

Chapter 10 - Conclusion:

*Triumph of Civilization: Democracy, Nonviolence,
and the Piloting of Spaceship Earth*

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The Twenty-first Century Triumph
of Civilization

*Planetary Maturity, Nonviolent Institutions,
and a Holistic Earth Community*

The earth is the place that touches our skin, the place where we make our dwelling, our ecology. This is the origin of the dialectic of person and cosmos, the phenomenon of nature, as habitat.

From this earth, then, we gather wood, for we have discovered fire: wood is warmth now, and safety, and light.... Nourishing, welcoming, protecting, motherly earth! Earth, lively nature, splendor of dawns and sunsets, beauty of mountain streams, of the singing of the nightingales, of the terrible, bounding sea! Earth, mother of the sweet smelling rose.

Sin is the destruction of the work created by God. God's most perfect deed is the human person. But the earth, too, is the work of God. Its destruction is the annihilation of the locus of human history, of humanity, of the incarnation, and hence the gravest of ethical misdeeds.

Enrique Dussel

*The state of peace among men living side by side is not the natural state (status naturalis); the natural state is one of war. This does not always mean open hostilities, but at least an unceasing threat of war. A state of peace, therefore, must be **established**, for in order to be secured against hostility it is not sufficient that hostilities simply not be committed; and, unless this security is pledged to each by his neighbor (a thing that can occur only in a civil state), each may treat his neighbor, from whom he demands this security, as an enemy.*

Immanuel Kant

The “utopian surplus” that spills over into our awareness from art, literature, philosophy, morality, spiritual practices, religion, critical thought, and everyday living firmly establishes the insight that things do not have to be the way they are. There are reasons, causes, behind the way things are that can be modified, changed, or transformed. Our human situation is informed by “real and objective possibility” that has yet to be actualized. It is this insight that animated the framers of the *Earth Constitution* who offer us the practical possibility of a new age. *The triumph of civilization* lives at the heart of our common human potential. It requires the *founding* of a holistic Earth community.

10.1 Ascent to the Freedom of Holism

We have reached the limits of our adolescent condition of personal and collective immaturity as well as the limits of our outdated and fractured institutions – global capitalism and the system of sovereign nation-states, along with the racism, bigotry, ethnocentrism, and technocracy that intertwine with these global institutions. Philosopher H. L. Finch states “that some major change in the way we live is beginning to manifest itself is evident from the many signs of our times, not the least of which is the exhaustion of the principles by which we have been living” (1995: 5). We have seen at length how this exhaustion operates throughout our world today – in the massive exploitation of peoples, in the on-going destruction of our planetary ecosystem, in unremitting violence everywhere on the planet.

We need, and live in the midst of, a renaissance, a rebirth. Such major changes in human thought and attitudes have happened a few times in history, not the least of which was the Renaissance that gave birth to the modern world during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Just as new “modern” political and economic institutions emerged during the Renaissance to replace older “feudal” institutions so new political and economic institutions need to emerge in the twenty-first century. However, the stakes are higher today because our immediate actions *will determine forever* either the flourishing or destruction of human beings and our planetary ecology.

There are many books, articles, and social movements in our day working for a transformation of our largely failed world order. But the general public worldwide has yet to see and affirm the significance of their work on behalf of a planetary renaissance. The renaissance we need goes beyond the grasping of an abstract holism of wholes and parts discerned by the contemporary sciences to a new concreteness, a new immediacy in

which we discover the living experience in which “the earth is the place that touches our skin, the place where we make our dwelling, our ecology. This is the origin of the dialectic of person and cosmos, the phenomenon of nature, as habitat.”

“Democracy” must no longer function as a mere abstraction for people who accept as “realistic” profoundly undemocratic structures and processes. To live from our rootedness in the Earth, in its beauty, its smells, the way it feels, the breath of fresh air, the immense sky with its multiplicity of ecstatic colors and moods, is to begin to discern our democratic equality in which we all inherit this magical planet at the same level. The Earth belongs to us all, and we must create the common, sustainable political, social and economic structures that embody this equiprimordial truth.

