present.^[48]

Slavoj Žižek prediction is that, in the ecological crisis, the situation will be tragically reversed, for it is humanity that acts as a virus in this case. For the Slovenian philosopher, “the pathogen whose terrible virulence has changed the living conditions of all the inhabitants of the planet is not the virus, it is humanity!”^[49]

If we do not listen to the message of Mother Nature, if we do not resume our truly human condition, of sons and daughters of Mother Earth, in a relationship of mutual interdependence and solidarity with other living beings, if we continue to respond more to the destructive calls of Death than to the beautiful charms of life, we run the risk of becoming the destructive mortal virus of planet Earth. No more possibility of return or healing.

The Covid-19 pandemic shows us the urgent need to make our way back to our common home, to our Mother Earth... It reminds us of the imperatives of reconciliation with Mother Nature and of a

life in harmony, as the utmost condition of humanity's survival. It calls for the healing of the rupture between the human being and the *Pachamama*!

The message is direct and clear. The illness causes shortness of breath. It cuts the breath, the link between the human being and life. We are given another opportunity, perhaps one of the last, to heal the fracture with Nature.

How we distance ourselves from Mother Nature! For lack of time, or now because of sanitary measures restricting freedom during the pandemic, or before it, for various other reasons, we no longer walked barefoot on the sands of the beaches. Nor did we dive into the rivers or seas that were and still are so polluted. We hardly went to the parks. We did not even know the forests. We do not respect domestic animals. Much less the wild ones. We create disharmony with Nature. And this creates viruses. Viruses threaten our lives by taking away our air...

Scientists' approaches are different when it comes to the hypothesis of the origin of the new coronavirus. For some, the virus would have resulted from the coexistence of a species of Chinese forest bat (Horseshoe bat) with humans at the large Wuhan live animal market.

For others, an animal called pangolin, much appreciated by the Chinese, could have been the intermediate host of the virus between the bat and the human. There are those who do not accept any of these hypotheses of the natural origin of the new coronavirus, already affirmed, on May 1, 2020, by the World Health Organization, [\[50\]](#) and believe that the virus was created from laboratory experiments, or in China, or the United States.

The *Huni Kuin* people of the Amazon rainforest, according to Els Lagrou, professor of anthropology at UFRJ, as soon as they learned of the quarantine, without yet having knowledge of the virus, they said it was *Nisun*, the revenge of the bat people. According to the Amerindian philosophy of the *Huni Kuin*, bats are beings that possess yuxin, the power to transform form, and therefore they do not eat them. As Professor Els Lagrou explains, “the rules of diet and negotiation around hunting point to an accumulated knowledge by forest people of the pathogenic potential of animals. They have their own habits and habitats that need to be respected if they want the hunt not to turn against the hunter.”^[51]

Although the fact that we eat bats or pangolins may not be confirmed as the immediate cause of the Covid-19 pandemic, according to traditional knowledge that preserves relational ontologies, such as those of the *Huni Kuin* peoples of the Amazon forest, a causal link between pandemics and the growing disharmony between human beings and other beings of Nature. Brazilian professor Márcia Castro, of Harvard University's Department of Global Health and Population, conducts research to prove, with satellite data and mathematical calculations, the causal link between mosquito-borne diseases in the Amazon and ecological factors, such as deforestation and the advance of human activity in the forest.^[52]

In the field of arts, Marcello Dantas wrote in his article “Bats and Men” that, after dreaming of the bat staring him in the face, he learned to respect it.

He realized how the bat saw him and understood that it was he who was inverted and, consequently, his whole world. He realized

that “something is out of order and probably we are the reason for it.”^[53] Since then he began to “see the beauty in a bat's eyes”^[54] as one of “those symbolic rites that we need to live.”^[55] “If we want to move freely back across the surface,”^[56] he says, “we have to relearn to respect the places of all the species that cohabit that planet. The species added together have an arsenal of viruses capable of destroying the planet much more often than all our atomic weapons put together.”^[57]

Now, charmed by a submicroscopic virus, we want more than ever to reconnect with Mother Earth through the air. We want to heal this fracture between the human being and Nature. We want to breathe! And the human being comes home... Goes back “by force” to his home... Will he also return to our Common Home, our Mother Earth? Do we really want to return to *Pachamama's* lap? Will we learn from the crisis of Covid-19, to the point of stopping the ecological crisis? Will we learn the lesson of revaluing our Mother Earth, of reconciling ourselves with the other beings of Nature, of revaluing life and living in harmony?

“Will we be able,” ^[58] as Leonardo Boff asks, “to understand the message that the coronavirus is giving us, or will we continue to do more of the same, hurting the Earth and self-checking in our eagerness to get rich?”^[59]

“The Earth defends itself,”^[60] as the Brazilian philosopher warns, emphasizing that the coronavirus pandemic reveals to us that the way we inhabit the common home is harmful to its Nature. According to him:

[...] the lesson it teaches us sounds: it is imperative to reformat our way of living on it, as a living planet. It is warning

us that just as we are behaving we cannot continue. Otherwise the Earth itself will get rid of us, excessively aggressive and evil beings to the life system.^[61]

As Ailton Krenak says, “we have to stop being convinced. We don't know if we'll be alive tomorrow [...]”.^[62]

According to Bruno Latour's hypothesis, it seems that the health crisis, because of the virus presence, could serve as a test for the next crisis, the climate change crisis that is coming. Bruno Latour says, “the reorientation of living conditions will be put as a challenge for all of us, as well as all the details of daily existence, which we will have to learn to resolve carefully.”^[63]

And if, by chance, instead of living a general test for the ecological crisis, according to the hypothesis of Bruno Latour^[64], this crisis unleashed by the Covid-19 pandemic was rather an opportunity than a test, to prevent the ecological crisis by creating a new world of prevalence of life, solidarity and harmony? If, by chance, from the cocoon, in the isolation in our inner home, with the return to our Mother Earth, the chaotic, conflicting, accelerated and suicidal world is transmuted from before into a new world full of life in harmony?

This is what seems to be trying to prevent His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, by exalting the value of compassion in these times of pandemic:

In the midst of that struggle, we are reminded of the value of compassion and mutual support. The current global pandemic threatens all of us, without distinctions of race, culture or gender, and our response must be as one humanity, meeting the most essential needs of all. [...] Our mother earth is teaching us a lesson in universal

responsibility. This blue planet is a delightful habitat. Its life is our life; its future, our future. In fact, the earth acts as a mother to all of us; as her children, we are dependent on her. In view of the global problems we are facing, it is important that we all work together.^[65]

On May 7, 2020, in his message from the Wesak Festival, the Dalai Lama reiterated the importance of compassion in this time of grave crisis that the world is going through, with a threat to our health and suffering from the loss of family and loved ones. According to the Buddhist leader, “we must focus on what unites us as members of a human family.”^[66] For him, we must help each other with a compassionate mind, for it is only by uniting “in a coordinated, global effort that we will overcome the unprecedented challenges we face.”^[67]

Mother Earth's message begging for more love, compassion, and solidarity, transmitted by the Covid-19 pandemic, begins to reverberate from east to west, in a two-way street, with reciprocal meanings, in all faiths. The promotion of “inter-religious understanding,”^[68] advocated by the Dalai Lama, based on the “fact that all religions promote the happiness of all people,”^[69] seems to be one of the main sources of this message.

His Holiness, Pope Francis, aware of the threat of the globalization of indifference, proposes an opposite thought, namely, “the necessary antibodies of justice, charity and solidarity.”^[70] For the Supreme Pontiff of the Catholic Church, “a civilization of hope: against anguish and fear, sadness and discouragement, passivity and weariness,”^[71] to be built every day without interruption and with a concerted effort by all.

To celebrate the 50th International Year of the Earth, declared in 2009 by the United Nations as International Mother Earth Day, Pope Francis calls us to re-establish a harmonious relationship with the Earth and the rest of humanity. According to him:

We often lose the vision of harmony: harmony is the work of the Holy Spirit. Even in our common home on earth, even in our relationship with people, with our neighbor, with the poorest, how can we restore this harmony? We need a new way of considering our common home. Pay attention, it is not a deposit of resources to be explored.^[72]

Pope Francis reminds us that the original peoples call this harmony “well living”:

The prophecy of contemplation is something we learn above all from the original peoples, who teach us that we cannot care for the earth if we neither love it nor respect it. They have this wisdom of 'well living', not in the sense of only a mere living: but of living in harmony with the earth. They call this harmony 'well living'.^[73]

Pope Francis prophesies, at this time of danger, a “humanistic and ecological conversion that will end with the idolatry of money and put dignity and life at the center.”^[74]

As long as there is life, there is freedom for every human being to use the magnifying glass of the innate wisdom of his heart, that “wisdom which is kneaded with the leaven of feeling the pain of another as his own,”^[75] even if we are not poets, philosophers, or even if we are skeptics or atheists. While there is life, there is freedom to see Mother Nature as the *oracle that always answers*; freedom to listen to her in silence, as a *poet of a thousand tongues*, and freedom to make peace with *Pachamama*, to feel her and us as

a magician who makes you understand what she doesn't say, a comforter who fortifies and packs.

Even during the compulsory recollection at home, we can return to the common home and then, after the pandemic, we can choose to walk the path of the pandemic to harmony. No one and nothing can take away our freedom to make conscious choices. Freedom to choose the path on which to live in harmony. Freedom, at each crossroads, to realize and echo the message of more life and more harmony transmitted by the oracle that is our Mother Nature!

4. The return to the cosmic home: back to the stars

*O' day, arise! The atoms are
dancing. Thanks to Him the
universe is dancing, the souls
overcome with ecstasy I'll whisper
in your ear... where their dance is
leading them. All the atoms in the
air and in the desert...they seem
insane Each atom, happy or sad...
is enchanted by the sun There's
nothing more to say*

*Poem of atoms.
Rumi In Bab'Aziz,
The Prince who contemplates his
soul.*

The pandemic of Covid-19 showed the fatal victims the way back to the cosmic home and revealed for the survivors other introspective and contemplative ways back to the stars, back to the cosmic home. Indeed, all people in the world, for health reasons, were forced into isolation. Isolated at home, reflections come to them more easily. The way back to the inner home is opened. There is no escape from conflicts or fears. The encounter with the shadows and haunts of the soul in solitude or during unwanted coexistence can no longer be postponed.

The world crisis of the new coronavirus appeared, abruptly, as if it were a destroying ray of solid towers of human existence. No one can escape it. We were forced to stop, to slow down the frenetic pace, to abandon the control of commitments, to remake plans and recreate lifestyles.

The dark night collapsed on the soul of humanity, peopled with moments of anguish generated and highlighted by the

pandemic. With the existential anguish, the desire to recompose the bond with the spirit that we are, to reconnect with the star that we may have been one day and from which we came, to return to the sidereal house, stands out. Now, we want more than ever to get closer to spirituality... The path between anguish and faith is shortened... Will we learn the lesson of revaluing our spiritual dimension and faith?

Pope Francis, heir to the name of the Saint of Assisi, who never lost his link with Nature or the cosmos and who considered the sun his brother and the moon his sister, asked during the Easter homily of 2020 when he granted the *Urbi et Orbi* indulgence in an empty St. Peter's Square: "Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" [\[76\]](#) Said His Holiness at that memorable rainy sunset, transmitted live to millions of spectators:

This afternoon, Lord, your Word reaches and touches us all. In this world, which You love more than us, we are advancing at full speed, feeling strong and capable in everything. In our eagerness for profit, we allow ourselves to be absorbed by things and upset by haste (Homily of the *Urbi et Orbi* Blessing). [\[77\]](#)

For some people, the slow time of recollection becomes precious time to do the cleaning of the heart... They find in a clean heart the key that opens the way back to the stars, to return to the cosmic home and to communion with the divinity.

We seem to have forgotten to do as the Andean peoples did: we forgot to contemplate the stars and with this we do not even remember to contemplate our own soul and to reach ecstasy with the dance of the atoms and the universe, as Rumi, the drunken

oriental poet of God, does. “The atoms dance. The whole Universe dances. Thanks to them the souls dance possessed by ecstasy.”

From the observation of the sky, the *Amautas* from the Andes conceived the social organization of *ayllu*, a community structure of “a cosmic house”^[78], guided by the notion of *ayni*, the commandment of reciprocity. Architect Carlos Milla Villena, also known as Wayra Katari, explains that in order to build a society in the image and likeness of the star cross of the constellation of Orion, the Andean had observed the sky that inspired the law of the *ayni*.^[79]

In the case of Amerindian and African cultures, Raúl Fornet-Betancourt comments that, as in multiple forms of Latin American popular Catholicism, a cosmovision and a conception of the human being are transmitted to this day, in his words, “deeply rooted in a fundamental experience that can be characterized as “Theocosmological.”^[80] In Christian culture, he cites Ignacio Ellacuria's philosophy as an example of a “form of philosophy articulated in the awareness that it is born from the depths of a spiritual experience.”^[81] Unlike, as he explains, the case of the secular culture of illustration, through which rational ways of interpretation and dealing with reality are offered to its members, banishing from life and the world those dimensions that are considered “irrational.”^[82] He clarifies that Christianity, as a culture of ultimate meaning for the real, continues to share the heritage of classical Greek philosophy: the conception of science as a specific dimension of culture. Namely, of science as an activity of the intelligence of the real, integrated in culture as a practice of the life of the conscience of the human being as a living person who belongs

to an order of superior, fixed, stable, eternal plenitude: the cosmos, in Greek thought, or God, on the horizon of Christian culture. [\[83\]](#)

Now, we want more than ever to reconnect with spirituality... To extinguish "Teoapartheid." More than ever we want to restore this fracture between the human being and the infinite, a fracture inaugurated with modernity and highlighted in our days. We are being forced by the ecological crisis, exposed with the Covid-19 pandemic, to return to our Common Home, Mother Earth. Back to our Common Home, in the welcoming arms of Mother Earth, it is easier to realize that planet Earth lives in a common universe that we integrate.

We came from nowhere and, until we came back to nothing, we continued to wander like cosmic dust on the floor of the stars of the universe, which can be counted, to our eyes expanded by equipment, around ten sextillion (10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000), in the supposedly infinite universe.

Meanwhile, we humans continue here on Earth, as if we were only tiny grains among the seven quintillion, five hundred quintillion, five hundred quadrillion grains of sand estimated in the deserts and beaches of the planet. The planet Earth remains, however small, revolving around the Sun star, one more among hundreds of billions of stars in the Milky Way galaxy (200 to 400 billion). And the Milky Way continues to resist, we realize, between the two estimated trillions of galaxies...

In this scenario of cosmic pilgrimage translated into gigantic numbers, in an extraordinary way, to our limited and limiting perception of space and time, life emerges, remains, and subsists...

The life that, for us human beings, only vicissitudes in the arms of Mother Earth, *Pachamama*, our Mother Nature.

Nature contains in itself the meaning of life. It is the alpha and omega of human existence. It is also all the other letters of any alphabet - from hieroglyphics to digital signs. Stones, walls of caves, with drawings of bison and humans, and walls with engraved hieroglyphics, papyrus with its signs, the baking paper with its letters and the silicon of the chips of computer languages, which intend to create Homo God, are, by equal, Nature. Just as all of us humans are Nature. Perhaps, in these times of transition to postmodernity, it is possible, as the African philosopher Youssef Seddik says, to perceive the human being itself as “the most successful alphabet.”^[84]

While reflecting on the pandemic, Youssef Seddik advises that it would be better to teach people not to decipher the alphabet or analyze a text, but to read the world.

