GARRISON INSTITUTE

PATHWAYS TO PLANETARY HEALTH

Symposium

REPORT

INTRODUCTION

In early March, 2020, just as the COVID-19 pandemic was beginning to grip the U.S., the Garrison Institute held a symposium on “Pathways to Planetary Health: Ethics in the Age of the Anthropocene” at its renovated monastery on the Hudson River in Garrison, New York. It was a by-invitation, three-day meeting of over 50 leading practitioners of applied ecology, conservation, impact investing, and sustainable business together with cosmologists, ethicists, journalists, meditation teachers, Native American elders, philosophers, physicians, researchers, students, theologians, and writers. The program was grounded in the Institute’s mission: to apply the wisdom that arises from contemplation and insights derived from science to today’s pressing social and environmental issues to create a more compassionate resilient future.

The symposium took place at a pivotal, disrupted time in history, situated on a line of demarcation between two epochs, seeking fresh insights into what had come before and grappling with what was coming soon after. It was one of the last in-person, face-to-face gatherings before the COVID-19 lockdown, exploring what it would take to reorient societies toward planetary health, grounded in the inseparability of ecological and human systems. On the cusp of massive social unrest, just days before the death of Breonna Taylor and ten weeks before the murder of George Floyd, the symposium strove to articulate a path to social, economic and environmental justice.

Within a few weeks, the lockdown would illustrate how changing human behavior at scale, could have immediate, positive ecological impacts on everything from reductions of greenhouse gas emissions to wildlife resurgence. But the long-term effects of our decades of behaviors also manifested in a summer of record heat, storms, fires, and other climate-related disruptions.

Unfortunately, these COVID 19 declines in environmental impacts were matched by the economic declines, closing millions of small businesses, and putting up to 40 million people out of work. More than one quarter of American people suffered from food insecurity, at the same time dairy farmers dumped tens of millions of gallons of milk because of the lack of infrastructure to get it to those in need. Meanwhile, the nation’s health care systems struggled to keep up with the pandemic’s waves.

These conditions have exacerbated the growing anxiety about the results of human management of the planet, and a deep yearning for pathways that could heal our social, economic, and ecological ills.

Although we didn’t know then exactly how the multi-layered crisis we’re now living through would unfold, symposium participants were well aware of the momentousness of the time. We talked explicitly, almost presciently, about how those who live through epoch-making transitions rarely see their full historical import, which often only becomes clear in hindsight.

Today, six months later, it’s clearer than ever that the discussions at the 2020 Pathways to Planetary Health symposium contained some insight into our disrupted, transitional time in history, illuminating how this period of crisis and existential threat, might also become the springboard to a more resilient, regenerative future.

PATHWAYS TO PLANETARY HEALTH: ETHICS AND THE ANTHROPOCENE

THE ANTHROPOCENE

The concept and the term “Anthropocene” has a long history.

The first European scientist to write of nature as a vast, integrated system was Alexander Humbolt. In 1800, he observed the relationship between deforestation and local climate change, and how climate influenced everything, He was probably the first to argue that human activities affected the climate, and thus the entire life system.

In 1873, Antonio Stoppani, a Catholic priest turned geology professor, wrote about “ the Anthropozoic era” in his Corso di Geologia. He argued that human influence was everywhere in the natural world, and that while that may have only been the case for a “handful of centuries” so far, it would continue long into the future.

In 1922, Russian scientist Aleksei Pavlov suggested the current geological era be called the “anthropogène.” The phrase gained traction in Soviet circles and was adopted in 1963 to denote the geological era of the last 2.6 million years. Also in the 1920s Vladimir Vernadsky, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Edouard Le Roy used the term “Noösphere” to denote how human thought and behavior could have decisive impacts on the geophysical evolution of the planet, an idea popularized in 2000 by atmospheric chemist Paul J. Crutzen.

In 1992 Andrew Revkin, who helped plan and attended our symposium, coined the term “anthrocene” to describe “the explosive growth in our numbers, resource appetites and environmental footprint since around 1950,” which was later widely adopted and amended to “Anthropocene,” meaning the geologic age we’re now living in, in which humans are the dominant influence on the Earth’s environment and climate.