The ascent to the freedom of holism in our lives not only liberates us from hate, fear, compulsions, and idolatries, it links us with others in communities of positive freedom and hopeful vision. To live from the equiprimordial truth of our common joy in living in touch with our Earth invokes a great responsibility toward all other people and nature. We experience the moral imperative to transform our planetary institutions from fragmentation to holism, from violence to nonviolence, from competitive destructiveness to a holistic Earth community. Such an Earth community can only be founded if we unite under a common constitution.

The title of Errol E. Harris’ recent book conveys this possibility: *21st Century Democratic Renaissance*. This title captures precisely what will save us from a complete disaster for human civilization. As we have seen, the renaissance of the twenty-first century, according to Harris, must include democratic world government:

In the world today the only form of democracy that could aspire to the ideals of the traditional philosophical conception would have to be global, one that could legislate to implement global measures to deal with global problems (as sovereign nation-states cannot) and could maintain the Rule of Law worldwide (which the exercise of sovereign rights by independent nations prevents). Accordingly, the only effective democracy would have to take the form of World Government, and that can be truly democratic only if it is federal, because federalism assures the right of member states to autonomy with respect to their own internal affairs, while it consigns to the federal administration control over issues, the interest in which is common to all its peoples, and which the several member states cannot regulate within their own jurisdiction. (2008: 135)

“Planetary democracy,” it should be clear, means both real democracy and world democracy. It means “Earth Federation.” It means that we begin paying attention to the deeper implications of our common humanity and realize that our institutions and practices must be premised on our emergent

human characteristics as indicated not only by spirituality and morality, but by rational common sense and practical action to save ourselves from disaster. It means that we begin to understand the meaning of *holism* much more deeply as applied to human life and relationships.

What is not permitted is postponement, the liberal and non-transformative notion that we have sufficient time to “evolve” toward a genuine democratic world community. We need a *renaissance*, a nonviolent revolution, not an incremental “evolution.” According to environmental scientist John Cairns, Jr., (2008) quoted in Chapter Six, we have “as little as ten years” left to make deep, fundamental changes. There is no one at the helm: no responsible persons constructing a decent future and acting to avoid unspeakable disaster. We must act now from our love of the Earth and our love of life, and we must actualize the moral obligation that we have to all other persons and the Earth’s other living creatures.

Civilized human beings live under the rule of democratically legislated, enforceable laws. The triumph of civilization will mean bringing this simple fact of civilized living to planet Earth. There are no good or evil nations (as there may be sometimes leaders of nations who do evil acts), there is simply a system of relatively autonomous nation-states that abjures the rule of law in the world. The horrors we see all around us are by and large a direct consequence of this system, in tandem with an economic system that must, like a cancer, grow or die, and so necessarily eats up the biosphere of our planet in its quest for endless increase in private profit for a few. Acting now can save our planet from self-destruction. It only really requires that we fully grasp the fundamental principle that *civilized human beings live under the rule of democratically legislated, enforceable laws.*

10.2 Planetary Maturity

It is sometimes said that the spirit of the fifteenth-century Renaissance was captured in the *Oration on the Dignity of Man* by Pico Della Mirandola. In his oration, Pico links the great dignity of human beings with the fact that we do not have a predetermined nature like the other creatures that limits what we may become. Rather, we can move to higher or lower levels of existence according to our own choices and free will. This insight again manifests in our own day as fundamental. We are indeed not predetermined by some hard-wired, corrupt human nature to self-destruct on planet Earth, perhaps as a failed experiment in God’s evolutionary upsurge within creation.

At present we are often choosing what is lower in ourselves, what is bestial: hatred, fear, greed, preying upon one another economically, ideologically, and militarily. We are moving to lower levels of existence by making ourselves into robots rather than free persons. We are willingly

submitting to national security domination, military domination, and the dominations of fear, hate, and insecurity, as well as the dominations of greed and egoistic self-interest at the expense of others. We are confusing fragmentation and our fragmented identities with realism. At best, we have settled down in this botched and broken world order and accepted its absurdity as “practical realism,” as “facing the hard facts.” We keep our heads down, indulge our private satisfactions, and let the world be damned.