Perhaps we are in the moment of inaugurating a new thought that will rise against the imperialism of technique, profit, benefit, and the accumulation of wealth by a small number of people. We're tired of our time leading up to two wars.^[85]

And continues: “To this day, we live in the aftermath of that time, of the division of the world into rich, developing and former colonies. This is a negative mark in humanity. It is time, after this pandemic, to completely change our software.”^[86]

Youssef Seddik foresees that one of the impacts of “banning for hygienic and sanitary reasons most collective practices,”^[87] due to the pandemic, is to reflect on the “forgotten truth in Muslim countries that the relationship must be direct and without mediation between the divine and the individual.”^[88] The African philosopher speaks

about the need to review the whole pedagogy of coexistence and sociability and, to this end, he advises, first of all, “to fight against the tendency of people to accumulate money for nothing and luxuries that serve only a small number of people.”^[89] In his opinion, “the coronavirus pandemic, in sum, is the prelude to a return to spirituality.”^[90]

Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, in his book on the dialogue between philosophy and spirituality, maintains that “philosophy contributes to the cultural mediation of the idea that there is really another sovereignty, different from the sovereignty of the world of objects and prices, namely, the wisdom of the spirit and its depth.”^[91] He believes in cultures in which politics and cosmology go hand in hand, that is, in living with cultures that have not broken the bonds of communication of life with the infinite, with transcendence and with the sacred.^[92] He criticizes the “path of modern European rationality as conflict, rupture and construction of hegemony,” marked by the “turning of contemplative and theoretical knowledge into dominating and technical knowledge.”^[93] He points out that European culture, as well as other cultures, such as the cultures of China, India, the Arab world, the Andean or Mayan world, was perceived on the classical and medieval horizon, prior to modernity, as an extra flower in the florid and diverse garden of culture in general. He therefore calls, on the basis of the freedom of civilization, for intercultural dialog, specifically between these diverse cultures of the peoples of the world, so that “the spiral of predatory progress can be reversed and paths of plenitude can be sought in the cultural diversity of humanity.”^[94]

In intercultural dialogs, these paths of searching for plenitude demand the recovery of contemplative knowledge and experiential knowledge. For this, warns Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, it is necessary “to overcome every residue of 'illustrated' prejudices in order to include the traditions of spirituality that impregnate until today the wisdom of the alternative life of many cultures,” exemplifying with the wisdom of the well living of the Andean cultures of *Abya Yala*.^[95]

With Raúl Fornet-Betancourt's understanding of the defense of intercultural dialogues, a clear memory of the coexistence I had with the Aymara people, one of the cultures of *Abya Yala*, is brought up. The celebration on June 21, 2016 of the *Inti Raymi*, feast of the Sun, in Tihuanaco, comes as a strong reminder of how deeply the awareness of interdependence between human beings and the cosmos remains internalized in the Andes. A crowd remains awake during the winter solstice, waiting for the birth of Tayta Inti, the Sun, to contemplate the dawn and thank him for all he has received from the solar star in the previous cycle. 'O' day, arise! The atoms are dancing” (Rumi). They gather, under a tormenting cold, crowded, in the mountains in a collective ritual of thanksgiving and exaltation of the Sun, to reciprocate what they had received from it before. In these cultures of *Abya Yala*, the connection with the stars, the sacred, the infinite and the cosmos has not been lost, which allows them an awareness of interdependence between all beings of Nature and the cosmos, besides strengthening the awareness of community and solidarity among human beings.

The turning of contemplative knowledge into dominating knowledge has obscured the visceral consciousness that in order to live we depend on *Pachamama*, who is, in essence, the harmonic

and complementary correlation, generating the one existence, between the cosmic force of the Father Sun and the telluric force of Mother Earth. With that turn towards modernity, the community consciousness, according to which we depend on each other for survival, has also become obscured. One breaks the links with the other, with Nature and with the cosmos, and with this, life itself is put at risk.

The Covid-19 pandemic arrives, however, with hard lessons that dissipate the clouds and tear the veils of humanity's collective hypnosis of denial of life. The Pandemic foresees in the midst of so many unveiled evils possibilities of healing human ruptures with each other, with Mother Earth and with spirituality. The sanitary crisis of the coronavirus reminds us in our skin, because of the illness of the body and the spread of disease throughout the world, the relationships of mutual interdependence between all living beings. This crisis brings the already underway ecological crisis, which highlights the challenges to be faced.

The Buddhist leader Dalai Lama, during the celebration of the Wesak (*Burna Purnina*) Moon in May 2020, says very clearly when addressing the pandemic that “today, the challenges we face require us to accept the oneness of humanity”^[96] and that “in an increasingly interdependent world, our own well-being and happiness depend on many other people.”^[97] According to him, “we need to help each other with a compassionate mind, for only if we unite in a coordinated, global effort will we be able to overcome the unprecedented challenges we face.”^[98] It is emphatic in recommending to twenty-first century Buddhists that “instead of simply relying on faith,”^[99] engage in the study and analysis of Buddha's teachings, modern science

that has developed a sophisticated understanding in the physical realm, and Buddhist science that has achieved a very detailed understanding of the functioning of the mind and emotions.

One of the possible paths that humanity has been following for the healing of the fracture between the human being and the divinity, for the return to the cosmic home, is meditation. The meeting, even if virtual, for the purpose of group meditation during the pandemic, unites humanity. Spiritual leaders from India and other cultures, daily, through the social media, guide meditations for spectators from all over the world, starting from several western countries, including Brazil, Sweden, Senegal, the United States, Australia, among many others. With the high purpose of unification between the human being and the divine being, mobilizations of virtual meetings for the purpose of collective meditation are multiplied all over the world, such as the summons for the virtual meeting of Mayday on May 21, 2020.

Mayday, presented as the greatest synchronized global meditation/prayer in history, with the presence of eastern and western gurus, was realized aiming to unite humanity through meditation and joint prayer for a better planet at this crucial time in history.^[100]

There are those who prefer to follow this path of re-encounter with the sacred and the divine through individual or collective prayer practices. His Holiness, Pope Francis, on May 13, at a time when he calls for the year 2020 to be a year of reading the “Encyclical Letter *Laudato Si*. The care of common house,”^[101] offers, when launching the book *Life after the pandemic*, a prayer through which it prophesies a civilization of love: “If we act as one people, even in the

face of the other epidemics that threaten us, we may have a real impact. [...] The globalization of indifference will continue to threaten and try our way... May we have the necessary antibodies of justice, charity, and solidarity when indifference reaches us. We should not be afraid to live the civilization of love.”^[102]

For Pope Francis, listening, contemplation and prayer are an integral part of fighting against inequalities and exclusions and for alternatives that sustain life. According to him, prayer is

a path that can lead us to a different vision of the world, its contradictions and its possibilities, it can teach us day by day how to convert our relationships, our lifestyles, our expectations and our policies to integral human development and to the fullness of life.^[103]

The lifestyles resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic stimulate the opening of paths for the recreation of the world and the search for the fullness of life. As in all paths, crossroads arise, and in each of them the underlying conflict reappears: the choice between life and death.

Will we learn from the upheavals of the health crisis of Covid-19 that we cannot do without our senses and affections?

Will we understand that reality cannot be replaced by technology, no matter how useful and enabling it may be? Will we realize that sensory experience cannot be replaced by information overdose? Nothing alien to the human, to Mother Earth and to the cosmos can replace the coexistence of human beings with each other, nor our coexistence with Nature and with the universe.

What if, by any chance, the trial we are experiencing during the crisis of the Covid-19 pandemic is an attempt to prevent the continuity or the repetition of the deep recurring fractures of the human being? What if, by any chance, it is a trial run in an attempt to avoid the emergence of the ecological crisis that lies ahead? What if, from this essay, it is possible to extract possibilities of simultaneous healing of these three deep human fractures: with the other, with Mother Earth and with spirituality? If, by any chance, this test is nothing less than the fuse of life expectancy promised in various traditional cultures, which is, according to Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, what do we really lack?^[104]

From various reflections on the Covid-19 pandemic, reflections by philosophers, journalists, writers, artists, scientists, lay people, we converge on the appreciation of the priority value of life and on the surrender to mutual interdependence among beings and, consequently, to the commandment of solidarity. This is what is on the horizon: the prevalence of the consciousness of complementary harmony among living beings and of the imperative to live well, to live in harmony...

In times of pandemic, because of the forced isolation at home and the delight of the slow time available for doing nothing, destined for trips to the interior, I remembered the first pilgrimage in the high mountains of the Peruvian Andes towards the community of Quechua peoples of *Queros*. This was three days of walking and riding, with friends, under sun and rain, without any contact with civilization. Halfway there, I took a break. Riding on horseback, at those heights on the edge of the abyss, I stopped and contemplated on the horizon the vastness of the sunny sky and the pallor of the

mountainous Andean lands with sparse and sparse undergrowth. At that moment, I remember well, I enjoyed the *centaura* experience of feeling one with the landscape and of tasting the fullness of life...

We are still enchanted with *Pachamama*! When I arrived at my destination, when it was already dark, I stopped again. Exhausted, I looked up and contemplated the night sky. The sky was dotted with shining stars... There was hardly any dark space between them. I felt them so close as if they were beside me. With the dazzling sight, I had the grace of the epiphany to feel as if I were one of them.

The atoms are dancing. The whole universe are dancing thanks to them.

...the souls are dancing, overcome with ecstasy

I'll whisper in your ear... where their dance is leading them

The atoms are dancing. All the atoms in the air and in the desert know well, they seem insane. Every single atom, happy... or miserable, becomes enamored of the Sun. Of which nothing can be said... Nothing more. [\[105\]](#)

Little piece of sea

Ana Valeska Maia Magalhães, Microcosm

It is difficult to live the experience of confinement without seeing the horizon line. I remember well a lecture by filmmaker Fernando Birri and writer Eduardo Galeano, in which they say that the horizon line is like an unreachable utopia, but it is the sight of it and the search to reach it that makes us walk.

From here the view from the balcony brings sky and buildings. Our jungle of stone. Inside every window of this time of pandemic, people experience the reinvention of themselves, as they want and as they can.

But from my balcony I also see a shelter, a little piece of sea. It remains between the buildings, like a small block of hope. Sometimes I pick it up, to have a moment of happiness.

The first time I saw the little piece of sea was before I lived in this building. I came to visit my friend Laurelia, who lives here well before me. She showed me the little geometric sea view, with an enthusiasm that, at the time, seemed excessive to me.

Time passed and today I anchor myself in this little piece of sea. Each one builds his own possible ocean, as the artist Sara Ramo did, by sailing in plastic buckets inside the bathroom. Or the poet Jorge de Lima, who says there is always a glass of sea for a man to navigate.

Today is a beautiful day of blue sky! I've come to take the picture of the little piece of sea to show people that I like. Here is a surprise: on the little piece of sea is a ship. I thought it was nice to give you a piece of sea with a ship inside it.



PART 2 From inside home to the crossroads

5. Back to the community village (ayllu)

*Listen in the wind The sob of the bush: This is
the ancestors breathing. Those who are dead
are not ever gone.*

*They're in the dense darkness.
The dead are not down in the earth.
They are in the trembling of the trees
In the groaning of the woods,
In the water that sleeps
They are in the hut, they are in the crowd; The
dead are not dead.*

*Those who are dead are not ever gone: They
are in a woman's breast,
In the wailing of a child,
And the burning of a log.*

*The dead are not down in the earth:
In the molding fire
In the moaning rock, In the weeping grasses,
In the forest and the home.*

Our dead are not dead

Ismael Birago Diop,
Ancestry.

“To the loss of cosmology,” says Cuban philosopher Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, “is joined the fracture of community consciousness, the loss of coexistence in the unity of the human race.”^[106] It is the loneliness of the loss of community. *A contrario sensu*, when we raise our eyes to the sky and recognize ourselves in the stars, it even seems as if they illuminate our gaze towards other human beings here on Earth. Cured of the rupture with cosmology, the feeling of coexistence of the human race is reinvigorated and, as a result, life in community can be reanimated. It is possible that people gather more around bonfires, listening to stories told by their elders, and they can continue transmitting the wisdom they have already received from their ancestors, under the starry sky or on moonlit nights. Around the bonfires, one learns and understands, as

the Senegalese poet Ismael Diop teaches us, that “our dead have not died,”^[107] that “the dead are not on the earth: they are in the fire that goes out, in the plants that weep, in the rock that moans, they are in the house.”^[108]

We live in times, however, in which, as a result of the pandemic, coexistence in community is curtailed. For health reasons, the public authorities impose social distance or recollection at home and tormented by loneliness, we feel a greater need to live together.

Feelings of loneliness have an insipid taste of eternity. It is as if we are condemned to a solitary life imprisonment. What a paradox! Now, when we cannot, we yearn more than ever to get closer to each other. Give a hug, a kiss, keep in touch, shake hands with each other. Have a chat... Eye in the eye... To touch, to feel in the other the fragility that is also ours. The confinement awakens in us the will to heal the fracture between the human being and the community.

Many skeptics do not believe that this will survive after the pandemic. They believe in the forgetfulness and inertial tendency of human behavior. This skepticism coincides with the devaluation of traditional knowledge combined with the overvaluation of scientific knowledge.

According to Peter Sloterdijk's analysis, the problem is the frivolous atmosphere and the possibility that we will not learn anything new from this pandemic. If we look at the history of modern societies, they have been steeped in relatively regular outbreaks, but in the past people tended to return to their common habits of existence. In the words of Peter Sloterdijk, “the new world now is that we see that, because of globalization, the interconnectivity of human

lives on Earth is stronger and we need a shared awareness of immunity.”^[109]

As immunity conditions public policies, the importance of science grows stronger. As Slavoj Žižek says, “the epidemic offers a welcome opportunity for science to assert itself in this role.”^[110] According to him, “we are now forced to admit that modern science, despite all its hidden biases, is the predominant form of cross-cultural universality.”^[111] He believes that the self-organization of local communities will do its work only in combination with science.

In times of pandemic, it is essential to take science into account in the political decision-making process, as the World Health Organization has been doing, for example. We are forced, however, to admit the impossibility of science alone presenting solutions to the plethora of problems generated by the Covid-19 pandemic. Only an integral knowledge in which scientific knowledge is articulated with other knowledge can present solutions to complex and multifaceted challenges. The choice of whether or not to follow scientific arguments involves judgments and, therefore, other knowledges. The problem, however, is not limited to the contempt, insufficiency, or precariousness of science. The barrier is built and raised because of the malformation of political leaders, who, besides being tied to a dual knowledge and despising values and “humanities,” are far from having an integral and holistic view of reality.

