



## The Nature Institute

Dear Friends,

As we write you this letter in early April, we are in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic. From The Nature Institute we send our good thoughts your way—for you, your families, friends, and colleagues.

This pandemic, and the global response to it, brings humanity into a wholly new situation. Thousands of people have passed away and many more thousands have fallen ill. Virtually all people on the earth are isolating and having to learn to lead a different kind of daily life. As people buy fewer goods and partake in fewer services, millions of workers lose their jobs. Humanity faces an uncertain future as much of the consume-driven world economy disintegrates. Who knows where things will stand when you receive this issue of *In Context*?

Looking to non-human nature during this time, we can, for example, see how air pollution coming from cities has lessened, and the sky is disburdened of immense airplane traffic. There is a quiet in nature that contrasts so starkly with all the concerns we human beings carry in our souls.

The contrast between our human-created world, with all its complexities and uncertainties, and the other-than-human natural world seems especially vivid at this time. On my daily morning walks I have been observing how the buds of trees are beginning to open—first the aspens, then the red maples; the oaks and hickories still waiting. On the grounds of the Institute, crocuses have emerged from the soil, bringing color, gestural form, and food for insects into the early spring. There is a wisdom in this connectedness of nature's creations with the larger rhythm of seasons.

But it is not easy in these times to engage the inner activity needed to counteract fear and uncertainty. How often we hear each other remark on how unsettling, strange, and challenging things are! We are in one way thrown back on ourselves. We are not carried by our usual rhythms and routines. We hear from others and experience ourselves how challenging it can be to bring about self-willed activity. And we also think of the many teachers who are trying to help their home-bound students find meaningful activities. With all this in mind, we decided to make Henrike's workbook on projective geometry, *To the Infinite and Back Again*, freely available on our website. It gives the reader the opportunity to bring thinking into a focused activity that lives in transformations. We are surprised and heartened by the many expressions of gratitude we have received.

Attunement with the large and wise living forces of the world is what we as human beings sorely lack and just as sorely need if we want to contribute to societal and ecological healing. Rocks, plants, and animals are attuned; they exist embedded in the larger wisdom of the world. We in a sense stand apart. We can question our place in existence and can freely use our minds to inquire and create. What we create—whether destructive or furthering to the life of our fellow beings and the earth—depends on where we place our attention and what from the world provides orientation for our thinking and acting.

At the Institute we are always striving to let life itself be our teacher. We find strength in this endeavor and hope that the fruits of our work as they appear in *In Context* are worthwhile for you.

Warm greetings,

Craig Holdrege

Steve Talbott

### STAFF

Craig Holdrege  
Henrike Holdrege  
Elaine Khosrova  
Kristy King  
Judith Madey  
Veronica Madey  
Stephen L. Talbott  
Gopi Krishna Vijaya

### ADJUNCT RESEARCHERS/FACULTY

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Jon McAlice  
Marisha Plotnik  
Vladislav Rozentuller  
Sergio Spalter  
Nathaniel Williams  
Johannes Wirz

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EDITOR: Stephen L. Talbott

LAYOUT: Mary Giddens

COVER ART: Kristelle Esterhuizen

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The Nature Institute  
20 May Hill Road  
Ghent, New York 12075  
Tel.: 518-672-0116  
Fax: 518-672-4270  
Email: [info@natureinstitute.org](mailto:info@natureinstitute.org)  
Web: <http://natureinstitute.org>

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