

Michel Serres Institute

Charter for Acting According to the Natural Contract

The explosion, since the 1950s, of interactions between economic activities and natural processes has altered the planet's major biogeochemical cycles, affecting the dynamics of the System that human societies form with the Earth. The continued growth on which the political viability of the global socio-economic system depends disrupts the global physical, chemical and biological conditions of the ecosystems that have regulated the human environment for millennia. However, the biosphere is as much the condition as the product of the emergence of all the forms of life that constitute it. To "live well" within the ecological limits of the planet, production and consumption systems, which are the root cause of environmental and climatic pressures, must therefore evolve. *These transformations imply profound changes in dominant institutions, practices, technologies, policies, lifestyles and ways of thinking because they challenge the conventional separation established by modernity between humanity and nature.*

In 1990, Michel Serres published *The Natural Contract* to meet these conditions, which were unprecedented in the history of humanity. By recognizing all natural beings as subjects of law, the Natural Contract imagines a symbiotic organization of interactions between humans and other living beings to learn to inhabit the new Earth that is being born before our eyes.

But, beyond the natural contract, it is the entire work of Michel Serres that tends towards this paradigm shift to which the disruptions that the Earth is experiencing inevitably leads us.

This is why the Institute legitimately bears the name of Michel Serres by setting itself the objective of establishing the principles that support the public institutions of a just transition towards an ecologically and socially unified society. The Michel Serres Institute thus commits itself to work not only for the conservation and preservation but also for the restoration, regeneration and enhancement of the ecological resources that constitute the commons on which the long-term fulfilment of human needs depends.

In this respect, the present generations must ensure precisely that the resources necessary for the common health of living environments, of the people and of the societies they compose, are guaranteed to succeeding generations by taking due account of the long duration of the evolution of living organisms.

It is clear, finally, that we are not acting in accordance with what we know, and therefore we must urgently create conditions favourable to the emergence of educational models based on a peaceful relationship with the Earth. We must learn to use natural resources well rather than exploit them, to put them at the service of collective needs rather than individual profits, to renew them rather than consume them. The Michel Serres Institute is above all a living school prioritizing processes of knowledge resulting from listening to, and cooperation with, all social actors.

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