This is why the intercultural philosophy proposed by Raúl Fornet-Betancourt is so relevant as it focuses on roots, revalidation of the authority of knowledge of tradition and dialogue between cultures.^[112] It suggests a journey back to our origins, to our most remote ancestors, to traditions. It bets on cultures, in which politics

and cosmology go hand in hand, that is, in the coexistence with cultures that have not broken the bonds of communication of life with the infinite, with transcendence and with the sacred.^[113]

According to Raúl Fornet-Betancourt, the belief in a dialogue of experiential knowledge and spiritualities is a belief in the recovery of human experiences that, ignorant of the dualistic habits of anthropocentric and androcentric knowledge, indicate paths to wholeness and, with them, “methods” for knowledge that resonate with the rhythm of the happening of the depth of life. The Cuban philosopher explains that, in intercultural dialogue, “the recovering return of experiential knowledge,” includes knowledge of the traditions of spirituality that impregnate until today the alternative wisdom of many cultures.^[114]

Since 2011,^[115] the Harmony with Nature UN program has promoted authentic intercultural dialogues before the United Nations General Assembly. To celebrate the International Day of Mother Earth, every April 22nd, dialogues are held between experts from all continents and different areas of knowledge, with the aim of overcoming the anthropocentric world view to establish a non-anthropocentric relationship with the planet where we live, recognizing, under the paradigm of harmony, Nature as a partner on equal terms with humanity.

In the United Nations Harmony with Nature program, as stated in the 2014 United Nations Report (HwN UN), knowledge is important “not only from scientists, but also from philosophers, poets and others whose studies, imaginations, intuitions, spiritual revelations and inspirations offer insights into the intrinsic value of Nature.”^[116] The Harmony with Nature UN program comprises

dialogues between scientific and traditional knowledge and also dialogue between various traditional cultures.

Tradition holds an invaluable treasure: the ancestral consciousness common to humanity of a visceral feeling of inseparability between the human being and Mother Earth, Nature or *Pachamama*. This consciousness, lost in some places, at some point in the history of humanity, receives different denominations in the various traditional cultures and today is echoing more strongly and has been the object of lectures and conversations at the United Nations. In Latin America, for example, there are the traditional cultures of well living: *Sumak kawsay* in Ecuador; *Suma qamaña* in Bolivia, *Ñhandereko*, with the guaranis in Brazil. On April 22, 2014, during the 4th Commemorative Dialog for the International Day of Mother Earth, the need to create a new future was stressed, based on the policies of well living or living well adopted in Ecuador and Bolivia, with an emphasis on extending rights to *Pachamama* or to Nature, as was pioneered in 2008 in the Ecuadorian constitution.

The Manifesto for a Democracy of the Earth: Justice, Sustainability and Peace, by the Indian eco-philosopher activist Vandana Shiva, who premiered the dialogues in 2011, was conceived from the Hindu conception of the Earth family: *vasutthaiva kutumbkam*. In the 2016 dialogs, echoes of the distant cradle of humanity resound through the voices of Mama Africa, who can teach us so much, with the philosophy of Ubuntu, remembered by the Congolese philosopher Basilele Malomalo: “I only exist because we exist.” African culture also appears as a strong inspiration and basis for the *Earth Jurisprudence* theory of US eco-theologian Thomas Berry, strongly present in the 2016 dialogues. From the East, the

defense of harmony is also found in Bhutan as a philosophical foundation, and in the 2013 dialogues we read the proposal of the GNH (Gross Domestic Happiness) index in place of the GDP (Gross Domestic Product), to measure the well-being of humanity.^[117]

In the dialogues of April 2017, when the International Day of Mother Earth was celebrated, I had the opportunity to defend, before the General Assembly of the United Nations, harmony with Nature as a precondition for sustainable development and the emergence of the need for this paradigm to succeed that of sustainable development.

The paradigm “Harmony with Nature” demystifies the belief in infinite progress and part of the acceptance of the limits of Nature. It involves, therefore, harmonious relations of the human being with Her. This acceptance produces an inversion of values. One begins to accept Harmony with Nature as a precondition for the continuity of Life of the human species. Harmony with Nature becomes an end in itself and not a means to achieve sustainable development. [...] Without Harmony with Nature there is simply no way to prosper human Life.^[118]

This idea was later systematized, in 2018, together with the comments on the trajectory and content of the United Nations dialogues, as a result of post-doctoral research, in the book *Harmonia com a natureza e direitos de Pachamama [Harmony with Nature and Pachamama's Rights]*, published by the Federal University of Ceará. This proposal registers the Latin American origin of the Harmony with Nature program, and relates well to live, harmony with Nature and *Pachamama* consciousness.

Pachamama Consciousness is the term used by the Aymara historian Fernando Huanancuni Mamani, former Bolivian Minister of Foreign Affairs, to express this common ancestral heritage of the intent to live “in harmony” with Nature.^[119]

Before presenting the proposal, as I wrote in the aforementioned book, “I went to apu *Huaman Lipa* and from there I walked towards the heights of Machu Picchu and other mountains of the Andes... I was in Africa at the feet of *Kilimanjaro*... In European lands, I took a contemplative pause in search of the Holy Grail in Montserrat. I arrived, via India, to the kingdom of Bhutan, bordering China. I went further and descended into the heart of the Himalayas, to *Little Tibet's* Lake Pangong, a sacred lake for Hindus and Buddhists...”

I walked and I continue to walk in the mountains, in the forests, in the deserts and in the savannas, trying to feel what they felt, there, where our ancestors *Homo Sapiens* appeared 120,000 years ago and 2.4 million years ago, their ancestors of the human race (*Homo Habilis*, *Homo erectus*, *Homo neandhertalensis*) or even, approximately 3.9 million years ago, our most distant hominid ancestors, the *australophitecus*, who possibly walked on their feet...

I keep walking on my feet, placing them on the ground, looking for a holy chalice: the Grail that allows one to experience and feel, deep in the heart, what native people feel, what keep them both here and in another place, the same ancestral sense of belonging with the Earth and all other living beings... So as to feel the completeness of life... Achieving and living in *harmony with Nature*...

According to the first report developed by the United Nations on harmony with Nature, which was inspired by several works,

including scientific papers from the scientists Eric Chivian, Muhammad Yunus, and Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Prize Laureates in the environmental, economic, and social areas, harmony with Nature is an “ancient heritage of Humankind”^[120], “around the world, ancient civilizations have a rich history of understanding the symbiotic connection between humans and nature,”^[121] and “The Andean concept of *Pachamama* conveys the symbiosis between Humankind and Nature.”^[122]

I have shared life experiences with indigenous peoples from the Andes in their ice-cold mountains and with people in Eastern Himalayas. The summit with the *Maasai* people, in the cradle of humankind, side-by-side with giraffes and baobab trees, as well as the contemplation of heavenly landscapes, consummated the comprehension of the **community** and **reciprocity** principles, which are part of the world perception of the ancient people and are crucial for the concept of *harmony with Nature* in this day and age. In the Andes, these principles and concepts are respectively expressed as *ayllu* and *ayni*, the nucleus of *Pachamama* consciousness, embedded in the society as the concept of *well living*. In Africa, the community and reciprocity or complementarity principles are part of the *Ubuntu* or *Bisoité/wenness* philosophy. In the same manner, they can be found in the principles of Deep Ecology, a term conceived by the European Arne Naess, and in the Earth Ethics belief, established by the North American Aldo Leopold. It is questioned if this consciousness, so often depicted in several ancient peoples and different parts of the world, which emerges from experiences, feelings, and world understandings of life in communities and related to reciprocity or complementarity philosophies, is being pointed

towards the personification of the United Nations paradigm of *Harmony with Nature*. In the *Earth Jurisprudence* theory, from 2016 *HwN* UN Dialogues, and created by the North American ecotheologian Thomas Berry from researches with *Ignuit*, that is, the people of the Canadian Arctic, and African peoples as well, the Earth is equally saw as a community composed of living beings, including humans, who share a common destiny in mutuality relations.^[123]

As per the *Pachamama* consciousness, we understand that human life is intrinsically bond to other living beings. Human life can only exist and remain in existence if lived collectivity, and only under a symbiotic relationship with other human and non-human living beings.

“*Ayllu* in *ayni*’s horizon is *Suma qamaña*. *Suma qamaña* is translated as Living Well, living in harmony,”^[124] as per the accurate composite crafted by the *Aymara* thinker Fernando Huanacuni Mamani. According to Mamani, “Living Well is every complementary relationship inside the community, when Life and all forms of existence are respected and cared-for.”^[125] He says that nowadays, “humans have become a virus in the cancer of the Mother Earth.”^[126] Therefore, he states that it is important “to emerge from *ayllu* in *ayni*, the consciousness that everything is connected, related, and interdependent.”^[127]

6. From ayllu to ayni. Relationship of mutual interdependence, complementarity, and solidarity

*I am a woman
who learned a lot
from time.
It taught me to love life.
To not give up the fight.
To start again if defeated.
To renounce to negative words and thoughts.
To believe in human values.
To be optimistic.
I believe in an immanent force
that connects the human family
in a luminous, universal
brotherhood chain.
I believe in human solidarity.
I believe in accepting the mistakes
and sufferings of the present time.
I believe in young men.
I praise your confidence,
generosity, and idealism.
I believe in the miracles of science
and that a future prophylaxis
for mistakes and violence
of the present time will be discovered.
I learned that it is better to fight
than getting money without any effort.
Believing is better than doubting.
Cora Coralina,
*Aninha's Offers (To young men).**

Many of us think just like Cora Coralina. Women and men, humans that, in the present time, trust in the solidarity and dialogue between generations. Professor Carlos Marés, for example, believes that “after coronavirus, when we fight against death, people should become more supportive, collective, poor in material goods, but rich with life.”^[128]

Marés explains that “after war, societies were more individually free”^[129] and that “coronavirus is so much more than a war.”^[130] He believes that “humanity can use a different, incomparable gun to fight it - a gun that cannot be bought with money and wealth and that lives inside the heart and consciousness of the people, which is solidarity, and not the brutality of a destructive pump.”^[131]

Pope Francis released a note on the COVID-19 emergency, called Global Pandemic and Universal Brotherhood, by the end of March 2020. He wrote that “an emergency like that of Covid-19 is overcome with, above all, the antibodies of solidarity.”^[132] After that, in a letter to the popular movements, in April 2020, he mentions that the fight against COVID-19 is a war and the Popular Movements are a real, invisible army that fights in the most dangerous trenches. “An army whose only weapons are solidarity, hope, and community spirit, all revitalizing at a time when no one can save themselves alone.”^[133]

It is believed that the world as we know it, which was actually created by war, is coming to an end. There is hope that these days are indeed numbered. From December 20 to 22, 2012, in the Summer Solstice of South Hemisphere and Winter Solstice of North Hemisphere, humans and peoples from all around the world gathered together in the Island of the Sun, at the margin of the Titicaca Lake, after hearing a call to fight for the planet’s life and harmony. They felt in their hearts that humanity is entering a new cycle, which requires more improved life values and principles.

We were together in that sunny island, at the margin of the Titicaca Lake, to receive the *Pachakuti*, “the new cycle, time to bring of balance and harmony to Mother Earth.”^[134] The call for this

international gathering exposed the words of wisdom of the *Tiwanakuta*, *Aymaras* and *Quechuas* peoples in the South, *Mayan* peoples in the Center, and *Lakota* and *Hupi* peoples in the North. As per the words from *Lakota* peoples,

[...] when the Earth is dying, when mankind is in chaos, when it is at the edge of the abyss, vigorous “rainbow warriors” from the South will emerge to restore balance and harmony to Mother Earth. They will put their faith into action, not words... There will come a time when we will need those who preserve the traditions, legends, rituals, myths and all the old customs of the people, to show us how to regain health, harmony and respect for life. ^[135]

There, in the Island of the Sun, amongst the colorful ponchos of the community leaders of the Bolivian Andes, we learned that when *ayllu* (community, as “life unit and structure”) and *ayni* (reciprocal interdependency, complementarity, and solidarity energy between beings) are applied in a synchronous manner, they culminate in the path for living a full life, in unison and harmony.

Professor Fernando Huanacuni Mamani taught us that “native people accept that everything is connected and consequently complementary and reciprocal.”^[136] He illustrates it as [...] plants expelling oxygen and absorbing carbonic gas, insects complementing each other by generating fruits, the rain renewing the lives of everyone, the sun heating us all, “as well as humans, who have inside them the instinct of creating and cultivating things and, to do so, take care, create, sow, and reap, maintaining the life balance.”^[137]

When I went to the UN *Harmony with Nature* dialogue in New York, 2017, I have participated of discussions about the foundations

and the essence of the Harmony with Nature initiative, supported by the Plurinational State of Bolivia, based on the culture of its native peoples. Climate change is the outward appearance, a rotten fruit of a tree with dried roots hanging on an old, dual and excluding way of life to survive. Living Well or in harmony means a perception of complementarity and inclusion. This perception is the essence of everything.

The Bolivian philosopher Javier Medina points out the complementarity principle as the logical heart of the *Suma qamanã* or Living Well concept.

He says that the laws of identity, non-contradiction, and excluded middle are rooted in the Western civilization in duality situations. Javier further explains that the Amerindian civilization is the one that “in duality situations, applies logical principles of complementarity of opposites and included middle.”^[138]

According to the Equatorian thinker Atawallpa Oviedo Freire, this “complementary harmony”^[139] consciousness confers integration and balance, that are dialogic principles. Such principles arise from a life’s interrelated consciousness named vitalism. When socially applied, it promotes consensualness, conciliation, agreement, reciprocity, conformity, and stability between opposed points. He believes that this attitude towards life, this way of living can be found in most of the world, in peoples in Americas, Eastern Asia, Africa, and Oceania. According to Atawallpa Oviedo Freire,

When one says that we are living in “harmony with nature,” it does not mean that there are no problems, disputes, and difficulties between humans and nature; it actually means that there is not a separation or division between humans

and nature; that the human nature and the extra-human nature are the same, or that humans are a part and continuity of nature. That is, this is a vision of integration between humans and nature, and not a vision of exclusion or restriction, which is often applied by the Western paradigm.
[\[140\]](#)

The consciousness of interdependence has been in expansion also in the Western world, to the extent that even the secretary-general of the United Nations, António Guterres stated, in March 2019, that “the 2030 Agenda is our Global Declaration of Interdependence.”[\[141\]](#) Eastern cultures, including the indigenous peoples of the Americas, had a strong influence for the consolidation of this consciousness of interdependence between living beings.

With the emergency of the Covid-19 pandemic now in 2020, Dalai Lama says that “the outbreak of this terrible coronavirus has shown that what happens to one person can soon affect every other beings.”

However, he also remembers that “a compassionate or constructive act, whether working in hospitals or just observing social distancing, has the potential to help many.”[\[142\]](#)

In Brazil, the Christian philosopher Leonardo Boff shares the same vision, saying that “what is saving us is not competition, but collaboration; it is not individuality, but the connection between all of us.”[\[143\]](#)

In Europe, the philosopher Slavoj Žižek, that calls itself atheist and Christian, thinks that “the current crisis clearly shows how global solidarity and collaboration are a **survival concern** of everyone and each one of us since they are the only rational and

selfish choice to be made.”^[144] He makes a point of reaffirming that this is not the idealistic solidarity between people, reminding us that “decisions about **solidarity** are eminently **political**.”^[145]

Solidarity has been increasingly spread as initiatives from individuals, companies, and groups, and has been a determining key for emergency public policies to face the pandemic challenges throughout the world.

Governments are adopting several health and economic public policies to diminish the negative pandemic effects on the economics and physical and psychological health. In neoliberal governments, these policies are more notably required. There are many claims in Governments that do not have efficient health systems - in which an expressive part of the population cannot pay for health and hospital services. As unemployment rates increase and an economic downturn emerges, Brazil, United States, Italy, France, as well as other countries, for example, have adopted emergency measures for workers and companies negatively affected by the pandemics. In Brazil, the Federal Government approved the payment of a benefit to informal workers, individual small business owners (MEIs), self-employed workers, and unemployed to provide an emergency support due to the crisis caused by the coronavirus pandemics.