The Anthropocene calls on us to recognize that humans have radically altered the planet, and we are therefore deeply responsible for the health of the earth’s systems. We have driven biodiversity loss for 20,000 years, epidemics for 10,000 years, and ecological damage for centuries. These dynamic, accelerating processes are now endemic. We can only reverse the degradation of planetary health with concerted human action on a planetary scale.

The symposium explored the moral implications of human impact on the biosphere, our responsibility for reversing it, and the values and ethics required to serve the common good and enable a regenerative future. This moral and ethical focus grew out of the first Pathways to Planetary Health symposium, which was held in 2018, and investigated four overarching pathways to planetary health:

1. Half-Earth – Conserving half of the earth's land and sea to safeguard biodiversity and create the conditions for ecosystem regeneration, as proposed by the great sociobiologist E.O. Wilson, whose work deeply informed the 2018 and 2020 symposia.

2. Ecological Civilization – Shifting human activities from ecologically degenerative ones to regenerative ones, using technologies such as renewable energy, regenerative agriculture, biologically derived materials, etc.

3. Regenerative Economics – An adaptive form of capitalism that rewards regenerative contributions to the social, ecological and economic commons.

4. Morality and Ethics – The search for overarching, guiding values of the common good, moral systems that can shift collective behaviors toward environmental, social, and inter-generational justice.

These four pathways are all interrelated. The 2020 Pathways to Planetary Health symposium focused primarily on the last of the four – the Ethics of the Anthropocene – for two reasons.

First, ecologically based values, moral systems and resultant ethics are the foundation of the other pathways, the ground from which human behavior grows. The way we think powerfully conditions the way we act. **Holding values and ethics attuned to the needs of the Anthropocene is a prerequisite for acting effectively on the other fronts – conservation, cutting emissions, protecting biodiversity, and shifting to regenerative systems.** As E. O. Wilson wrote at the end of his book *Half-Earth: Our Planet's Fight for Life*, "Only a major shift in moral reasoning, with greater commitment given to the rest of life, can meet this greatest challenge of the century."

Second, the Garrison Institute 's core expertise is in the understanding of the mental models and frameworks that enable systems change, and how they can be applied to shift behaviors.

For example, in 2008, the Institute launched its Climate, Mind and Behavior program, integrating recent findings from the behavioral and social sciences, evolutionary theory, and psychology about the drivers of human behavior, in order to generate new thinking about behavioral-driven climate solutions. The program integrated contemplative traditions, academic research, and practical applications to propose ways of shifting environmentally impactful behaviors at scale. On the contemplative side, we drew from compassion practices to expand care for the well-being of all of life. On the academic side, we brought together systems thinkers from diverse fields such as neuroscience, behavioral economics and other social sciences, together with climate movement leaders and others, in order to delineate key leverage points for shifting human behavior. We built networks of sustainability leaders in over 100 cities, many states, and several federal agencies, who continue to collaborate and apply these learnings, developing practical behavioral strategies for reducing energy consumption and GHG emissions.

When the Pathways to Planetary Health program launched in 2018, it drew on these two streams explored by the earlier Climate, Mind and Behavior program: morals and ethics; and behavioral insights. PPH seeks to combine them in actionable ways leading to practical, scalable solutions.

In this search for solutions, moral and ethical questions are far from trivial. In his most recent book *Genesis: The Deep Origins of Society*, E. O. Wilson observes that altruism is the essential element in every great transition in the evolution of life, from the formation of the first cell to what he called humans' social conquest of the earth. Altruism is also essential in the next transition, the pathway to planetary health.

Samuel Myers, Karenna Gore and Victor Masayesva

WHAT IS PLANETARY HEALTH?

The 2020 Pathways to Planetary Health symposium was conceived as a search for a contemporary ethics of the common good, shared well-being, and societal altruism. Those themes ran through discussions at the symposium, but others also emerged, enhancing the way we viewed these propositions.