All these phenomena destroy other human beings and nature and exhibit the sense of nihilism in values and illusion of immortality often characteristic of adolescents. Only adolescents are solely concerned with their private satisfactions regardless of all others. Only adolescents think the tiny set of religious and cultural identities of their childhood are the only true identities. Only adolescents fool themselves into thinking that this absurd, socially constructed nightmare of a world gives us the “hard facts” or what is “practically realistic.”

The reality of our universe has been revealed by twentieth-century science as an astonishing holistic plenum of dynamic *unity in diversity*. The reality of our humanity has been revealed by psychologists and spiritual thinkers as a host of higher human potentialities involving the same structures of *unity in diversity* that are today inhibited and crushed by our fragmented economic and political systems. The reality of the universe does not deny our childhood religious and cultural identities but *embraces* them within a series of ever-larger holistic fields.

All of these phenomena destroy *community*: the mutual recognition and trust that lives at the foundation of authentic democracy. They all destroy the active commitment to others and our common human project that is at the heart of human maturity. They destroy the *holism* of the human species and our sustaining biosphere living on spaceship Earth.

This self-dehumanization will also mean our self-destruction and the destruction of the precious and beautiful Earth, which is an intimate part of our selves. We fail to comprehend the direct, interdependent relationship between community, love, and mutual cooperation and the fulfillment of each of our selves as individuals. We need to rapidly ascend to a deep understanding of planetary maturity and global democracy.

The immense record of human spirituality, philosophy, political thought and intercultural common sense indicates that we can think and act differently, that we can recognize “the exhaustion of the principles by which we have been living” and begin to live from healthier, more universal, more life-affirming principles. The “utopian surplus” characterizing our lives reflects our potential as human beings, the sense that we are unfinished animals that can become greater and do better than we have done in the past. The emergence of democracy as a moral ideal

and transformative force throughout the past 2500 years of human history points to this higher human potential in all of us.

We have seen the simple expression of this ideal in the holistic slogan: “liberty, equality, and fraternity.” We can embody our higher human potential for mutual freedom by *founding* truly democratic institutions for our planet. These institutions will necessarily embody *freedom* through protection of our inviolable human rights and dignity, meaningful *equality* that makes possible the political and economic participation of every citizen to the point where citizens recognize in government a reflection of their general will, and *community* in which positive liberty arises from a mutual recognition and trust predicated on the common good of all.

We have understood that democracy is not just another form of government among other possible forms. It is the fundamental moral framework for human association, encompassing our experience of human dignity, rights, freedom, and equality. Democracy manifests, therefore, much of *our higher rational potential* as human beings that is finally coming to fruition in the twenty-first century. It also manifests our *universal* human potential and therefore can only effectively be planetary democracy – a manifestation, as well as condition of, our growing planetary maturity. It signals the coming great transformation from a fragmented world of adolescent ego-struggles to a mature world of holistic reciprocity, mutual respect, and real institutional unity within the world’s diversity.

Planetary democracy and community institutionalized under an *Earth Constitution* also means the activation of *positive freedom* rather than mere negative freedom for the peoples of Earth. The mutual recognition and trust of genuine community under authentic democracy are what make freedom possible at all. The perpetual struggle of those who embrace *negative freedom*, believing that they must perpetually resist governmental authority and resist tyranny of the majority in order to maximize their private license to do what they please, radically restricts their life possibilities.

All our resources derive from present and past communities: our technology, our wealth, our education, our opportunities, and our common inheritance of the surface of the Earth. The creation of planetary democracy empowers us to positive freedom and multiplies our life-possibilities. Instead of a perpetual struggle to defend our private freedom, we find vastly enlarged opportunities to expand our deeper life opportunities. Our conception of the common good matures into an empowering holism.