In the country, tax and financial laws were amended to diminish the first impact of the losses in view of the health crisis. Political measures effectively reduce the negative effects of the pandemics but are far from being the final solution for the problem.

Seeing that it is impossible to compensate such effects with these measures, the survival of many groups of people, particularly

those who are more vulnerable, such as elderly, migrants, unemployed, and street persons, depends on the solidarity of other people. Fortunately, acts of solidarity are burgeoning in the world. National and multinational companies are making donations of huge amounts of money destined to researches or other actions and people, individually or in groups, are mobilizing to help anyone in need of psychological support, distribute food, and donate personal hygiene products and medications.

It may be that acts of solidarity are not always motivated by altruistic, compassion feelings or consciousness of interdependency between living beings. However, it is believed that more and more acts of solidarity contribute to overcome egoistic behaviors, which are usually our standard attitudes. In pandemic times, we can see people and institutions united to fight back against the world crisis. It is possible that, as stated by *Ciro Gomes*, “this crisis will lead to habit changing and a greater part of the humankind being finally aware of the crazy path we are taking.”^[146]

But in spite of that, solidarity is not only about relationships between human beings. *Fausto Reinaga* reminds us that indigenous peoples not only include their fellow humans, but all beings and Nature elements as well when it comes to solidarity.^[147]

From the perspective of the *Pachamama* consciousness (*Fernando Huanacuni*), “complementary harmony consciousness” (*Atawallpa Oviedo Freire*), or “principle of Living Well complementarity” (*Javier Medina*), we understand that human life carries within itself relationships with other living beings.

Human life can only exist and remain in existence if lived collectivity (*ayllu*), that is, if, and only if under a symbiotic relationship

with other human and non-human living beings (*ayni*).^[148]

Carlos Milla Villena, also known as *Wayra Katari*, understands the reciprocity commandment, *ayni*, as “the highest form of human expression in the cosmic causality law.”^[149] The architect explains that the Andean people, in order to build a society in the image and likeness of the Orion constellation, observes the sky that inspired the law of *ayni*. The law of *ayni* is associated to the stepped cross, which subsequently gave birth to chakana, an Andean cross representing the balance between elements and the Sky and Earth. “The stepped cross is the deepest scientific expression of our Andean Culture, which solved the impossible myth of squaring the circle, thus crossing the prohibited frontier to the Greek thinking.”^[150]

According to Carlos Milla Villena, the law of reciprocity, that is, *ayni*, is “the millennial mold of the historical memory of Andean peoples; it is a synthesis of the ethical, community-oriented behavior and single cultural commandment that was quite enough to bring balance to the societies of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.”^[151] This is so evident that the “crossed hands” in clay, an archaeological discovery in 1960, at *Waka Kotosh*, is considered the iconic expression of *ayni*. Five thousand years ago, humankind has already perceived, in the Andes, the principles of living in harmony. The poem of Esteban Pavletich about Kotosh revelation depicts the subject:

Revelación de Kotosh

Hace mille de años
Estrictos sacerdotes revestidos de canela
Encendieron en tus senos las estrellas

y sembraron
En tu vientre riguroso
Las Manos Cruzadas de arcilla
Las manos
podían estar cruzadas
aquel tiempo,
porque había
en el fértil territorio desprendido de la noche paz
fraternidade
alegría...

7. The false dilemma between economics and Life and the proposal of the economy of Francesco

*Praised be You, my Lord,
Through Sister Mother Earth,
Who sustains us and governs us
and who produces Varied fruits
with colored flowers and herbs.
Praised be You, my Lord,
Through those who give pardon
for Your love,
And bear infirmity and tribulation.
Blessed are those who endure in
peace
For by You, Most High, they shall
be crowned.
Saint Francis of Assis,
Canticle of the Sun.*

Pope Francis, who is Latin-American, is leading a plan to co-create, with the collaboration of 115 countries in the world, and based on youth-led movements, the “economy of Francesco,” upon a call to a worldwide meeting of young people that will place in Assis, in November 2020, with the purpose of “..building new paths, a new man-made economy, socially fair, economically feasible, environmentally sustainable, and ethically responsible.”^[152]

The Letter from Pope Francis for the event *Economy of Francesco* was written on May 1, 2019, since the event was initially scheduled to take place in March 2020 and was subsequently transferred to November 2020 due to the Covid-19 pandemics. The invitation starts in the following way:

I am writing to invite you to take part in an initiative very close to my heart. An event that will allow me to encounter young men and women studying economics and interested in a

different kind of economy: one that brings life not death, one that is inclusive and not exclusive, humane and not dehumanizing, one that cares for the environment and does not despoil it. An event that will help bring us together and allow us to meet one another and eventually enter into a “covenant” to change today’s economy and to give a soul to the economy of tomorrow.^[153]

The letter of invitation makes clear that the vision of economics of St. Francis of Assisi remains extremely relevant and

[...] that it can give hope to our future and benefit not only the poorest of the poor, but our entire human family. A vision that is also necessary for the fate of the entire planet, our common home, “our sister Mother Earth,” in the words of Saint Francis in his Canticle of the Sun.^[154]

When Pope Francis made the call, he reminded us that, in the Encyclical of *Laudato Si*, it is featured that

[...] today more than ever, everything is deeply connected and that the safeguarding of the environment cannot be divorced from ensuring justice for the poor and finding answers to the structural problems of the global economy. We need to correct models of growth incapable of guaranteeing respect for the environment, openness to life, concern for the family, social equality, the dignity of workers and the rights of future generations. Sadly, few have heard the appeal to acknowledge the gravity of the problems and, even more, to set in place a new economic model, the fruit of a culture of communion based on fraternity and equality.^[155]

Pope Francis, in the letter invitation for this world meeting, encourages the questioning of the “economic laws that produce

inequality and exclusion” and to understand that “they derive from political decisions, therefore, may be questioned and transformed.”^[156] His Holiness explains that the city of Assis is the ideal place to inspire a new economy since that was the place in which St. Francis’, an “outstanding example of care for the vulnerable and of an integral ecology,”^[157] according to Him, abdicated from his fortune to embrace equality and Nature. Pope Francis stated that “there is no reason for such misery,”^[158] When He called up the meeting.

In the preface of *Life after pandemics* book, written by Pope Francis, the cardinal Michael Czerny questions if the time has come, now in 2020, to reflect on economic activities and work.

He considers that “Just going back to what was being done before the pandemic may seem the obvious, practical choice,”^[159] but questions “why not switch to something better? Why reinvest in fossil fuels, monoculture farming and rainforest destruction when we know they worsen our environmental crisis?”^[160]

The Covid-19 pandemics displayed a false dilemma, objected by some rulers, between life and economics. If such a thing as economics without life was possible. Likewise, this has been the false premise of paradigm of sustainable development.

Harmony with Nature would be initially a precondition of the sustainable development and Humankind’s subsistence. Without Harmony with Nature, there is no sustainable development and no development at all. Without it, the survival of the human species would be endangered. Without Harmony with Nature there is simply no way to prosper human Life.^[161]

The Covid-19 pandemics has been warning humankind that the asset called “life” should be a priority and urging the revision of the economic models (capitalism, communism, or socialism) adopted herein.

It is speculated that the Covid-19 crisis would provoke the fall of communism in China, just like the nuclear accident in Chernobyl, in April 1986, considered one of the reasons that led to the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1989.

Thinkers are divided into two antagonistic movements. On the one hand, some share the thoughts of the Sloven Slavoj Žižek, remarking that “the coronavirus should compel us to reinvent communism based on trust in the people and in science.”^[162] Žižek questions if “does all this not clearly signal the urgent need for a reorganization of the global economy which will no longer be at the mercy of market mechanisms?”.^[163]

He clarifies that he does not refer to the old-style communism, “just about some kind of global organization that can control and regulate the economy, as well as limit the sovereignty of nation-states when needed.”^[164]

On the other hand, philosophers like South Korean Byeng Chul-Han believe that “the virus will not defeat capitalism; it may resurface, stronger, the digital capitalism.”^[165] Byeng Chul-Han affirms that China can now sell its digital police State as a successful model against the pandemics. He does not hesitate in predicting that capitalism will continue with even more force after the pandemics.

Without considering ideological attitudes, the facts reinforce the evidence of turmoils being caused by the pandemic in the local

and global economics, to the extent that the unthinkable is now being considered. Strong economy states, such as the US, had 30 (thirty) million people unemployed in only three months, which is approximately one third of their population, and are at the risk of facing poverty in the country. Fears of a US economy collapse are growing, and China may take over the market hegemony from the United States. It is also mentioned the end of the oil-dependent world, which would be replaced for a new dependency: the world, previously addicted to oil, would not depend on the big information technology companies.

Ignácio Ramonet speaks about the triumph of the digital capitalism in the post-pandemics era, emphasizing the culmination of the digital tools in the communications area as a pandemics consequence, when over half of the humankind faced isolation in their homes for weeks. He further explains that the global quarantine is a threat to the economic survival of several companies, mainly those related to entertainment, culture, and idleness (theaters, museums, bookstores, cinemas, stadiums, concert rooms, etc.), “while digital mastodons, such as Google, Amazon, Facebook, or Netflix, which were already the owners of the market, continues being successful. [...]

These big technological platforms are the absolute economic winners in this tragic moment in History.”[\[166\]](#)

What seemed impossible happens. A group of 170 European academicians from the Northern, Western Hemisphere countries release, in April 2020, the “Dutch Manifesto,” with a proposal for a social and economic model that prioritizes life over economic growth. On no account it intends to be a new version of the Communist

Manifesto, but it covers subjects that seemed unthinkable before the pandemics. The “Dutch Manifesto” is based on a study carried out in Oxford by professor Kate Raworth (*Doughnut economics: seven ways to think like a 21st-century economist*),^[167] on the Doughnut economic model, outlining the principles of degrowth without misery.

The “Dutch Manifesto” has five main foundations. The first is related to admitting the existence of an economic model that is not based on the GDP, by defending investments in public areas, clean energy, education, and health, and by the radical drawback of investments in other areas, such as oil, gas, mining, advertising, etc. It is worth nothing that experiences related to the use of the GNH - Gross National Happiness index have been applied in Bhutan for over a decade (<http://www.gnhcentrebhutan.org/>) and could be applied as well in the management of the city of Amsterdam, which currently intends to command a never-seen-before experience of this new proposed economic model. The second is related to suggesting an economic model more oriented to distribution and solidarity, by establishing the universal basic income, universal social policy system, a strong taxation of income, profit, and wealth, reduced working hours, and job sharing, focusing on essential services. The third is related to the transforming agriculture in a regenerative process, based on conservation, sustainable biodiversity, and prioritizing the local and vegetarian production, as well as fair agricultural wages and work conditions. The four is related to reducing consumption, particularly in travels, by shifting luxurious and useless trips to basic, sustainable, and satisfactory ones.

The fifth and final foundation is considering cancellations of debts with international financial institutions for workers, owners of

small companies and cooperatives, and government bonds from countries in the South Hemisphere.^{[168],[169]}

Serge Latouche, an expert in the North/South economic relations and creator of the economic degrowth ideology, defends a sober life and the preservation of natural resources before they are over. To him, for the current society, “growth and consumption became a religion.”^[170] He states that the term degrowth is “a semantic bomb to neutralize the intoxication of the so-called sustainable development”^[171] and that “happy people don’t need to consume.”^[172]

There is a possibility that other creative solutions are brought up for the South Hemisphere demands with the collaboration of young people of *The Economy of Francesco* since such demands are different from those in the North Hemisphere. Pope Francis had already summoned young people towards this goal before the pandemics outburst, and now it poses as a post-pandemics response supported by fraternity, solidarity, and care. In the book *Life after the Pandemic*, published on May 13, 2020,^[173] Pope Francis considers that the vision of the economist Mariana Mazzucato, professor at the *University College London* (*The Value of Everything: Making and Taking in the Global Economy*, 2019),^[174] is a good tool to help thinking about the economic future.

To criticize and propose the reinvention of capitalism or socialism seem to be more practical than “courageously think outside the box,”^[175] suggests cardinal Michael Czerny: “After what we have already been through this year, we should not be afraid to venture out on new paths and propose innovative solutions.”^[176]

It would be better to search for other economy co-creation possibilities, moving away from these models, which are in decay or were already surpassed. Other economic and social models are may be provided and the coming out of care-based economic variations is expected. There are huge expectations about *The Economy of Francesco*. The call for the co-creation of the economic future by young people is aligned with what was outlined in the *Economy of Care*, which has been receiving support by some Laureates of the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences. Among them, we can mention Amartya Sen, Laureate of the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences in 1998, and the Bangladeshi economist and banker Muhammad Yunus, Laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006. Both will attend the event “The Economy of Francesco” as speakers, which will take place in the city of Assisi, in November 2020.

Leonardo Boff and other theoreticians of the Theology of Freedom has been defending for decades the ethics of care in Latin America. Boff states on the pandemics that “we do not want to suffer from this virus, we want to be free from it upon taking more compassionate, life-friendly, protective, and caring attitude towards nature.”^[177] He concludes that “we need to know how to coexist as humans and to construct love and care for nature.”^[178]

8. Biopolitics, globalization, the Phoenix State, and human rights in dystopias

I want to live in a world in which beings are

just humans...

I fight for kindness.

I confess. I have lived.

Pablo Neruda.

In Covid-19 times, it is more evident that all human rights converge at the right to life. When no air could be breathed due to current pandemics caused by the infection of the novel coronavirus or due to the ecological crisis, we should demand the right to breathe - the right to the gulp of air that keeps us alive.

The African philosopher Achille Mbembe defends the universal right of breath. According to Mbembe, “Covid-19 is the spectacular expression of the planet's dead end the humankind is currently facing, hence, this is specifically about the reconstruction of an Earth we can live on, because it will offer to us all the possibility of a breathable life.”^[179] Mbembe explains that it is about recovering our world's resources to create new lands. That humanity and the biosphere are interconnected to the extent that there will be no future for one without the other. The “Necropolitics” theoretician questions if we will be capable of rediscovering our association to our own species and our unbreakable bond to our whole living sense. To him, maybe this is the ultimate question before the door is locked forever.

As vital as the air, it converges on the existence and full life conditions of the classic freedom, equality, and fraternity human rights. Favorable fraternity conditions arise while freedom and equality are unsteady.

We should follow the words from the poem “Slow death,” written by Martha Medeiros, which says that “let’s avoid death in slow doses, always remembering that being alive demands an effort so much greater than just breathing.

So, let’s be alive!”^[180] For those who were infected by Covid-19, living is not only a “simple act of breathing.” Breathing is no longer a “simple” act and requires more “effort.”

Breathing is now a right to health. To prevent the pandemics from spreading even more and to lead the way to provide the right to health, several Governments are adopting widely disseminated measures to reduce damages and losses experienced by those who are sick. The toll being paid is an unprecedented violation of human rights, to the extent that the freedom and equality rights are jeopardized today and are at risk for tomorrow.