The symposium proposed expanding the notion of planetary health beyond current definitions. The Planetary Health Alliance, a consortium of universities and NGOs, defines planetary health as "a field focused on characterizing the human health impacts of human-caused disruptions of Earth's natural systems." **The PPH symposium considered planetary health as encompassing the health of all ecosystems and species on the planet. It's a view of the common good that includes but is not limited to humans.**

Monica Gagliano, Research Associate Professor in Evolutionary Ecology at the University of Western Australia, writes that all species collect information about their environmental conditions and shift their behaviors in response, and thus have forms of consciousness. She proposed that they all have subjectivity, sentience, and ethical standing.

PPH symposium participants also took a broad, holistic view of "health" as a continual evolution towards greater systemic balance, an ongoing journey rather than a fixed destination. The symposium explored what principles values and ethics can guide us on that journey.

The opportunity of the Anthopocene is to embrace individual and collective human agency as a force for regeneration rather than degeneration. Planetary health, like climate change or biodiversity loss, is not a static end-state, but a dynamic process. **Regeneration entails adapting human behavior and human systems to align with natural systems and foster health, justice, and sustainability.**

That work will never be finished. It's predictable that there will be many new disruptions to work through. Our collective social, economic, technical and political systems will need to evolve continuously towards generating a healthier and more just future.

This report describes the discussions and key learnings of the PPH symposium, including the guiding values and ethics participants proposed, and how they might be applied. These arose from thoughtful, introspective, rich discussions punctuated by contemplative exercises, Native American rituals, small group sessions, shared meals, informal gatherings, and generative side conversations. The discussions are still evolving as symposium participants continue their exchanges via the Institute's online Pathways to Planetary Health learning hub.

KEY THEMES FROM THE SYMPOSIUM

The following is a summary of the five key themes that emerged in the course of the symposium. For a more detailed description of the presentations and discussions that took place at the symposium, see Proceedings of the 2020 Pathways to Planetary Health Symposium.

Addressing the Challenges of the Anthropocene Through a Planetary Health Framework

Until recently, the health of humans and the health of the planet were viewed as separate realms. For example, the 1950s "green revolution" in agriculture, which used chemical pesticides and fertilizers to significantly increase crop yields, was lauded for reducing global malnutrition. However, it also caused diseased soils, pest-infested crops, chemical contamination, and overexploited groundwater. These are now threatening not only the ecologies of the places that were "revolutionized," but also the livelihoods and health of the farmers and communities that the revolution was designed to serve.

Andy Revkin

"We need to do everything differently: food, chemicals, manufacturing, cities, business, economics," said Sam Myers, MD, Ph. D., the founder and director of the Planetary Health Alliance.

The field of Planetary Health provides a contemporary scientific framework for recognizing that humans are part of natural systems, and that at the most practical level, when we damage an ecosystem, we damage ourselves. It integrates the health of human and natural systems, seeking solutions that optimize both.

To achieve this requires significant changes in our mindsets and the behaviors they generate, in particular, looking beyond the Western cultural mindset. Other ways of thinking and behaving are possible. The predominantly Western, educated, industrialized, rich and democratic (WEIRD) worldview is only one of many. There are in estimated 6909 extant languages and over 3814 distinct cultures in the world. Many of these are grounded in concepts of planetary health, and have cultural practices that support pro-health behaviors. The Pathways to Planetary Health program serves to help build bridges to those alternatives, and make conscious choices about the mental models we adopt in pursuit of planetary health.

That pursuit requires a different moral, ethical, psychological, and spiritual relationship between humans and nature than the one that obtains in the dominant paradigm today. The PPH symposium's indigenous participants reminded us that achieving such relationship is possible, and that it can not only help release nature's regenerative capacity, but also our own capacity as "regenerative humans." As David Attenborough said, "If we take care of nature, nature will take care of us... We can become a species in balance with nature. We just need the will to do so."

REINTEGRATING THE NATURAL WORLD AND HUMAN CULTURES

Noted writer and ecological thinker Paul Hawken points out, after a natural disturbance such as an earthquake or fire, nature naturally knows how to heal itself. Human cultures, if they are to survive and thrive in this era of complexity and uncertainty, must also cultivate regenerative capacities. when regenerative capacity pervades a culture, it shifts mindsets and behaviors towards systemic health.