Growth out of adolescence comes in spurts and abrupt changes: one moment a wise-ass kid, the next moment a responsible young adult. Something similar is happening with the development of our species: the Greeks and other ancient cultures were like beautiful, innocent children; the moderns with their macho capitalism and militarized nation-state system are like wild adolescent boys, defining “freedom” as their right to do whatever

they damn well please. But the dawning awareness of our global crises has placed immense pressure on our consciousness to grow to another level.

Our problems will not magically disappear, but they will look entirely different and fundamentally manageable from the point of view of a united humanity and a federated Earth. We are beginning to transcend the false, fragmented individualism and understand our fundamental relatedness to one another. Soon we will be capable of nonviolently operating our Spaceship Earth.

10.3 A Founded Society

Will we slowly *evolve* to planetary maturity in time in the face of the immense forces and institutions opposing that growth? This is not likely since tremendous powers resist the growth of that maturity. *Peace must be established.* In the quotation at the outset of this chapter, Kant has proclaimed the most fundamental of principles. Peace can only derive from a *founded* society, just as the United States is a founded nation, and India is a founded nation. A founded global civil society, an Earth community, is one established according to principles embodied in a founding document, a constitution. Once we have established peace through founding an Earth community under democratic institutions, the continued development of maturity can and will happen rapidly.

From the outset the principles embodied in that constitution work to control the forces opposed to those principles, or, better, the founding principles simply reorganize society to substantially reduce forces that subvert universal peace, justice, and prosperity. The *Constitution for the Federation of Earth* establishes a global government according to the federal principle of shared sovereignty, from the local to national, to world levels. No longer can the institution of the lawless sovereign nation-state destroy the peace, freedom, and justice of the people of Earth. The *Earth Constitution* also organizes the framework of world economics according to market socialist principles of reasonable equality of all persons and freedom from exploitation and domination by gigantic banking, corporate, and nation-state forces.

Finally, the immense power of the wealthy classes of Earth to inhibit democracy and the growth of human maturity through their ownership of the mass media and other means is carefully circumscribed by the *Earth Constitution*, as it also does regarding the powers of nationalism, racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, or religious bigotry that interfere with the peace or the development of planetary maturity. Under the *Constitution* elections cannot be bought, and the power of big media to undermine democracy is intelligently curtailed.

Without *establishing peace* through the creation of a global body politic in which the general will of the people of Earth prevents by law war, exploitation, and injustice, the gigantic forces ranged against peace will continue to subvert the best efforts of peace activists or non-governmental organizations to evolve the world toward maturity and decency. The war system of sovereign nations and the oligarchic power system of monopoly capitalism (reaping huge profits from the violence and injustice of the present system) must be transformed through the founding of global democracy. The *Earth Constitution* establishes the essential elements for a genuinely peaceful planetary community.

This reveals the immense flaw of many writers cited in this book who work for a holistic world order. Writers such as Ervin Laszlo, David Korten, Brian Swimme, Thomas Berry, Vandana Shiva, Sally Goener, Robert Dyck, Dorothy Lagerroos, and a number of others correctly argue for a holistic Earth civilization. However, they argue on a cultural level trying to convince the peoples of the world to embrace a culture of holism before it is too late (including the holisms of freedom, justice, and sustainable economic equity). *They fail to understand that a war-system cannot culturally evolve into a peace-system.*

Not only are gigantic institutions ranged against peace (such as the militarized nation-state, a huge military-industrial complex, and the immense forces of disaster capitalism) but the system of sovereign nation-states itself is an anti-holistic war system defeating peace at every turn. They fail to understand that the system of sovereign nation-states as it now stands cannot embrace holism. Its very structure embodies fragmentation, division, conflict, and violence. It might “evolve” over hundreds of years, but by that time the Earth will be uninhabitable for any form of life above the level of cockroaches.

The establishing of peace creates a global body politic under the authority of the people of Earth that prohibits war, disarms the nations, protects human rights worldwide, moderates economics for the common good of all, protects the environment, converts the world to sustainable production and consumption, and shares the resources of the planet equitably for all people and for future generations. A holistic Earth civilization can only be *founded*. It necessarily includes establishing a genuine democratic government for Spaceship Earth. The founding itself will activate an immense step forward in human maturity.