Meanwhile, we can also see solidarity and fraternity arising in several places, in several ways... Among the side effects of the pandemics, it is noticed that many people are only able to survive due to acts of charity, collaboration, solidarity, and fraternity. “Selfishly, solidarity is the only choice we have,”^[181] the thinker Slavoj Žižek remarks in his more recent book *Pandemic, Covid-19 shakes the world*. For many humans, “the simple act of breathing” and “living” depends on the solidarity and fraternity of others. Despite that, many people just buy and use unnecessary medications, ignoring those who really need them. Others are refusing to isolate themselves during the quarantine, trusting that their health is good and being cold to the vulnerability of older people and those who have comorbidities - which may even be their parents or grandparents. Not to mention countries intending to supply vaccines

and medicines only to their own populations and that continue to be indifferent to neighboring countries and regional blocks.

Noam Chomsky speaks about the indifference of Germany, which took care of its own population, however, “did not extend it to other countries,”^[182] and of the European Union, which “proved to be everything except union,” he states^[183]

Foucault’s biopolitics, developed as “the attempt, starting from the eighteenth century, to rationalize problems posed to governmental practice by phenomena characteristic of a set of living beings forming a population: health, hygiene, birth-rate, life expectancy, race,”^[184] is being revised since the beginning of the twenty-first century by Byung Chul Han, who considers that “the immunological scheme of the last century is outdated,”^[185] with its flow deviated to Achille Mbembe’s necropolitics and, as of 2020, according to Peter Sloterdijk, runs into the return of the “immunity as the greatest philosophical and political issue after the pandemics.”^[186]

Despite the different origins and world visions of the African Achille Mbembe and German Peter Sloterdijk, they are once again associating to Foucault when it comes to the importance of the body and life in the politics, and are intersecting in the demands of universality, that is, the universal right to breathe claim made by Mbembe and in the *co-immunity*, which is considered by Peter Sloterdijk as the “universal shield for humankind.”^[187]

Achille Mbembe states that “In the end, everything bring us back to the body”^[188]. “To answer here and now for our life on Earth with others (including the virus) and for our lives as a community,”^[189] continues Mbembe, “this is what the pathogenic moment imposes to

humankind.”^[190] When he claims the right to breathe, he emphasizes the universality “not only from each member of the human species, but from all living beings”^[191] and as a “fundamental right to exist.”^[192]

To Mbembe, the universal right to breath is “a primary right for life on Earth, a right entitled to the universal community of everyone living on Earth, whether humans or non-humans.”^[193]

Aiming at humankind from a broader perspective, Peter Sloterdijk considers that *co-immunity* may be the “universal shield for humankind”^[194], “the individual commitment to mutual protection that will define a new way to living in the world.”^[195] The German philosopher believes that the current competition for immunity may be replaced, in the future, for a new community consciousness, for the need to promote it, upon the realization that survival does not take into account birth places and types of civilizations. To him, the need of a universal shield protecting all humans is not a utopian concept anymore. According to his vision, the huge medical interaction throughout the world is already an evidence that is can work.

In politics, the challenge of combining Government needs to ensure basic human rights, such as the right to health, and the urgent demands for self-organization in local communities and global responses due the pandemics is resurgent.

As stated by Joseph Stiglitz,

[...] one takeaway is that viruses do not carry passports; in fact, they don't observe national borders — or nationalist rhetoric — at all. In our closely integrated world, a contagious disease originating in one country can and will go global. The spread of diseases is one negative side-effect of globalization. Whenever such cross-border crises emerge, they demand a

global, co-operative response, as in the case of climate change.^[196]

Climate change is even more restless. Achille Mbembe reminds us that “before this virus, humankind was already under a risk of becoming asphyxiated.”^[197]

He mentions risks that are becoming more and more crucial to our existence, such as biosphere destruction, take-over of minds by technoscience, disintegration of resistances, uninterrupted attacks against reason, overgrowing ignorance, or the ascension of determinisms (genetic, neural, biological, and environmental). To him, “from all of these risks, the biggest will be the impossibility of existence of all and every forms of life.”^[198]

Pandemics are a real and concrete threat to freedom and equality, victims of authentic ongoing dystopias well beyond the imagination of Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, George Orwell in *1984*, Anthony Burgess in *Clockwork Orange*, as well as other authors of dystopian books and makers of dystopian movies. Restrictions on freedom are now based on the justification that they are required to slow down the spread of the virus. Under pretext of a health police, some governments, such as China, became authoritative and oppressor, using digital technology to control the lives of people. Others, such as Hungary, adopt unacceptable and unnecessary authoritative measures. Humankind, which is “stuck in the vicious cycle of injustice and inequality”^[199], has taken a blow due to the Covid-19 pandemics, which worsens and creates more inequality - also uncovering persistent inequalities. However, the positive side effect is that fraternity has been considered the key to

put an end to the possible extinction of the human species due to pandemics or climate change.

In the sight of the fast and progressive diffusion of a “virus that does not carry passports” in all countries of the world, we should ask ourselves if domestic or global solutions should be applied.

As described by Slavoj Žižek, “we are not dealing only with viral threats – other catastrophes are looming on the horizon or already taking place: droughts, heatwaves, massive storms, etc.”^[200]

He prevents that “in all these cases, the answer is not panic but hard and urgent work to establish some kind of efficient global coordination.”^[201]

According to his vision, the Government’s ineffectiveness is uncovered due to the pandemics, and we relate it with the fact that it cannot control the situation, then we have panic. Since Slavoj Žižek realized such ineffectiveness, he does not trust in the solution proposed in the communities. He believes that “we should resist here the temptation of celebrating this disintegration of our trust as an opening for the people to self-organize locally outside the state apparatuses.”^[202] Slavoj Žižek recognizes that, today, an effective Government that “delivers” something and that can be at least relatively reliable is more required than never before and that “self-organization of local-communities will do its work only in combination with the state apparatus...”^[203]

How to articulate and combine local-communities and the state apparatus to recreate an efficient, global coordination able to redesign new politics favoring human rights and the right to life is a

question that should be answered after careful consideration and responsibility.

According to the United Nations, we are experiencing the worst crisis since World War II, and now, a group of activists and philosophers consider that this is the opportunity to defend an Earth Constitution as the only realistic way to face issues such as pandemics and climate change that go beyond national boundaries. In February 2020, a campaign was released in Roma for the creation of a universal rule that “serves as a compass for all governments and for a good governance of the world.”^[204] The Italian jurist Luigi Ferrajoli and the Argentinian architect and activist Adolfo Perez Esquivel, Laureate of the Nobel Peace Prize in 1980, who is also committed to non-violence and liberation theology are among the defenders of global solutions for world crises.

Luigi Ferrajoli expresses his shock saying that “it is absurd that we accumulate weapons for war, but not masks for the pandemics.”^[205] To him, a world constitution with global functions and institutions to ensure human rights is urgently required. Ferrajoli states that

[...] climate change, nuclear weapons, hunger, lack of medications, the unfortunate situation of immigrants, and the coronavirus crisis are an evidence of how ambiguous is the reality of the world and the legal and political ways used to govern it. Global issues are not in the national agendas.” Nevertheless, he concludes that humankind survival depends on their solution.^[206]

In Covid-19 pandemic times, we are still not certain of how far the national and Government agendas can be disposed of at the

expense of global solution demands for a world crisis or, if they will actually reborn, like a phoenix, then creating states of exception that ironically tend to be persevere.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos, in the book *A cruel pedagogia do vírus*, points out the first and most intense lessons learned with the virus, that is, “the return of the State and community.”^[207] He explains that, in the last forty years, market was the absolute priority, and not the State and community, as a regulation principle of modern societies:

[...] the privatization of collective social assets, such as health, education, running water, electricity, mail and telecommunications services, and social security was just a superficial manifestation of how the commodification of the collective lives is a prime concern.^[208]

Pandemics cruelly show how neoliberal capitalism prevented the State from having the ability to solve emergencies,”^[209] states Boaventura de Sousa Santos when observing that

[...] the responses the States are giving to the crisis are not the same, but none of them can hide their lack of capacity and predictability regarding emergencies that could have been anticipated.^[210]

Luigi Ferrajoli insists that the universal constitution is not a utopian hypothesis, and that it would be “the only rational and realistic response”^[211] to the same dilemma Thomas Hobbes (a modern State theoretician and author of *Leviathan*) faced: “the general insecurity of wild freedom or the peaceful coexistence pact based on the prohibition of war and to ensure the right of life.”^[212]

The Spanish philosopher Maria José Farinas Dulce also understands that we are once again facing the same old Hobbesian tension between freedom and security featured the historical development of modern, political liberal democracies. Since March 2020, many reflections were made in Europe on this freedom/security conflict during the Covid-19 pandemics. The book *A sopa de Wuhan – Pensamiento contemporaneo en tiempos de pandemias*, for example, contains several reflections from great contemporary philosophers. Among them, we have the Italian Giorgio Agamben. In February 2020, he wrote about *The invention of an epidemic*,^[213] which led to many controversies that obliged him to clarify his apprehensions with a possible creation of a permanent State of exception and the political, social, and ethical consequences of the crisis. “What worries me is not the present, or only it, but what comes next,”^[214] he clarified. To Giorgio Agamben, “even more sad than the implied limitations of freedoms in the provisions”^[215] is the degeneration of the relationships between men that they can produce. As per Agamben,

[...] the State of exception we are used to for a while became a normal paradigm for the Government. [...] We lived in a society that has sacrificed freedom for the so-called “security reasons” and was condemned to live in a permanent state of fear and insecurity.^[216]

A society that lives in a permanent state of emergency can no longer be a free society. According to Agamben, “A state of fear was created, and in the last years it has been clearly spread in the consciences of the individuals, being translated into a real need for

collective panic situations - the epidemics being then a perfect excuse for that.”^[217]

The philosopher María José Fariñas Dulce, in Spain, acknowledges that fears and search for security spaces are a central vector in the social structure construction, and that they are constantly defied by the fact that humans need to act freely as well. However, she considers that “freedom is not doing only what you want, but doing what should be done.”^[218] As for this point, she emphasizes the individual and collect responsibilities to face crises without losing sight of the problem or creating other new problems.

The current fear in this pandemic crisis is translated into the future fear of losing freedom. As per the analysis of the Sloven philosopher Slavoj Žižek, it is strong the fear related to “the improved social control due to the virus threat being continuous and restricting our freedom since individuals in panic reduced to people who only wants to survive are perfect subordinates.”^[219] Slavoj Žižek recognizes that the danger is very real and mentions Hungary as an extreme case, in which the prime minister Viktor Orbán approved a rule-by-decree legislation for an undetermined period.

There is one more factor to be considered, which is digital technology, that contributes a lot to increase the fear of losing freedoms. Technologies stimulate the excessive digital surveillance, justified by the health crisis.

Non-existent limits to invasion of privacy may be considered as unimportant and continue even after the pandemics. As warned by Ignacio Ramonet, “cyber vigilance paradises, such as South Korea, Singapore, Taiwan, and China may ascend based on forthcoming models. Societies ruled by a kind of *coronóptikon* and

excessive technological surveillance is converted into something natural.”^[220] According to him, in quarantine times, we live in “the digital apotheosis and, with it, fake news and post-truth are spread,”^[221] which disarrange social and political issues since they are a subproduct of fear. *Infodemia* is described by Ignácio Ramonet as a raging war between several factions to impose a dominant narrative over this crisis, that is, “a pandemic of false information that has been spread with equal or even more speed than the novel virus.”^[222]

There is a possibility that, from the conflicts arising out of the *infodemia*, a lesson is learned about the necessity of restoring the value of “truth” as a harmony condition between humans, as it happened with the Constitution of the Plurinational State of Bolivia, in 2009. Item II of article 8 outlines one of the ethical-moral principles of a plural society: The State should be responsible for assuming and promoting the following saying “do not lie (***ama llulla***).”^[223]

The Covid-19 pandemics not only brought out the fear of losing freedom, but also emphasized the human weaknesses related to the right to equality.

While we should use masks to protect ourselves from the contamination of the novel coronavirus, inequalities amplified due to the pandemics are uncovered. Covid-19 exposed and increase socio-economic, race, sex, and gender, and regional socio-economic inequalities.

As stated by Eliane Brum, in the coronavirus pandemic, the same “climate *apartheid*” is reproduced.^[224] She further clarifies that

[...] those who will suffer more due to the global warming – black, indigenous peoples, women and poor – were the ones

that less contributed to this climate emergency. And, those who provoked the climate change due to the consumption of the planet's resources in huge portions and proportions – white, rich men from wealthy countries, white, rich men from poor countries, and men who have centralized the decisions in the last millennia, are the ones to brought us to the place we stand today – as will be less affected by it.^[225] (author's emphasis).

To Eliana Brum, “the first coronavirus death case in Rio de Janeiro”^[226] was of a woman, a domestic worker that was contaminated by her employer, who had just arrived from a Carnival feast in Italy. It shows race and class inequality in Brazil - and that was exposed due to a radical pandemic situation.

The mapping of the pandemics in Brazil and throughout the world confirms the realistic observation of Michelle Bachellet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, who said that “the virus does not discriminate, but its impacts do.”^[227] The Covid-19 impact on black people, immigrants, women, and poor people is stronger. The same is true for social and economic losses, which have been more disastrous in the least developed countries in the Southern Hemisphere when compared to the Northern Hemisphere countries, considered as developed.

Sidarta Ribeiro says “There is a conspicuous attempt to^[228] smash down the Brazilian people, which suffers so much already.^[229] According to a research made in April 2020 by the Brazilian Ministry of Health, “the novel coronavirus contagion is not affected by color or social class. But its risk is higher in vulnerable groups.” Data from the research exposed that Covid-19 is more lethal in Black people. As for the White population, the number of deaths is lower than the

number of people admitted into hospitals (73% of hospitalized individuals and 62.9% of deaths).

However, among Black people, the number is higher: people admitted into hospital with Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome represent 23.9%, but they account for 34.3% of the Covid-19 deaths.

Another evil pandemic effects are the worsening of gender inequality related to work and the upsurging of domestic and family violence indexes against women and girls around the world, which was previously considered as endemic by the United Nations “women who work have been suffering more with the Covid-19 isolation than men that kept their public places,”^[230] as Lilian Schwarcz stated on May 13, 2020.

In the United States, that held the position of global epicenter of the epidemics for more time, an “exacerbation of health disparities” was intensified, as pointed out by Ignacio Ramonet. He says that it can be observed “that some ethnic minorities, African Americans, and Hispanics are experiencing a lethality rate far superior than their social representations.” He mentions the example of the city of New York, with data pointing out that African Americans and Latins are 51% of the population but represent 62% of Covid-19 deaths.

The regional disparities are evidenced in Brazil as well. According to Flávio Dino, Governor of the State of Maranhão, “we should focus the fight on the prevention, because reality is very harsh.”^[231] In historically impoverished regions, such as Maranhão, the challenge is even harder due to the social and regional inequalities. There are permanent asymmetries between the challenges and means to overcome them. This is a huge challenge,

actually, demanding a mobilization of all financial and human resources available.