Keith Bowers, is a landscape architect and restoration ecologist. who has spent his career nurturing regeneration in places where humans have done some of the worst damage. Presenting at the symposium, he observed that restoring ecosystems begins inside ourselves, with our own personal sense of place and relationship with nature. He suggests we begin with reclaiming wildness in the landscapes where we live and work, the places and ecosystems we're personally intimate with and care most about. The key, he says, with "re-forging our own personal relationship to the natural world and recognizing our own integral participation in it, shifting our awareness from the Anthropocentric to the eco-centric."

Marcelo Gleiser, a theoretical physicist at Dartmouth College, specializes in particle cosmology, which connects the very smallest things in the universe with understanding the universe as a whole. To make sense of the world and our place in it, he studies the emergence of complex structures in nature, focusing on what he calls the "three origins:" cosmos, life, and mind. Human minds and lives are connected to the cosmos, but the Anthropocentric view of our position in it is blinkered and egoistic, and treats the natural world reductively. Gleiser is using modern astrophysics to construct a kind of new cosmological myth to help us understand the we are emanations of the natural world.

Eco-centric awareness runs deep in Native American cultures, a core value of which has been described as a "riot of reciprocity," where taking and giving back to the earth and one another suffuses indigenous social, economic and environmental practices. It's a holistic view in which the human world is an embedded part of the natural world, with no distinction between the two – people are part of nature, and nature is personal. "The earth is not a business," said Grandfather Rankin, an Elder of the Anishinaabe people of Quebec. "Give love to it. It is not an object. It is a mother. And when she suffers, we suffer. And when you suffer, she suffers."

Diana Rose, co-founder of the Garrison Institute, observed that when we tune into the interdependency of the world (both the natural and human world), and experience a decentering of the self, ethical behavior arises naturally.

Grandfather Dominique Rankin and Mindahi Bastida

ADOPTING A NEW ETHICS FOR THE ANTHROPOCENE

"What are our moral obligations across space, time and species?" asked Karenna Gore, the Director of the Center for Earth Ethics at Union Theological Seminary, "What are the implications of those moral obligations for how we behave and act every day? This is the field of ethics. Ethics are particularly important when a deep sense of right and wrong are out of step with law and culture, as they are today. The drivers of ecological destruction are perfectly legal and encouraged by our culture. Given the scale of suffering that we know will occur if we continue on this trajectory, how do we make sense of this? There is a concept of structural evil. It easily masks as good."

Gore noted that Bill Mckibben includes Gandhian nonviolence on the list of "technologies" that can help us solve climate change. In fact, moral and ethical interventions might be just as important or even more important than technological ones, because they determine human choices and behavior. **Shifting human behavior at scale is more than a matter of scaling up technologies; it requires transforming our mental frameworks.**

Mary Evelyn Tucker, Senior Lecturer and Research Scholar at Yale University's School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, Divinity School and Religious Studies Department asked, "what is the cosmological shift that is needed to achieve this transformation?" In her view it has to be grounded in wonder, awe, and joy, as well as grief for that which is being lost.

Tucker led the symposium in an exploration of Confucian cosmology, which combines the virtues of science, contemplation and compassionate action as the framework for an altruistic society. She called it "a cosmic, ecological context with symbolic consciousness" which "awakens in the human the largest identity we can possible imagine and reimagine for ourselves. And that is a source of awe for action, of wonder for transformation, of beauty of justice, for comprehensive compassion, based on grace… care, love in the Christian tradition, *tikun olam* in the Jewish tradition, *karuna* in the Buddhist tradition, and humaneness in the Confucian tradition–comprehensive compassion for the whole. Each of the virtues in this tradition has a cosmological component… so that you are in resonance with the creativity of the universe."