There can be no genuine holism, and no peace, without the *establishment* of a global body-politic. Our higher human potential is actualized in significant measure in this awakening – not only the understanding of holism itself but in the understanding that holism for human beings requires the just rule of law for the whole of humanity. Our

equiprimordial freedom, equality, and community as human beings inheriting the ecstatic beauty and marvel of life on this planet must be embodied in our social, economic, and political institutions.

10.4 Common Sense Political and Economic Arrangements

There is nothing particularly mysterious about this understanding of our higher human potential, and much of it can be summed up in the concept of nonviolence that has been a major theme of this book: nonviolent society, government, and economics. Gandhi writes:

The world of tomorrow will be, must be, a society based on nonviolence. That is the first law; out of it all other blessings will flow. It may seem a distant goal, an impractical Utopia. But it is not in the least unobtainable, since it can be worked for here and now. An individual can adopt the way of life of the future – the nonviolent way – without having to wait for others to do so. And if an individual can do it, cannot whole groups of individuals? Whole nations? Men often hesitate to make a beginning because they feel that the objective cannot be achieved in its entirety. This attitude of mind is precisely the greatest obstacle to progress – an obstacle that each man, if he only wills it, can clear away. Equal distribution – the second great law of tomorrow's world as I see it – grows out of nonviolence.... I see no poverty in the world of tomorrow, no wars, no revolutions, no bloodshed. (1987: 458-460).

Gandhi's vision is not naïve. *Satyagraha* (clinging to Truth) is an expression of holism, the holism shown by science to inform every dimension of our universe. The truth that Gandhi sees is the truth of the whole (which he also calls 'God'). He understands the implications of holism for human life, reflecting our "utopian surplus" of "real and objective possibility."

We have seen that Gandhi advocated a world federation to actualize this nonviolent world of tomorrow. The Earth Federation that he advocated would also be responsible to end poverty and create a substantially equitable world order. "Equal distribution" does not mean enforced sameness, for Gandhi, nor for the emerging Earth Federation, as we have seen, but rather the ending of a system in which "the few ride on the backs of the millions." We have seen that this can only effectively happen through a democratic Earth Federation that represents everyone, whose mandate is to represent the common good of everyone, and whose institutions allow an effective determination of the general will of the people of Earth.

For Gandhi, the world of the future will of necessity be an Earth Federation characterized by "socialism" since this combines respect for

each individual with meaningful equality and a sense of the human community as a whole under the rule of enforceable law. A nonviolent world order is a logical consequence of the fact that each of us can adopt the nonviolent way of life here and now and work to embody this in nonviolent institutions. For Gandhi as well – peace must be *established*, even though it can also be adopted by any individual at any time and at any place. “Clinging to truth” (*Satyagraha*) includes clinging to the holism of our human situation.

The principles behind the new, nonviolent, holistic economic and political democracy are simple and clear. They are all embodied in the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth*, establishing a peace system. A united Earth could easily implement these common sense principles:

- Take banking, money creation, and a few other key aspects of the economy out of the hands of the oligarchy that now controls the economics of the Earth and place these under the democratic control of the people of Earth.
- Empower local communities and economies through interest-free lines of credit and job creation for restoring the environment and building the infrastructure (including clean water, sanitation, eco-friendly industry, free quality health care, social security, and education) for a decent economy for all.
- Empower people from the bottom up to take political control of their lives, communities, and businesses and to contribute their voices to the general will for governing of Spaceship Earth. The vast majority desire only freedom, peace, and reasonable prosperity.
- Undertake worldwide programs to restore and clean-up the environment: including replanting forests, providing fresh water for all, restoration of farming land, clean oceans, etc., paying for these projects by primary created Earth Federation money that will activate local economies worldwide.
- Eliminate weapons of war (including all weapons of mass destruction) from the Earth and prevent their further production by enforceable world law.
- Represent, and dialogue with, all groups and peoples equally, taking grievances seriously and dealing thoughtfully and fairly with conflicts so that no group feels it has to turn to war, violence, or terrorism.
- Protect and enforce equal human rights (both political and economic rights) equitably for all people on Earth within the context of worldwide conflict resolution programs designed to promote mutual understanding and security as well as reduce the felt need to resort to violence.
- Provide the democratic agencies and institutions for monitoring the health of the planet, assessing new technologies, and planning for a

sustainable future for our entire planet with all its people, ecosystems, and animals.