With the Covid-19 pandemics crisis, it is more evident that rights to freedom and equality are essential as a condition to exercise the full right to life. Raúl Fornet-Betancourt emphasizes the “metaphor” of Ignacio Ellacuría, that says that “all evil deeds crucify life.”^[232]

He explains that Ellacuría analyzes the evil in the historical reality, “which is inexorable in the world order, an order that dehumanizes the human being.”^[233]

Before the uncovering of the inequalities, which was by the pandemics, the Liberation Theology idea of human rights are once again being discussed, mainly in the countries in the Southern Hemisphere, in which inequalities were not solved. Alejandro Rosillo Martínez, for example, understands the globalization as the current moment of the colonial, capitalist modern system, and propose that we can reflect on human rights using a freedom vision based on Ignacio Ellacuría’s Liberation Theory, particularly in its “civilization of poverty” concept.^[234]

Pope Francis, in a fraternity message to the world of street newspapers, says that “looking at the poorest, in these days, can help us all to be aware of what is truly happening to us, and of our true condition.”^[235] He states that fraternity “is renewed before the huge and urgent task we have before us. In pandemic times, fraternity blooms and opens new horizons.”^[236]

“It is the breath of the Spirit that opens horizons, awakens creativity and renews us in fraternity to say I am present (or here I

am) before the enormous and imperative task that awaits us,”^[237] it is what Pope Francis announces when he talks about “A plan to rise up again,”^[238] in his book *Life after pandemic*.

During the Easter, in 2020, His Holiness had already pointed out four keywords to rise up again: roots, memory, fraternity, and hope, emphasizing that “there will be no longer 'the other', but we will be 'us'. Because we can only solve this problem together.”^[239]

We do not know if the pandemics will bring the world together. It is likely that the incredulous Agamben perception is actually confirmed, which is “the bare life [definition of the human being reduced to merely biological life due to the pandemics] – and the risk of losing it – will not bring people together, but will separate and blind them.”^[240]

According to the philosopher Manfredo de Oliveira “considering that we are free beings, we know we have no conditions to know beforehand how people will live their lives in the future.”^[241] Notwithstanding, the Brazilian philosopher believes that

[...] such an event as Covid-19, while is a threat to humankind, may lead to a fundamental reflection on what truly matters in human life, on the real values that should guide our lives. On one the hand, it is an extraordinary opportunity to be aware of our basic weaknesses and, on the other hand, to be aware of how great can we be as beings made to spread fraternity, justice, and love.^[242]

It is rare to find a philosophical reflection without at least one of these words: fraternity, collaboration, solidarity, love, compassion, and care. These terms refer to brotherhood, affection, and union, which are all related to the keyword “fraternity.” Fraternity is the foundation of the caring culture, which is referred to by Cláudia

Leitão, when she celebrates that “among many things we are learning with the pandemics, we learned to bring together the critical and caring cultures.”^[243] The Brazilian thinker observes that “if in tragic times, science serves as a guide to ensure the human survival, only care and affection may help us soothe the spirits, opening new paths for the well-living.”^[244]

Still in the last century, in 1999, before the pandemics due to the novel coronavirus, care was referred to by Leonardo Boff as a “matrix category, capable of inspiring a new agreement between human beings and a new relationship with nature,”^[245] when he published the study *Saber cuidar: ética do humano-compaixão pela Terra* (Vozes, Petrópolis, 1999). He expresses the essential care as a principle of the new *ethos* when explains that “The centralization of care does not mean that interventions will no longer be made in the world.”^[246]

Cooperation has also been pointed out by many people as an antidote against epidemics. The Israeli historian Yuval Harari supports this point, saying that

[...] many people blame the coronavirus epidemic on globalization and say that the only way to prevent more such outbreaks is to de-globalize the world. Build walls, restrict travel, reduce trade. However, while short-term quarantine is essential to stop epidemics, long-term isolationism will lead to economic collapse without offering any real protection against infectious diseases. Just the opposite. The real antidote to epidemic is not segregation, but rather cooperation.^[247]

Now, while we are facing the pandemics, vulnerability was responsible for interconnecting people. Vulnerability brings people

together: it inspires empathy, compassion, and solidarity. The storm, as analyzed by Pope Francis, uncovers our vulnerability, and exposes the false and superfluous hopes we use to build our programs, projects, habits, and priorities. Pope Francis says that

COVID-19 has allowed us to put selfishness and competition to the test, and the answer is in: if we continue to accept and even demand ruthless competition among individual, corporate and national interests where the losers are destroyed, then the winners will ultimately lose along with the rest because this pattern is unsustainable at every scale, from the microscopic virus to ocean currents and worldwide atmosphere and supplies of fresh water. A new era of solidarity would have all humans on the same plane of dignity, each taking responsibility and contributing so that all, oneself and others and future generations, may flourish. [\[248\]](#)

The ecological and humanistic conversions should walk hand in hand, using as their foundation the practice of solidarity as previously seen, as harmony, *ayni*, a reciprocal and complementary interdependency between living beings. Vaccines and medications will not be useful if supplied only to some countries since our world is globalized and human actions are numerous, depending on the communication of people and people moving to and from different countries and regions.

After all, such as Pablo Neruda said, we want to fight for kindness and live in a world in which we are “only humans”?

9. From human rights to Mother Earth's rights: Towards Utopia with the Manifesto Harmonia

*Dialogue is the way. On the horizon
we can see Harmony.
From intercultural,
transdisciplinary,
pluriversalist, rhizomatic,
spiritual, contemplative,
and aesthetic perspective,
we will sing with
a. the paths to Harmony and
Well-Living and towards
community-participatory politics;
b. the values and principles of
ecological ethics and Ecocentric Law.
c. the rights of Mother Earth,
Pachamama, and the Rights of Nature.
Harmony Manifesto,
05.Jun.2020.*

It seems that scenes from the worst dystopias came out of the pages of the books and TV screens to invade our houses. Threats are all around us: the immediate threat of not being able to breathe due to the Covid-19 health crisis and due to the ecological crisis, the imminent threat of the “Sixth extinction,” announced by Elizabeth Kolbert^[249] and diagnosed in a research made by scientist of the Stanford University and the Autonomous University of Mexico. According to the researchers,

[...] in the last decades, the habitat loss, excessive exploration of resources, invasive organisms, pollution, the use of toxins and, more recently, climate changes, as well as interactions between these factors led to the catastrophic downfall in numbers and sizes of populations of common and rare vertebrate species.^[250]

The marked population decrease and the extinction of many animal species between 1900 and 2015 is an evidence that a serious biological annihilation phenomenon is occurring, which is already considered as mass extinction. The scientists warn that “The resulting biological annihilation obviously will have serious ecological, economic and social consequences^[251] and humanity will eventually pay a very high price for the decimation of the only assemblage of life that we know of in the universe”^[252].

The Covid-19 outburst in the ecological crisis context worsens the place we live in, making the daily hardships even more evident. Liberticide dystopias become real with the quarantine, that obliges us to stay home due to the epidemics with freedom restrictions, therefore showing how thin is the line between totalitarianism and health police measures. The fact that we depend on communication technological tools makes these scenarios more dystopia-like, mainly with the increasing inequality abyss between people and regions. On the horizon, we are scared of robotic dystopias related to the combined experiences of information technology, neuroscience, and genetics. There is an ever-growing fear of the rising of artificial intelligence that would eventually exceed human intelligence. Regardless of what can be feared in the dystopias, there is a common point that can be seen in all of them: the disdain for human rights. Human rights have no place in dystopias.

The Covid-19 health crisis enhances and creates new dystopic scenarios: people cannot hold each other anymore, are obliged to keep social distancing or isolation, mass unemployment rates, travels canceled, empty streets, increasing violence, dead

people in the streets, burials without funerals... It creates and exposes dystopias that already existed before the crisis in many places, in which violence is never quarantined, and all around the world: according to the United Nations, hunger has already killed over 820 million people in the year 2018.^[253] This multiple faces of this crisis expose negligence existing in which no human rights are guaranteed.

With the Covid-19 crisis, it even seems that they are bursting along with the novel coronavirus. They reach countries in the Northern Hemisphere, in which such problems did not exist or were ignored. Human rights dystopias are bursting when, for example, the excessive digital vigilance model leaves China to be used in the Western World. Some dystopias related to poverty caused by human rights being neglected and that seemed more fitting to countries in the Southern Hemisphere are now feared and even experienced in almost the entire planet.

But there is one crisis that nobody can escape from, and it is tragic and drastic: the effects of the ecological crisis or the continuous threat to human survival. The right to life, basic condition for all other human rights, is brutally damaged or strongly threatened by the health crisis due to the Covid-19 and the ecological crisis, which is even more frightening.

It seems natural that we, human beings, wish to leave such dystopian worlds... It seems natural that one wants a good place to live and enjoy more rights. If the opposite was true, that is, if human rights could not exist, it seems natural that solutions would be sought... That paths leading to good places, in which human rights could prevail would be sought... That paths leading to utopian,

unreachable places, far on the horizon, with a strong desire to moving forward and hope for the future would be sought...

Eduardo Galeano reminds us that utopia is on the horizon and exists so we cannot forget how to move forward, and he does so saying those words by Fernando Birri: “I go two steps closer, and it moves two steps away. I walk ten steps and the horizon runs ten steps. No matter how far I walk, I will never reach it. What is utopia good for? It is good to never make me forget how to move forward.”[\[254\]](#)

In the dystopia vs. utopia crossroads, our choice is utopia! Therefore, in the World Environment Day, on June 5, 2020, we have subscribed and released the *Harmony Manifesto* with the Brazilian colleagues and expert researches of the United Nations *Harmony with Nature* program, Cristiane Derani, from UFSC, Fernando Aith, from USP, Fernando Antonio de Carvalho Dantas, from UFG, and Vanessa Hasson de Oliveira, from UNICAP, with this NU program, and it took place with the virtual event of the Graduate Studies Program in Law of the Federal University of Santa Catarina, in Florianópolis.[\[255\]](#)

According to the Harmony Manifesto,

Nature as the environment and natural resources separated from the humans, and an object they can control, is now gone. [...] From its ashes Harmony with Nature is reborn and the rights of the Mother Earth – our *Pachamama* flourish; paths for the Well-Living are opened with harmonious life and care for the Common House. The Rights of Nature are enlived.[\[256\]](#)

The proposition of Well-living, rooted in the Andean Latin America, moved with the seas, and was diffused to the world through the United Nations, with the *Harmony with Nature* program. In the scope of this UN program, a non-anthropocentric form of Law is currently seen, reported as an Earth-oriented world vision, in which “the planet is not considered an inanimate object to be explored, but it is our common house, and it is alive and subject to excessive risks to its health.”^[257]

Ecuador and Bolivia are two countries that established, in the first decade of the 21st century, a non-anthropocentric Law, with the constitution of the *Well-living* and *Living Well* propositions, respectively, synthesized as harmony with Nature. Ecuador expressly provides the Rights of Nature (*Pachamama*) in the 2008 Constitution (art. 71 and subsequent articles). The Plurinational State of Bolivia institutionalizes the principle of harmony in its 2009 Constitution (article 8, item II). In order to bring awareness to the international community, Bolivia proposed to the United National General Assembly, in the same year this Constitution was issued, in 2009, to turn the date of April 22 the “International Mother Earth Day,” which was approved as per the Resolution A/RES/63/278 dated 22.Apr.2009, from which the *Harmony with Nature* initiative came from.

The Brazilian philosopher Leonardo Boff was delegated to propose the project to be voted (to transform the Earth International Day in the International Mother Earth Day) to the United Nations General Assembly. As the representative of Brazil, he made the speech called “*Porque a Terra é nossa Mãe*” [Why Earth is our Mother] on April 22, 2009. In his speech, Boff defends the

philosophy of the project, stating that “the indigenous people of the past and in the present times have always been convicted that the Earth is the creator of life, so it is considered as a generous and fertile Mother.”^[258]

Then, he explains that, with the modern masters of scientific knowledge, such as Newton, Descartes, and Francis Bacon, the vision of the Earth as the Mother ended up being lost. Under this new prism, he clarifies that the Earth “is not seen as a live entity anymore, but only as an extensive (*res extensa*) reality, without life and purpose. Therefore, it is left behind to be have its assets and services explored by humans searching for wealth and welfare.”^[259]

One of the main challenges in these post-modern days, maybe the leading issue, is the urgent need of restoring the relationship between humans and Nature so as to include the latter on it and to make their reciprocity acknowledged. To restore the relationship between humans and Nature, it is required to reconsider the ethical, philosophical, spiritual, contemplative, aesthetic, and legal paths taken plus the predominant scientific method in the modern Western world.

Nordic scientists and philosophers have been warning us, for approximately half a century, about the risks if the predominant parasitic relationship model between human beings and Nature remains. But, as for the constitutional law field, it was Latin America that had the courage to take the first step to a genuine paradigm revolution, with the ecocentric maneuver.^[260]

James Lovelock, a British scientist who developed the scientifically proved holistic vision of the Gaia theory, when showing that the Earth is a living and self-organizing superorganism and that

livings beings are interdependent, had already warned, in 2010, that “understanding that the Earth is a living planet is a matter of life or death for billions of people, and a matter of extinction for an entire species range.”^[261]

In the law field, as analyzed by Eugenio Zaffaroni, it is the Andean constitutionalism that had the courage to make the first move from environmentalism to deep ecology, despite all criticism, subjugation, and mocking attributed to constitutionalism. He explains that, between the progress made by a predatory civilization, which depict signs of a civilization neurosis since it cannot incorporate death and is based on the unlimited accumulation of assets, and an harmonic coexistence model shared between all living beings on the Earth, the new Latin American constitutionalism chooses the second path, conjuncturally expressing, as a consequence, the rejection to the market fundamentalism of the last decades of the twentieth century. He observes that Gaia, that is our *Pachamama*, did not came to us through the hands of scientific creations, but as the resurfacing ancestral culture of coexisting with Nature, being then incorporated to the constitutional Law as another universal contribution of the American constitutionalism, such as in the case of Querétaro, in 1917, when social constitutionalism was first set out.^[262]

In the legal-constitutional field, both Ecuador and Bolivia, when institutionalized the *Bien vivir* or *Vivir bien*, or *Sumak kawsay* and *Suma qamaña*, respectively, which are basically living in harmony with Nature, restored the ancestral principles of the region cultures. According to the Uruguayan biologist Eduardo Gudynas, “The Ecuadorian *Sumak kawsay* has a “biocentric” potential, which is

different from anthropocentrism”: in the first, intrinsic values do not depend on impacts made by humans; in the second, Nature depends on the benefits or convenience provided (use or exchange value). Lastly, Ecuadorians do not approach environmental issues separately and the Well-living-oriented development points out towards an “harmonic coexistence with Nature” (art. 275), with respective rights and liabilities. ^[263]

As for the Ethics, the need of restoring the relationships between humans and Nature first came out in the twentieth century, in the 1960s: then, it blew up out of proportion in the 1970s and 1980s, due to discussions about intrinsic values of Nature in Universities of the Northern Hemisphere, mainly in the United States and Europe.

In the last decades of the twentieth century, social movements hit the streets, from North to South, being strongly influenced by the Deep Ecology theory and was included in political fights and Law, such as was the case in the first decade of the twentieth-first century, in South America, with the pioneering constitutionalization of *Pachamama* rights or rights of Nature in Ecuador’s Constitution, 2008.