Tucker's mentor, **Thomas Berry, wrote, "The universe is not a collection of objects, it is a communion of subjects."** He went on to write, "The devastation of the planet can be seen as a direct consequence of the loss of this capacity for human presence to and reciprocity with the nonhuman world." Repairing the devastation and reestablishing presence with the nonhuman world is a subjective, symbolic act of communion, in which art, poetry, myth, religion, values, and ethics come into play.

John Fullerton and Sabene Selassie

Demo Rinpoche

In particular the world's spiritual traditions, and how they connect to science and ecology, can help guide us along pathways to planetary health. As Tucker says, **"Science may elucidate the objective facts of our ecological predicament, but we still have a need and a predisposition to understand it subjectively and symbolically, with spirituality and human dignity and emotional sensibility."**

Humans generally aren't objective in how they perceive the predicaments and changes of their own time. Theologist and Reformation scholar Rev. Dr. Serene Jones observed that the epoch-making shifts in consciousness of the Reformation were scarcely perceptible to the people who lived through it. They were only recognized after a certain tipping point was reached.

"They did not think they were giving us the Reformation," Jones said. "Only in hindsight could history see the magnitude of the change. But if we are gestating some new shift in consciousness in our own time, that process can't be separated from the very real existential threats we face. **We can't talk about pathways to planetary health without reckoning with our own potential for non-being as a species and a planet.** We could cease to exist. It's powerful to think about what happens when we open up to our massive fear of death, and how wrestling with death and coming to peace with it can open up the possibility of a radically changed life."

That points back to possibility of adopting new values, ethics and mental constructs that can guide our pursuit of health and regeneration. The symposium examined many familiar ones from European traditions – grace, justice, love, mercy, and compassion – and many non-European traditions, especially Native American and Confucian teachings, discussing what they might mean and help us accomplish amid the disruptions of our time. Part of the point of consciously examining and choosing which values and mental models to adopt is that we're already harboring unconscious ones that have led us to the current crisis. But if we change the framing, consciously chose our values, and recognize and shift the conditions we unconsciously create, then we can change the world.

PLANETARY HEALTH AS PROCESS, NOT OBJECT; A VERB RATHER THAN A NOUN

In what sense is society making progress towards the objective of planetary health? Ambitious climate goals like the Paris accords or financing schemes to help developing countries sequester carbon aren't reaching their targets. In fact, the whole proposition of "climate solutions" may be doomed to failure, because of the reductive way it's framed, viewing climate change as a carbon pollution problem, and climate solution as an objective, static end-state where the pollution is reduced below a certain threshold. In reality, climate change is a complex, dynamic set of many processes. "We need to move from conventional, mechanistic, reductionist [view]" to sustainability, said impact investor and economist John Fullerton, but sustainability is "an ongoing, ever-evolving upward spiral," not a steady state or a box to check.

Andy Revkin, Director of Initiative on Communication Innovation and Impact at Columbia University's Earth Institute, said he avoids using terms like "climate crisis" or "climate emergency" because they contribute to a reifying or objectifying tendency to treat climate change as a "thing" or a single entity instead of a complex, continuously unfolding process.

Our current degenerative paradigm is based on seeing the world as objects, with fixed states, versus the Eastern and indigenous worldviews of everything as a process.

Award-winning Hopi filmmaker Victor Masayesva noted that the West describes "being" as a noun, while Hopi and other Native cultures embody it as a verb. This was a revelation to many Western-enculturated participants of the symposium.

This "object bias," a deep tendency toward objectification in the European worldview, cropped up in many different contexts throughout the symposium. Participants often identified it with the history of colonialism, slavery, and exploitation that underlie our current economic system. Some connected it to our current atomized view of society and one another that reduces human relationships and our vision of community – what Thomas Berry called "a collection of objects" as opposed to "a communion of subjects."

Revkin described how subjective value judgments often lurk behind what purport to be objective scientific or technical decisions, and run rampant in our climate discourse. "That's why the conversation here [around values and ethics] is so deeply important," he said.

Many spoke of the need to de-objectify the current discourse on climate change, which is largely a one-way download of narrowly framed, jargon-loaded scientific information that fails to connect, even with otherwise well-educated, well-informed people. To be compelling, public discourse about climate change needs to break away from object bias, become more aware of its own subjective assumptions, and consciously choose values and ethics that connect with audiences and serve the common good.