All of these principles are simple and quite common sense. Yet none of this can be done without uniting our planet under a single democratic government. It is precisely the federation of the many nations and communities of the Earth under the rule of democratically legislated enforceable world law that creates *the holistic dynamic of unity in diversity essential to our survival*. To speak of a holism of human relationships on Earth without the universal democratic rule of law constitutes a naïve idealism of the worst kind. Holism must be institutionalized and embodied in our political and economic systems, just as presently fragmentation and division are institutionalized in our non-democratic planetary systems.

Science has understood that there is no atom without a field, that an atom is *incomprehensible* without a field, which ultimately includes the field of the whole universe. Similarly no human being is comprehensible apart from the field of our entire human community on the Earth. The fact alone that we have a “language instinct” and that we are universally genetically structured as language-speaking beings (Pinker 1994) indicates the field character of our human community. Holism implies both planetary democracy and nonviolence. The *triumph of civilization* means a conversion, not only of thought, but of economics and politics to holistic principles. It means the *founding* of an Earth community.

Proper economics involves the means by which the basic necessities of life can be obtained by all human beings under conditions of freedom and community without the violence of involuntary poverty, exploitation, or domination. We have seen that our present global economic system has utterly failed in this regard. For a nonviolent world order to become a reality requires that we put an end to the *irredeemable fragmentation* fostered by today’s global economics. We must unite together under the *unity in diversity* of democratic world law. Only then will the intimations of our “utopian surplus,” that is, our mature human potential, become actualized in the daily life of humankind.

10.5 Rationality and Spirituality

The communicative rationality that has been shown by Habermas and others to live at the heart of our universal human ability to use language (and that is therefore fundamental to human civilization itself) must be activated and promoted in every venue. Communicative rationality must supersede our present obsession with manipulative *instrumental* rationality as the primary mode of human interaction. Only adolescents lack the healthy sense of self that drives them to use language manipulatively and

project a false image of their selves to the world. As we grow, our use of language becomes more and more communicative.

Communicative rationality immediately implies a world community, worldwide respect for human rights, global democracy, and the beginnings of planetary maturity. It reveals the equality, dignity, and fundamental rights of every human being and provides the rational foundations for global democracy. We understand that the presuppositions of the very possibility of language, as Habermas points out, in addition to its universal intelligibility, include “truth, truthfulness, and normative rightness” (1979).

These are also the presuppositions of democracy. There can be no democracy without communicative interaction directed toward *truth*, without a framework encouraging *honesty and integrity* in communication, nor without mutual recognition of legitimate *rights and responsibilities*. We are very close to that maturity which allows us to recognize our common *species-being*.

The communicative core of language is the living source of *both* our continually developing autonomy as unique persons and our bonding in community with other persons. Habermas, building on and quoting the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt, emphasizes that our fundamental communicative rationality *simultaneously individuates and unites*. The same is true of cultures, nations, and groups: “And what holds true for individuals holds to an even greater degree for nations: ‘In its capacity for dividing peoples, language unifies the difference between individualities without detracting from them in any way, by means of the mutual understanding of foreign speech.’ Language compels the individuation of peoples and individual persons, ‘but in such a wonderful way that, precisely in dividing, it awakens a feeling of unity; it appears indeed as a means of creating unity’” (1998b: 187-188). Our language instinct both progressively binds us together as one species and one Earth civilization, and actualizes our individualities as persons, members of cultures, groups, religions, and nations. *The field embraces and unites the parts while simultaneously enhancing their uniqueness as parts.*