Deep Ecology depicts the preference for Ethics (and not Law) to restore the relationship between human beings and Nature, using **value** as the starting point. It was proposed by the Norwegian Arne Naess, in 1973, and admits the intrinsic value of Nature, regardless of the impacts caused by humans. In Norway, ecological ethics and principles and rules related to ecocentric Law are still supported, mainly by the international organization *Ecological Law and Governance Association* (ELGA), ^[264] which brings together national

and international organizations seeking to transform human-centered paradigm to an Earth-centered paradigm. In Spain, José Maria Garcia Gómez-Heras, Professor Emeritus of Philosophy in the University of Salamanca, released the foundations for *Ecoethics* in 2010, based on the “harmony with Nature” life imperative. He proposed the environmental reconstruction of the Western Philosophy, explaining the transition from the intrinsic values of Nature to the Moral field without the naturalism fallacy.^[265]

According to José Maria Garcia Gómez-Heras’s *Ecoethics*, when the relationship between humans and Nature is restored by recognizing the intrinsic values of the latter, it is intended to adjust them to the modern philosophy demands and characteristics, namely the natural sciences, human freedom, value historicity, and its democratic revalidation in terms of social dialogue.

Although there was no rupture from modernity, Deep Ecology and *Ecoethics* were the starting point to restoring what was damaged by modern philosophy, which was analyzed by Raúl Fornet-Betancourt as being damages between humans and Nature, between humans and spirituality, and between men and the community.

With the Philosophy of Ecology, paths are reopened to connections lost during the Western European modernity, namely the connections between men and Nature and between men and “the infinite, the transcendental, and the sacred” and, as a consequence, between men and the human community. Raúl Fornet-Betancourt states that we are heirs

[...] of the misconception of nature as a reality that does not include the presence of humans or, from another angle, of

the misconception of humans as subjects that do not belong to the natural order, which reflects on the separation between men and nature and/or between nature and society, therefore jeopardizing the full comprehension of reality.^[266]

The ecological perception of the world as a network of interconnected and interdependent phenomena restores the full comprehension of reality and, as a consequence, it is expected to find a cure for all harm resulting from these losses, ruptures, and damages. The Deep Ecology perception, as precisely explained by Fritjof Capra, when compared to the shallow, anthropocentric ecology, is either spiritual or religious. “When the concept of human spirit is understood as the mode of consciousness in which the individual feels connected to the Cosmos as a whole, it becomes clear that ecological awareness is spiritual in its deepest sense.”^[267]

To be able to attribute values to Nature does not deny Moral's or Law's anthropogenic Nature. Notwithstanding, with the theoretical recognition of the intrinsic values of Nature, its qualitative dimension is restored, and the moral field tends to be expanded with the attribution of moral values to non-human beings or when laws related to the intrinsic values of Nature are created.

Eduardo Gudynas observes that, in South America, the mechanisms used to support new relationships between humans and Nature end up being political and this maneuver starts with discussions and academic productions on the intrinsic values, going through social movements, expressing the same purpose of abandoning the dualistic anthropocentrism and overcoming the vision of Nature as a value object.^[268]

The Uruguayan biologist Eduardo Gudynas understands Ecuador's Constitution of 2008 as a concrete biocentrism expression, opposed to the modernity's anthropocentrism. He admits the importance of recognizing the intrinsic values of Nature. Such recognition was responsible for providing rights to Nature. Notwithstanding, he emphasizes that the Ecuadorian recognition of the rights of Nature or *Pachamama* not only kept intermittent connections with academic contributions, particularly from the Northern Hemisphere, but also relied upon the contribution of several other supporters, such as members of the Constituent Assembly, which did not relate to biocentrism or participated in the Deep Ecology movement. According to Gudynas, they were mainly perceptive about it, sometimes due to their own life background and cultural heritages, while in other cases, it came from political practices, social militancy, and intellectual reflection. Therefore, he addresses the rights of Nature, *Pachamama*, or Mother Earth, under the well-living cultural perspective of the indigenous peoples of the Americas.^[269]

The rights of Nature have been continuously discussed, mainly in Latin America and specially through the publication of papers by authors from several Latin American and European universities, which were all compiled in the book *La naturaleza como sujeto de derechos en el constitucionalismo latino americano*, published in 2019 by the professors Lilian Estupinan Achury, Claudia Storini, Rubén Martínez Dalmau, and Fernando Antônio de Carvalho Dantas.^[270]

In one of the papers in the abovementioned book, the Brazilian professor Antônio Carlos Wolkmer emphasizes the “new”

constitutionalism as one of the new trends coming out in the Western legal-political scenario, with heated discussions and practices developed in Latin America, particularly those leading to “the reflection and reconstruction of a world vision committed to life and assumed as a genuine expression of an harmonic relationship between human communities and Nature.”^[271]

To Wolkmer, in the 2009 and 2008 constitutions in Bolivia and Ecuador, respectively, which promote alternative paradigms from ancestral traditions of a worldview based on well-living ethics, it is possible to notice the orientation and achievements of this “new” Latin American constitutionalism. While they have received an innovative status in the context of Western theories, “they were actually created from (and represent) millennial knowledge cultivated and transmitted for several generations in the indigenous communities, particularly the Andean communities, therefore establishing complex and plural interactions.”^[272] Therefore, the author says that “contributions to an intercultural and oriented discussion are required. They should also motivate sustainability ethics, inspiring new relationships between humans and other Nature elements, based on their integration and harmony.”^[273]

Gudynas explains that it is the recognition of the rights of Nature and *Pachamama* that puts the Ecuadorian proposal in the scope of very strong sustainability, which is understood as the one in which Nature’s own values or intrinsic values are supported, such as values of living species and ecosystems, regardless of their status as useful to humans or acknowledged by them.^[274]

Notwithstanding its evolution, the sustainability concept supported by Eduardo Gudynas’ contributions to a very strong

sustainability does not overcome the rupture between men and the Mother Earth. According to Gudynas, the Ecuador's Constitution living-well, when incorporating a biocentric environmental dimension, points towards other paths that move away from modernity and allow the anthropocentrism to be surpassed, thus leading the way for other development models, based on more egalitarian relationships between man and Nature.^[275]

The current sustainable development paradigm, based on an anthropocentric worldview and in holistic and reductionist methods, which have been adopted as the *ethos* in the creation of the 2030 Agenda, was recognized in the *HwN (Harmony with Nature)* Reports of the United Nations as a model out of harmony with the current Science and Philosophy knowledge. This generation should at least start inquiring into the social, political, and legal knowledge, so as to be able to catch up with the new harmony with Nature paradigm being outlined with the restoration of the ancestral and traditional knowledge. They are intersecting with the current evolution of natural, physical, and biological sciences, Ecosophy and Biophilosophy, that are fields in which this paradigm is already a reality, and the health sciences fields, under the whole health perspective. Therefore, they are in accordance with the vision of the neuroscientist Sidarta Ribeiro, who says that “the science of biologists, chemists, and physicians should walk hand in hand with the knowledge from Shamans, and yogis, never against it.”^[276]

“The development conception, based on sustainable attitudes and founded under an anthropocentric worldview no longer meets the global ecological emergency demands resulting from the rupture between humans and the Mother Earth.” (Harmony Manifesto).^[277]

As outlined in the paper “*Do direito ambiental aos direitos da Mãe Terra*,” co-written by the Environmental Law Professor from the Federal University of Ceará Geovana Cartaxo, and published in the e-book, *Do Direito Ambiental aos direitos da Natureza*,^[278] the environmental right had three development phases, every 20 years (1972-1992-2012). The dawn of the Environmental Law was the 1st United Nations Conference on the Human Environment, in 1972, in Stockholm, when the environmental thought itself first came out. The epitome took place in 1992, with the consolidation of the sustainability idea, in the Rio-92 Conference.

As of 2012, it starts to enter its twilight phase when ecocentrism is recognized in the Rio+20 Conference and the Harmony with Nature program (www.harmonywithnatureun.org) is implemented, which was heavily influenced by the Latin America’s Well-living culture.

In a twilight scenario in these transition times that led to post-modernity, the environmental law “that became only a mechanism used for the private appropriation of Nature” and “the developmentalism and its economic growth theory based on market relations” clear the way to the rights of the Mother Earth and the principle of harmony.

In the path towards utopia, we have surpassed developmentalism to reach harmony, human rights, and rights of the Mother Earth. During this journey, it is imperative to admit that “The human rights, mainly rights to life and health, depend on recognizing the rights of the Mother Earth and all other living beings.”^[279]

Regarding the Advisory Opinion on the Environment and Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights

(IACHR), according to the remarks made in the paper “*Direitos de Pachamama e direitos humanos*,”^[280] with the first edition published in the *e-book* with the same name, in 2018, recognized “the undeniable link between environmental protection and human rights” when preparing the Advisory Opinion OC-23/17 dated November 15, 2017.

This Advisory Opinion was requested by Colombia and addresses the general State obligations in relation to the environment in the context of the protection and guarantee of the rights to life and personal integrity; and, in view of the long-established environmental standards in treaties and international customary law, particularly on how to interpret the Pact of San José, when the marine environment of the Wider Caribbean region and, as a consequence, the human habitat are under risk of being seriously affected by the construction and use of new sized infrastructure works.

The IACHR, supported by article 11 of the Protocol of San Salvador and article 26 of the American Convention addressing economic, social, and cultural rights, emphasized, in its response “the relationship of interdependence and indivisibility between human rights, the environment, and sustainable development.”^[281]

While the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights used the expression “environment” and not Nature, *Pachamama*, or Mother Earth, the recognition of the interdependence and indivisibility between human rights and environmental are a starting point in the path towards the development of harmony and paves the way for the rights of Nature, *Pachamama*, or Mother Earth in the scope of international and national courts.

In the scope of the constitutional law, courts in several countries in the world are already starting to outline incipient and relevant jurisprudential guidance on the rights of Nature. This can be noticed in the cause analysis performed in the paper *Os rios nos Tribunais como sujeitos de direitos (No fluxo dos precedentes da Justiça constitucional do Equador, da Índia e da Colômbia)*, published in the book *Democracia, pluralismo y derechos humanos*,^[282] issued in 2019 by the University of Seville, Spain, and in several papers from researches of professors of the Graduate Studies Program of the Federal University of Ceará and published in the e-book “*Do Direitos Ambiental aos direitos da Natureza.*”^[283]

Among the causes analyzed, we should emphasize those proposed by Ecuador, by the Vilcabamba river;^[284] In India, by the Ganges and Yamuna rivers;^[285] and in Colombia, by the Atrato river.^[286]

These pioneering judicial decisions in Ecuador, India, and Colombia, as well as the governmental decision in New Zealand (favoring the rights of rivers) have impacts on each other. Furthermore, their impacts are so strong that prompted the dialogues of the Harmony with Nature program of the United Nations (<http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org/>) and, as a consequence, may open ways for the creation of a future Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth and motivate its contents. After the rights of *Pachamama* (Nature or Mother Earth) were approved by the Ecuador's Constitution of 2008, the first judicial decision based on this new constitutional rule and favoring other living beings (non-humans) was made in 2010, upon a proposal favoring the Vilcabamba river, with a constitutional act to protect the Nature

(Acción 010-2011) against the Provincial Government of Loja. Leaders of countries like Ecuador and Bolivia provided support to create the agreement between the New Zealand's government and the local Maori indigenous peoples so as to accept an association of trusteeship, which has its origins rooted back in the Maori concept of "kaitiakitanga." One week after the New Zealand's *Te Awe Tupua* agreement was signed, on March 15, 2017, which prompted the creation of a legal document granting the rights of the Whanganui river, the *Uttarakhand* Upper Court, in the Northern India, granted the legal entity status to Ganges and Yamuna rivers on March 20, 2017. Ten days later, on March 30, 2017, the same was applied to Himalayan mountains, glaciers, rivers, lakes, air, and forests, alleging that these rights should be equivalent to human rights. In Latin America, Colombia has one of the most important judicial victories favoring the rights of rivers. The Constitutional Court of Colombia stated that the Atrato river drainage basin should be entitled to rights and ordered the National Government to be responsible for protecting and legally representing the rights of the river by an institution appointed by the President of the Republic and ethnic communities living in the Atrato River basin region, in Chocó.

In Brazil, in the scope of the infra-constitutional law, the decision made by the Superior Court of Justice, the legal presiding body responsible for the standardization of Federal laws, the rights and dignity of non-human animals and Nature were granted during the judgment of a guardianship appeal for the Verdinho parrot (Special Appeal 1.797.175 -SP (2018 / 0031230-00)1). Ibama (Brazilian Institute of the Environment and Renewable Natural Resources) took Verdinho from Maria Angélica Caldas Uliana after

she took care of him for over twenty-three years. Ibama issued an opinion stating that Maria Angélica was not caring Verdinho properly and, since it is a wild animal, it should not be with her anymore. The Minister Og Fernandes, who reported the Special Appeal 1.797.175 SP (2018 / 0031230-00) and had a good knowledge of the current Brazilian laws, submitted the document to the Superior Court of Justice and determined, under certain conditions, the definite guardianship of Verdinho to Maria Angélica.

Several jurists and researches, who were also professors from several Brazilian universities -Cristiane Derani, Fernando Antônio de Carvalho Dantas, Germana de Oliveira Moraes, José Luiz Quadros de Magalhães, Lafayette Garcia Novaes Sobrinho, Tatiana Ribeiro de Souza, Vanessa Hasson de Oliveira, and Vitor Sousa Freitas -co-wrote the chapter “Derechos de la naturaleza en Brasil: perspectivas teóricas, prácticas y normativas,” of the book *Derechos de la naturaleza: teoría, política y práctica*, published in 2019, with comments about this preceding paradigmatic of the Superior Court of Justice, which was considered a very positive outcome. “The recognized right to a harmonious coexistence between living beings was reinforced in the scope of the Brazilian legal system, in favor of the rights of non-human beings and a new inter-relationship of harmony between humans and Nature.”^[287]

To solve the current problems due to the Covid-19 health crisis and to prevent the worsening of the existent ecological crisis, it seems that it is required for humans, both in individual and socially settings, as well as for the planet Earth and the cosmos, the creation of a theory and the implementation of practices with the purpose of sustaining, under an intercultural perspective, the legal, international

recognition of the rights of the Mother Earth, *Pachamama*, of the rights of Nature, herein as a subject qualified for its intrinsic dignity, and also the proposal of “Living in harmony with Nature” as the basic principle (*ethos*) of the legal relationships, all supported by the United Nations in a future Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth.

Therefore, in the **Harmony Manifesto** the following is proposed, based on intercultural, transdisciplinary, pluriversalist, rhizomatic, spiritual, contemplative, and aesthetic perspectives: Subject-Nature with “N” in uppercase letters; collective over private; a planetary, popular citizenship capable of constituting a global, democratic, and intercultural constitutionalism; harmony between all beings in Nature and the cosmos and the Universal Declaration of Rights of Mother Earth.

The time is now. Dialogue is the way. On the horizon, the harmony...

10. The conflict behind conflicts: the crossroads between life and death

"Nobody died today."..

[...]

*"It's normal to die, and dying only becomes alarming
when deaths multiply, during a war or an epidemic,
for example, When things depart from the norm,
You could put it like that, yes."*

José Saramago,

Death with Interruptions, 2005.

In 2020, in the Northern Hemisphere's Spring and the Southern Hemisphere's Autumn, the world faced the Covid-19 pandemics and death became alarming, yes. "Deaths multiply" and, as Saramago said, "depart from the norm." Following the daily deaths in our cities, big urban centers, in the most affected countries, and comparing the increase or decrease of deaths throughout the world rapidly became part of our routine.