Eric Poettschacher, Diana Rose, Dan Siegel Jonathan Rose

But to connect, it must be an inclusive discourse, led not only by scientists, academics, thought leaders and other elites, but also by youth, indigenous people, people of color, and low-income communities. “There is a huge segment of people who can’t wrap minds around this conversation,” said one participant, an African American divinity student from a low-income community. “People on the ground in inner cities will do whatever they can to survive….[Planetary health] is not even a topic for them”

NEW FRAMEWORKS FOR BUILDING SOCIETIES OF SHARED WELL-BEING

“What might a positive vision of human flourishing be?” Bill Vendley, Secretary General Emeritus of the World Conference of Religions for Peace, asked the symposium. His answer recalled Thomas Berry’s communion of subjects: **“shared well-being and the balanced comportment of the community of beings.”**

To build such a future, we must adopt the ethics of care for the common good, and implement them in our behavior, both as individuals and as societies. Ethical behaviors are framed by larger social, governance, and economic systems. For example, government regulations permit or interdict certain behaviors, establishing the minimum level of destructive behaviors allowable, instead of aspiring the the maximum level of positive behaviors possible. We need systems that will maximize positive, pro-environment, pro-climate, and pro-health behaviors, and draw us towards a regenerative future.

Capitalism is one of the most powerful framing systems and one of the most powerful influences on individual and social behavior. Many of the symposium’s participants are successful impact investors or investment managers, working to generate financial returns for their clients or themselves while achieving environmental or social good. Some wrestled with the inherent contradictions of capitalism, asking **“How can we ‘succeed’ in a system that is failing?”** Others made the case that capitalism consciously applied is key to solving our problems. How capital gets invested is now the most important question,” said John Fullerton, the founder of the Capital Institute.

Fullerton coined the term **“regenerative economics,” which he defines as “the application of nature’s laws and patterns of systemic health, self-organization, and self-renewal to the vitality of socio-economic systems.”** Its core values include maintaining the “right relationship” with nature, balancing stakeholder needs, honoring community and place, and “holistic participation” where all parts of the system are in relationship with the larger whole. Grounded in these values, Fullerton is working to reimagine finance, and move it toward an integral or regenerative system. Under such a system, investments that degrade the common good (human and/or planetary)_would fail, just as mutations that harm their environment fail in nature, while those that enhance it thrive.

Adam Smith’s *Theory of Moral Sentiments* proposed a framework for understanding the role of virtue in civic and commercial life. Regenerative economics is one contemporary sign among many others that “moral sentiments” are beginning to infuse the worlds of investment and finance. Some symposium participants predicted that climate change will drive that process forward, by reaching a tipping point past which

Marcello Gleiser

finance must be transformed. “It’s going to change modern portfolio theory, asset allocation and risk reduction return,” one participant said. “Planetary systems, society, humanity, ecosystems [will] become the fundamental factors driving everything else. That’s when I think we are finally going to shift and move to a new paradigm.”

The shift will require making a vast number of decisions to be made, set in a larger moral framework, guided by personal ethics, implemented in practical ways to change behavior at scale. The symposium explored precedents and examples that might model the shift.

One of them is the clothing company Patagonia. Vincent Stanley, Patagonia’s Director of Philosophy, described how they conceived and implemented their decision to phase out nonorganic cotton and use only organic cotton in its supply chain. Conventional cotton is produced in extremely unsustainable, degenerative ways, poisoning and wasting the land, water and workers with chemicals. But a dearth of organic producers made transitioning away from it complex, expensive, and potentially disruptive. Making the shift would require inventing ways to retool the company’s supply chain that didn’t exist yet.

To show their employees why this was worthwhile, Patagonia took an experiential approach. It bussed its staff to visit non-organic cotton fields and to see and smell for themselves how conventional cotton production assaults humans and nature. “I think it is important that we connect to people on the basis of experience,” Stanley said.”(We are learning that) connecting tangibility with values in the way that we are communicating is really essential.”