Similarly, the spiritualities of compassion, kindness, *agape*, and holistic intuition can no longer live merely as the luxury of a few saints or mystics. We have seen that these spiritualities exist as characteristics of human maturity rather than as esoteric or mysterious irrelevancies. Today, they have become necessities for our survival. They operate in our lives unnamed every time we respect another person simply because they are a person, every time we feel another’s suffering, and every time we intuit that things could be different, that the future could be one of peace, freedom, and prosperity. They operate unnamed today in the lives of millions of mindful, thoughtful, and mature human beings. They also operate within the human potential of every normal human being.

The Fourteenth Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso, never tires of asserting this primordial truth: “Love, compassion and tolerance are necessities, not luxuries; without them, humanity cannot survive” (1990: 3). Human spirituality on its most fundamental level does not direct us to exotic sensibilities realized through yoga or contemplative prayer. It draws on what is utterly common and most universally human – our ability to live with gentleness, compassion, kindness, love, and holistic intuition. We must establish a holistic Earth community that allows these primordial truths to flourish.

In every way (in our teaching, writing, speaking, acting, and learning) these should be promoted, although not necessarily named as I have named them. Racism, ethnic discrimination, sexism, nationalism, class elitism, and religious fundamentalism are all forms of collective egoism, positing the superiority of one group over another and violating the face to face of personal respect due to every person and the imperative to develop a living community on the Earth. Our recognition of the personhood of each is *simultaneously* our understanding that the world could be transformed on this basis. Personhood is both utterly unique and deeply universal. This recognition is simply the next step in human maturity.

10.6 Nonviolence

Insofar as we overcome these egoistic compulsions we become ever-more nonviolent. Violence is incompatible with the spiritualities of compassion, kindness, *agape*, or holistic intuition, just as it is incompatible with communicative rationality and democracy. Nonviolence lies at the heart of integral liberation. There is nothing mysterious or utopian in the negative sense about these insights. They only appear utopian because they exist in conflict with our fragmented institutions and immature attitudes blocking their full actualization.

Nonviolent social relationships simply mean economic and political democracy on Earth, something everyone can understand. Creating these nonviolent relationships will mean the eschatological fulfillment of the human project. This simply means that we are capable of establishing a world order of peace, freedom, justice, and reasonable prosperity for all. To put this in the religious language from which it derives, it will mean the gentle prelude to the Kingdom of God on Earth. Again, nearly everyone can easily understand the meaning of this symbolism, whether or not they come from a religious tradition.

Nonviolence, therefore, need not and cannot be limited to a personal orientation to life. We saw that it can be and must be substantially institutionalized, that authentic democracy itself involves an embodiment of nonviolence, and that even Gandhi envisioned this as an earth federation.

With the political will to create a decent world order for ourselves and our children, we can rapidly institutionalize a nonviolent economics premised on reasonable prosperity for all rather than great wealth for a few with suffering and death for the vast majority. We can create nonviolent institutions protecting social change, human rights, and nonviolent conflict resolution. We can institutionalize nonviolent law enforcement through an Earth Federation that protects the life, liberty, and security of each, and oppresses none.

Global democracy flows from the universal communicative rationality in which all language speaking creatures participate as well as from the spiritualities of compassion, *agape*, and holistic intuition alive within all of us. It will promote global solidarity and global community within which the Earth Federation will be able to respond to the general will of the people of Earth. We are at the end of the line. Postponement is no longer an option.

Planetary democracy and human maturity also mean a new ecological and holistic relationship to the biosphere and our planet's other living creatures. Just as democracy requires genuine community among human beings, so it transforms our attitude toward nature from one of domination to one of balance and harmony. The community spirit and the ecological spirit are two sides of the same orientation that overcomes egoism, destructive individualism, and the spirit of competitive domination. The concern with a healthy human community mirrors the concern for healthy ecological communities. It reflects the desire to live holistically, in harmony with one's environment, rather than atomistically within a fragmented world disorder.