Certain death, uncertain time. This is the truth that a great portion of the humanity has been denying over time. This truth is screaming in our faces. In 2020, Covid-19 deaths are not giving a break. Without interruptions, they can be seen every day. The novel coronavirus death rates are exponentially growing.

Death is unreservedly around us, human beings. Covid-19 is written in death certificates. It has a ribonucleic form, it is an RNA. And, as it suits it best, it is not visible to the unaided eyes. Even though it is only a submicroscopic form, it has led to many social disorders and mental distress. In pandemic times, the fear of death torments even more the minds and hearts of humans. Death is omnipresent with the novel coronavirus.

It is not for nothing that, in the deepest pandemics analysis, recurring reflections on death are featured. It has been remembered by philosophers, artists, economists, and thinkers of the most different humankind cultures.

Now, more than never, it is not possible to run away from the crossroads between life and death. “The struggle of Eros and Thanatos is always decided inside of us,”^[288] Freud once said. We deny Thanatos. We deny this fight. We also deny Eros, which was already agonizing, as per the South Korean philosopher Byeng Chul-Han. He speaks about a society without Eros, which “it is becoming even more narcissistic,”^[289] and “when lose all it has inside of it, cannot be free for the other.”^[290]

We try to detour from the crossroads and avoid death. When we run from death, are we not running away from life? Now we cannot run anymore. The crossroads between life and death are in the paths of everyone. For some people, death arrives silently. Inside the bodies of the sick ones, life and death are struggling. Many suffering with Covid-19 are fighting against the virus. They desperately seek public or private health care. Sometimes, it is all in vain. There are no ICUs for everyone, and to have access to them or not is a matter of life or death.

In some cases, the decision about who will live or die since there are no ICUs for everyone is transferred to the health care professionals. These professionals face the Sophia’s dilemma: they should choose the patients that will receive medical treatment to save their lives. In order to ease their minds, ethical guidance is used for the decision-making process.

After emphasizing that “usually, the consciousness of the own mortality has a very powerful effect on subjectivities”^[291] and that “the future is in dispute,”^[292] Eliana Brum tries to predict that we will know, after so many interpretations and speculations, if we are living the Genesis or the Apocalypse:

[...] if the minority, but dominant part of the humankind will remain being the hideous and suicidal virus, capable of exterminating its own species by destructing the planet-body hosting it. Or if we will stop this destruction force by reinventing ourselves as a society aware of the fact that it shares the world with other societies.^[293]

Nobody accepts the own death. Nobody wants to die. The filmmaker Woody Allen once said, “I’m not afraid of death; I just don’t want to be there when it happens.”^[294] But it is even harder to accept death when it becomes alarming. Death is final for all of us, with or without the pandemics. It is stealthy overlooking the entire humankind. We avoid facing it at any cost.

In 2014, when questioning how humankind could be legally disciplined regarding waters, other minerals, forests, animals, in the national, regional, and international scope, so as to ensure the life and future for all living beings, I wrote that

[...] once again Humankind is in the recurring crossroads between Eros and Thanatos. [...] When Humankind was almost extinct due to the World Wars in the twentieth century, we were wise and gathered together under the common idea of defending the human rights, issuing international statements and rules to protect the human and citizen rights.^[295]

I had pointed out that the hope for this multiple civilization crises we are facing (mainly the ecological crisis) is the well-living model, based on the understanding that Nature is a whole, organic, and inter-related organism, and Humankind belongs to Nature. Based on proposals in the likes of the living-well proposal, since 2009 the United Nations have been advocating for more lucid ecological awareness through the *Harmony with Nature program* (<http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org/>).

In 2020, it seems that Covid-19 deaths are not going to give a break. Without death interruptions, which were described in José Saramago's book, we can feel that, somehow, every human being is losing something with this pandemic.

The professor Fátima Limaverde says that “we should not be afraid of death, what should die instead is social inequality; the exploration of our Mother Earth and the economic model that do not prioritize our lives.”^[296]

She states that “this virus was a wake-up call to humans, so they could understand the real meaning of life.”^[297]

When death seems imposing, we remember that there is life. It shows us that life is valuable and that the meaning of life is actually life itself.... “When life dies, it cannot be resurrected,”^[298] Leonardo Boff vehemently states. “Life is reinventing itself” states the Buddhist Padma Santem, emphasizing that we are learning to meditate and think collectively.^[299]

Life and death are part of our existence. Denying death does not make you live forever. If you accept that life and death are like

twins, maybe the fear will become hope and more harmonious worlds can be dreamed of and created.

Hope also rises when Pandora opens the jar and exposes the evil. Covid-19's brand new Pandora may bring a hope message hidden reminding us that the human being, the humankind, our Mother Earth, and life can be better if we use harmony to resolve all conflicts. Will we reopen the door and free hope? It is in our hearts, in our minds, and in our hands to rebuild the inventions of these worlds that create pandemics over and over again.

You should not wait until someone can say “nobody died today,” like in Saramago’s book, or “there were no Covid-19 deaths today” to spread hope and have the trust renewed. We will make a revolution in the world together, choosing life over death. “Changes are already being conceived,”^[300] Ailton Krenak observes. “We are the revolution,”^[301] Joseph Beuys writes.

A world aware of the reciprocal interdependence between living beings does not need leaders - everyone takes his/her own responsibility.

A possible revolution in favor of life is the path to leave the pandemics behind and reach harmony. In view of the Covid-19 pandemics effects, it is possible to strengthen the living-well, living in harmony imperatives... “Living-well” as explained by Leonardo Boff,

[...] is living in harmony with yourself, with other people, with *Pachamama*, with the energies of nature, air, ground, waters, mountains, animals, and plants, and with the spirits and the Divine, based on sufficient and decent economics for everyone, including all other beings.^[302]

Afraid of dying or afraid to live?

Fernanda Teles, May 2020.

With so many uncertainties and new things going on, it seems to us that all humans are afraid. Afraid of what? Afraid of death, that unexpectedly moved out to our country, to our city, our neighborhood, our street...

However, as people say, death is an old acquaintance and the only thing certain we have in our lives... Despite that, we insist on ignoring it. We do not want death – actually, we do not accept death. We are always looking for treatments, medicines, creams, therapies, everything that can ensure more life - and a busy life, because, yes, all of these things cost a lot of money and we use them to simulate eternity or at least create a safety and happiness bubble around us, so we can be protected from death - and from life as well.

Life became the busy life, with time to wake up, to work, to eat – as fast as you can – and sleep, because tomorrow you have to wake up soon and start all over again.

Hanging out with friends, playing with the kids, petting animals, meditating, doing nothing... these are for when you have some time to spare, only, after so much work required to keep yourself inside the bubble.

Then, out of nowhere, without our permission – so cruel! – a virus invades our lives, takes everything away, haunts us, stops everything and our agenda is gone – pure madness! The time we did not have to spare is now so much longer and is now running at turtles' speed – animals so loved by Manoel de Barros.

Arts, friends, jokes, the house, and everything we did not have time before now is saving us from feeling empty – here a different kind of feeling, not that emotional numbness we were used to.

Some had their bubbles done up and created new places to fill the emptiness, but the fact is that tomorrow – that was never under our control – is not even a “perpetual possibility” anymore, and what distresses us is that we only have today - we have always had today, only, actually.

Without the possibility of “tomorrow,” we need to be stronger to live today, to clean the house and the soul... and this is enough, or everything.

I wonder if when we try to run away from death, we end up running faster to find it – in the speed of a car! We should never be late; eating fast food because there is (was) no time to cook and to enjoy the meal; being always easily startled and busy with many excessive, unnecessary stuff to get done.

Is it the death we fear so much or is to get to know ourselves better? To take care of our house, hang out with our close friends? To deal with pain or bad news?

Our bubbles are no longer able to protect us from the harsh reality, that was always there, in several ways, but now is in the form of a virus.

Having so much time to spare, it is not possible to say that there is not time to look inside ourselves anymore and our masks of “happiness” are no long fitting – they got too stuck, almost suffocating - at least for some people.

Is it really fear of death or fear of life?

A friend told me that does not know how the house survived for so long without him. How could we have lived so long without ourselves?

Citing Fernando Pessoa, I hope that the Child Jesus that lives inside us all awakes and teaches how to look at things; points out all the colors that can be found in flowers; shows how funny the stones are when we take them in the hand and look slowly at them.

EPILOGUE: the path from pandemics towards harmony

Humankind, throughout its brief history on the planet Earth, had already recovered from other epidemics and should recover from the negative impacts from this global Covid-19 crisis which, as a complex fact, according to Ignacio Ramonet, shakes the social relations and moves all players, institutions, and values.^[303] However, the recovery will be “serious and possibly horrendous, mainly to poor and most vulnerable people,”^[304] states Noam Chomsky. To him, the global reach of the Covid-19 crisis overcomes the fear of polar ice caps melting and other devastating global warming consequences – which can damage the world without chance of recovery.

This fear contributes to the extended consciousness of disgrace and misfortune resulting from an imminent global ecological emergency, which has already been warned as devastating, tragic, and that will exterminate the human species. This extended consciousness arises in the chaos as one of the “potentially beneficial side effects of the epidemic,”^[305] and, according to Slavoj Žižek, we should “not be afraid of pointing them out.”^[306] Ecological awareness clears the path for our life or death choice, the conflict beyond all human conflicts.

Human conflicts came out pretty fast from the Pandora’s jar opened by the Covid-19 pandemics. We got trapped by the Eros and Thanatos dilemma and, to escape from our dystopian-like spaces, we were (and are) obliged to remind ourselves about the importance of values. The crisis due to the pandemics led us to face a crisis regarding the meaning of life, which is the genesis of all the other crisis.

Christian Dunker says that “It’s as if, when we are faced with the prospect of dying, we would realize that there is no meaning to life.”^[307] Life meaning crises flow to crisis of values, and the only way out, as stated by Joseph Stiglitz in the 2020 World Economic Forum in Davos, is to come out with a solution for the capitalism and climate crises, which were discussed back there. Now, with the outburst of the Covid-19 crisis, he confirms his point of view, saying that “there is nothing like a pandemic to focus attention on what really matters.”^[308]

The awareness for life styles in harmony with Nature, ourselves, the cosmos, and the community is the right path to be taken towards the emancipatory and basic utopia, which can be seen on the horizon and is within reach for humans beings individually and for the humankind, as a collective group.

Nowadays science is getting closer to the myths and spirituality. They converge when affirm that creativity arises from conflicts and chaos. Curiously, conflicts between cosmic beings led to the cosmic organization of life. Conflicts created life and the cosmos. If you clap your hands, a sound comes out. From the union of two different and complementary beings (father and mother), a third different person is born (the child). Despite the conflicts we face in the journey, the horizon shows us harmony.

The Covid-19 pandemic forced us to go back home, face the shadows inside of us, and face family conflicts. It exposed the damages done to the Mother Earth, the cosmic, spiritual dimension, and the community. When we get back to ourselves and light the darkness of our hearts, the keys to run all the way to the starry sky are found. When we get back to our cosmic home and restore the

spiritual dimension of the human beings, the paths towards the common house are opened. Humans reconcile with Mother Earth and all other beings co-existing with them, restore the visceral interdependence between all living beings, and remembers the consciousness of harmony between complementary beings.

During this journey, humans face many crossroads: me vs. the other; new vs. old; economy vs. life; State vs. communities vs. globalization; dystopias vs. utopia; human rights vs. rights of Nature; eventually, when all veils covering the eyes of the humankind will be removed and, once free from outdated duality concepts, they will understand what really matters. What really matters for us, as Earth pilgrims, is to keep walking... With death always around us, possibly preventing us from breathing, we can learn to value life and awake for the joy of living in harmony!

During the pandemics, hope keeps trying to get out of the Pandora's jar. The Covid-19 pandemics lightened the dark, apocalyptic path of death that was being followed until now. They give us the opportunity to choose a new, bright path towards life in harmony and to do that, we should reflect and change our values and habits.

"When life dies, it cannot be resurrected,"^[309] Leonardo Boff vehemently states. According to him, the Earth demands respect to its limits and rhythm, and a different sustainability attitude from us, who are its sons and daughters — the Mother Earth itself thinks, feels, loves, worships, and cares. We should care about her as we care about ourselves.

She does not need us. We need her. Our presence may not be required anymore. But she will continue spinning through

space, but without us - those who damaged her that bad. We love life and are intelligent beings, so we can change our destiny.^[310]

Hopefully, for every life or death choice we make, life prevails, with the purpose of retaining the consequences of future ecological catastrophes, and with Eros as our guide... Hopefully we can realize, feel, and understand that we are all part of a network, bound together by mutual interdependence relationships, so as to guide our decisions and actions with solidarity towards harmony...

Harmony is the art of gathering people and things together... Like when children are playing with Lego construction toys.

More than no conflicts at all, harmony means, according to a Brazilian Portuguese Language Dictionary, a “combination of elements connected as per their relevance, that produces an agreeable and pleasant feeling.” Etymologically, it means “to fit, to combine,” a combination of the Indo-European *harmos* “body joint, shoulder” and *ar*, “to fit, articulate.” Its semantic field evokes combination, consonance, balance, agreement, adjustment, complementarity, symmetry, reconciliation. It also refers to the idea of musical harmony. The word comes from the Greek “harmonia,” as “sound adjustment, combination, tuning” and in many languages it means “musical consonance.”^[311]

Music and arts are shortcuts for harmony, and they make the transitions from chaos to cosmos, duality to unity, and conflicts uncovered by the pandemics to harmony easier. It seems impossible to refuse an appeal made by Pope Francis, when he asks to “let us awaken our God-given aesthetic and contemplative sense,”^[312] in the book he wrote about life after the pandemics. Music, poems, arts, in

all of their expressions, are the credentials of our humanity. They bring the past and future together, transform pain into beauty, and make the path toward harmony shorter and more pleasing.

From the chaos created or exposed by the pandemics or otherwise, we can change or retain the climate change consequences and reorganize them, by getting our hopes up not only in a utopian future that never comes, but in the present times and in the paths towards harmony, which should be the guiding star to our daily choices and life styles. Thus, it is possible to defend and apply the concept of “harmony with Nature” as the consciousness and awareness in this twentieth-first century (which seems to have finally begun) to replace the sustainable development paradigm, with the support of a multidisciplinary team that has been making a great job with the UN *Harmony with Nature* program (<http://www.harmonywithnatureun.org/>).

The Brazilian diplomat Sérgio Vieira de Mello used to say, when he worked to protect human rights in the United Nations, that “We should keep walking and the rest will come naturally”^[313].

The ecological conversion depends on the human conversion; both are crucial for the path to leave the pandemics behind and reach harmony. “To reach Good, we need to learn how to be human.” The song should echo inside our hearts, so we can keep breathing, walking, and living well, with art and intelligence, in the arms of the beauty and generous Mother Earth... Thus, we can continue being “the Earth that moves,” according to the musician Atahualpa Yupanqui...

Let’s keep walking down the path, from pandemics towards harmony... After all, just keep walking... Mia Couto reminds us that

walking down the path is the dream: “As long as people dream, the road will stay alive. That’s what roads are for, to make the future our kin.”[\[314\]](#)

The time is now. Dialogue is the way. On the horizon, the Harmony...

*Germana de Oliveira Moraes,
in the Festival of Humanity, Full Moon (2020)*

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