Nili Gilbert and Mary Evelyn Tucker

Valerie Belanger and Jonathan Wiesner

Vincent Stanley and Michael Fitzpatrick

PROGRESS TOWARD PLANETARY HEALTH

The theme of "progress" was woven through the symposium, and it's appropriate to ask, how far have we progressed along the pathways to planetary health? The answer, objectively speaking, is not far, though there are signs that the understandings and mental frameworks needed for change at scale are beginning to emerge.

For example, while the area of preserved wild lands and ocean continues to decline, our knowledge of the benefits of re-wilding is growing, and early efforts are underway. Human population and its consumption continues to grow, swamping our efforts to reduce emissions. But the rate population growth has begun to slow, and new decarbonization pathways are emerging, including electrification of our building and transportation systems, which envision a carbon-free economy. For now, capitalist markets and economies still confer the lion's share of their benefits on the wealthy and treat the environment, the climate and well-being as externalities instead of pricing them in. Yet there are significant efforts underway to change that, such as regenerative economics and the wellbeing economies of Scotland, Iceland and New Zealand. They are adopting integrative solutions, enacting more caring and inclusive policies, and soliciting and welcoming the contributions of diverse communities and non-elites.

Such movements represent the early research and development of the foundations of an altruistic society and a regenerative future. But as we discussed at the symposium, framing our outlook as a question of "progress," traveling the "rest of the way" down the path, finding a "solution" to the climate "problem" and arriving at our future "goal," are definitional examples of object bias. Progress toward planetary health is a dynamic, ongoing process, like climate change itself.

Making objective progress toward a regenerative future is not linear, not terminable, and not only subjective. It has a strong subjective element, because shifting behavior at scale requires adopting new values, ethics, and mental models. That isn't a matter of flipping a switch, or of solely intellectual conviction, but also of reflection, dialogue, ethics, values, art, story, myth, faith, contemplation, and engagement of the whole self.

The symposium was designed to open a space for this level of engagement. Marcelo Gleiser opened the discussion by telling the cosmological story of life, from the big bang to our current civilization. Nili Gilbert immersed us in impactful investment. Terry Tempest Williams read us her stories, Vincent Stanley a poem. Sabene Salassi and Dan Siegel lead us in meditations. Andy Revkin led a band of music makers in our local Hudson Valley song tradition of Pete Seeger. And the symposium ended with Grandmother Marie Jose Rankin singing a radiantly beautiful song of the Anishinaabe people, and Victor Masayesva and Grandfather Rankin holding a fire ceremony with tobacco and sage, dedicating our efforts to the well-being of all.

While we may not have progressed far down the pathways to planetary health objectively speaking, in terms of process, something valuable has begun. The symposium offered a glimpse sense of the progress and potential shifts in awareness percolating within us and our culture, which may enable more objective progress in the future. Going forward, the Pathways to Planetary Health program will contribute further to the gestation of these ideas, and especially to the formulation of an ethics for the Anthropocene, so that one day soon, we may look back on our troubled times and recognize them as an epoch-making turning point, the dawn of a transition to a regenerative future. ■

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Garrison Institute expresses thanks to the funders, partners, symposium participants, steering committee members, and Garrison Institute staff members who made and continue to make indispensable contributions to Pathways to Planetary Health program.

PPH programmatic partners include:

Capital Institute capitalinstitute.org

Center for Earth Ethics centerforearthethics.org

The Earth Institute of Columbia University earth.columbia.edu

E. O. Wilson Biodiversity Foundation eowilsonfoundation.org

Half Earth Project half-earthproject.org

Hastings Center thehastingscenter.org

Planetary Health Alliance planetaryhealthalliance.org

Union Theological Seminary utsnyc.edu

Yale Forum on Religion and Ecology fore.yale.edu

Funding for the 2020 PPH symposium was generously provided by the Lostand Foundation

To all who walked this path with us, we're deeply grateful.

"If you do not change direction, you may end up where you are heading"

- Siddhārtha Gautama

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