Planetary maturity means the realization of what is most fundamental and significant about each of us – our common humanity arising from the deep mystery of existence and portending unlimited possibilities for beautiful forms of transformation and self-realization. The more that we concretely and effectively realize that we are citizens of Spaceship Earth, first and foremost, the more our wonderful diversities and unique individualities can be appreciated and protected. Unity and diversity arise together throughout this marvelous universe. Planetary maturity means they arise together on Earth as well. “Thy will be done on Earth, as it is in heaven” – if “heaven” means the deepest foundations or the basic meaning of existence, then human beings have yet to fulfill this hope implicit in our potential for planetary maturity.

10.7 The Triumph of Civilization

But we have seen in some detail that all of this remains empty rhetoric unless embodied in concrete institutions and democratic procedures that

effectively translate our human potential into democratic world law that applies equally to all. Without a concrete Earth Federation under a *Constitution for the Federation of Earth*, the oppressors and exploiters and postponers can say “Oh yes, I very much agree with these ideals that we are all working toward in the future.” The claim to hold ideals that we are working toward in the future reflects an inauthentic and dishonest response to our human situation when those ideals could and should be effectively institutionalized *now* within a concrete world democracy.

The *Renaissance of the Twenty-first Century*, the triumph of civilization on planet Earth, must necessarily include non-military, civilian democratic Earth Federation. The renaissance cannot be merely cultural. It cannot be an evolution in mere global “governance” as some economists and political leaders like Al Gore (2006) appear to urge. It must include real civil *government*, with the ability to enforce democratic laws over even the heads of nation-states and transnational corporations. As with the Enlightenment of the Eighteenth Century, it must result in a concrete democratic constitution – with a founding document that can both enhance and lay the groundwork for continuing growth in planetary maturity and a peaceful, prosperous, and free human existence on Spaceship Earth. Everything is ready for us to take this next step toward a higher human civilization.

The next step must be a real step, a genuine transformation of our fundamental assumptions and premises. It cannot be the pretence of change that attempts to deal with our planetary crises from the same outmoded set of assumptions. We have seen the disastrous effects of assumptions such as the fragmented system of sovereign nation-states, the economics of monopoly capitalism, a United Nations that is in no sense “united,” the false notion of a “clash of civilizations,” or the naïve assumption of the incommensurability of the world’s religions. We must ascend to genuine *unity in diversity*, institutionalized under an *Earth Constitution*, which is indeed the foundation stone for a holistic planetary community of freedom, sustainability, and prosperity.

Planetary democracy and human maturity go together. We have understood that political and economic democracy serves as *both ends and means*. More than a political system, democracy lives as a moral ideal for human relationships, demanding that economic and political liberty, equality, and community become the norm in human relationships, that we begin relating to one another as *persons*, not as things. Institutionalizing democracy constitutes the *means* to mature, sustainable living in peace on planet Earth as well as the ultimate *end* to be sought through all our activities. Ends and means at last achieve harmony. The end or goal of democratic liberty, equality, and community on Earth is also the means to that ideal.

Our present non-democratic and immature world system of neoliberal capitalism, sovereign nation-states, and other forms of social and moral fragmentation surges forward, like an immense raging river, toward planetary disaster. We face the final crossroad. Either we create a truly democratic renaissance for the twenty-first century by founding a holistic Earth civilization or we go down to perdition – and the immense promise of our common human project may be lost forever on our failed planet. The choice is still ours if we summon the courage and political will for immediate action to ratify an *Earth Constitution* and found a holistic Earth community.

To think, act, and live in terms of the concept and ideal of planetary democracy is to become a catalyst for a rebirth for humanity that prepares a glorious future for our children. We no longer live from the divisive ego but from our deeper common reality, actualizing our higher human potential for a pacified and just world community. Only this transformative action can lead to a triumph for civilization – uniting all peoples under the equal protection of democratically legislated laws. We see before us the possibility of a new dawning for humanity. This is our highest hope, our most beautiful dream, our most rational conclusion, and our most fundamental moral obligation.

