

My Philosophical Work from *Millennium Dawn* (2005) to *One World Renaissance* (2016)
From Tentative Roots in the Past to Revolutionary Flowering in the Present
A Brief Intellectual Biography

Glen T. Martin

When he was nearly 60 years old Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) began to publish works that fundamentally transformed our conception of the human situation. He left the ranks of ordinary German rationalist professors of philosophy and entered into the association of deep, penetrating thinkers who creatively address the foundational problems of human existence in the dimensions of knowledge, ethics, political thought, and metaphysics. From the time that his first critique appeared in 1783 until his death, Kant came out with one book after another articulating the implications and conceptual elaborations of the revolution in thought that he had initiated.

This does not mean, of course, that the conceptual revolution of Kant's great "critiques" was not already in the *zeitgeist* of 18th century Europe. Others responded to his works precisely because his creative contributions had already been prepared for in the advanced sectors of intellectual and spiritual life of the times. Perhaps each age calls out for thinkers capable of discerning that *zeitgeist* and addressing the needs of the time in creative and foundational ways. I would like to think that my work since *Millennium Dawn: The Philosophy of Planetary Crisis and Human Liberation* (2005), and the subsequent development of its revolutionary insights in the books and articles that came out after that turning point, follows this historical pattern.

Kant showed that the very conditions of the possibility of having any experience at all included "categories of understanding" and "forms of perception" provided by the human mind and sensibility. For this reason, the world that we experience is only "phenomenal," not the "thing-in-itself," the "noumenal." Kant placed God, the soul, and ultimate reality beyond the scope of human knowledge as this is developed through the systematic investigation of experience through our human categories of understanding and forms of perception. For Kant, God, freedom, and immortality are the subjects of a "rational faith," not possible objects of scientific investigation. Nietzsche and some others pointed out that this appeared to cut humanity off from what was most fundamental and significant: all grounding in possible sources of value.

My own work during the past decade or more has been directed toward restoring the immanence of value to human awareness and our human condition. It is not that Kant was wrong by any means, and it is not that I haven't been profoundly influenced by his "counter-Copernican Revolution" that claimed to place humanity back in the center. Rather, my work has endeavored to complete this counter-Copernican Revolution by helping reveal the depth dimensions that permeate our experience on every side and their role in the transformative and eschatological destiny of our human species. My work has drawn on a new *zeitgeist* that has been developing for more than a century, a new paradigm of holism and immanence, and has attempted to articulate the implications of that paradigm across the board: in ethics, politics, law, epistemology, and civilization. It has described our revolutionary, emergent evolutionary situation and the transformative and revolutionary implications of our human condition.

Immediately after graduation from high school in 1962, I lived at home with my parents and worked at Eastman Kodak Company (where my father had worked for many years) while saving money and applying to colleges. I took an evening course in creative writing that was offered across town, having even then, at age 18-19, a vague intuition that I wanted to be a writer. At a bookstore there I picked a book by Henry G. Bugbee called *The Inward Morning: A Philosophical Exploration in Journal Form* that became decisive for my life.

I hand-copied many passages from that book and read them over and over. It conceived of life as a spiritual journey of thought, experience, reflection, and ever-growing insight. One did not have to have definitive answers, dogmatic beliefs, or culture-bound loyalties. None of these ways of living were faithful to the open-ended development of wisdom and understanding that characterized the philosophical journey that was life properly lived. And the book showed me that not all wisdom and insight were conceptually expressible and definitively clear. There was a pervasive dimension of depth, of mystery, unsayability, and spirituality into which one could progressively grow.

My lifelong concern with the problems of world politics and world peace also guided my reading and thought during these early years. The horror of the Vietnam War, raging while I was in college at the University of Buffalo from 1967-1970, led me to confront the question of war and the military draft on a very existential and personal moral level. I decided that all war was wrong, that all war was an abomination and destruction of our human integrity, and became a conscientious objector, refusing to go into that war or any other. In retrospect, I believe that this decision also began to place my thinking on a global plane transcending the nationalist perspective. I began thinking in terms of the global problems of war, conflict, values, and civilization. The nationalistic perspective dramatically receded for me. Already, I was becoming a world citizen without knowing it.

I continued to read books by such thinkers as Eric Fromm, Herbert Marcuse, Jacques Ellul, and Paul Tillich that substantially influenced my understanding of the need for a deep and pervasive critique of civilization and began to see the need for developing a critical theory of civilization, history, and economics, along with the need for a critical psychology and spirituality that complemented the social critique. I enrolled in the Master's Degree Program in Philosophy at Hunter College in 1972, working during the day (during the next few years) and taking evening courses in Spinoza, Hegel, Kant, Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Wittgenstein given by professors Henry Rosenthal, Charles Sherover, Joan Stambaugh, and Henry Leroy Finch. Along with professor Milton K. Munitz, whom I later met in the Ph.D. Program of the City University of New York, these great professors and thinkers became a lasting influence on my philosophical development.

I wrote my dissertation during the years 1980-85 under the influence of these thinkers and the guidance of Professors Stambaugh and Finch. Since my undergraduate years of 1968 to 1970 when I took a course with Richard Perkins and was introduced to the creative struggles of Friedrich Nietzsche to overcome nihilism by discovering a philosophy of great life-transformation and affirmation, I had been

concerned with the problem of values: that is, the problem of nihilism (the loss of meaning and value in the modern world) and its overcoming.

My first book which derived from the dissertation, published after significant revisions by Peter Lang in 1989, was called *From Nietzsche to Wittgenstein: The Problem of Truth and Nihilism in the Modern World*. The concern upon which that work was focused undoubtedly contained the seeds of *Millennium Dawn* and the revolution in thought that it attempts to articulate. *From Nietzsche to Wittgenstein* involved a detailed account of Nietzsche's thought and a critique of that thought under the concept of "metaphysical skepticism."

It argued that, for all his anti-metaphysical initiatives, Nietzsche was never able to extricate himself from the metaphysical demand for ultimate certainty and secure epistemological foundations. He saw Kant's claim to have conceptually isolated the metaphysical "thing in itself" not as a positive "showing the limits of knowledge in order to make room for faith in God, freedom, and immortality," as Kant had put it. Rather, Nietzsche's demand, unfulfillable in principle in the face of what at that time I called "the groundlessness of the human situation," led to his radical skepticism and his nihilism—the belief that there was no truth, that all values have been devaluated, and that human beings face an abyss of valuelessness and meaninglessness. The Kantian thing-in-itself was not revelatory of a new orientation of human life to the mystery of God and the ethical, for Nietzsche, but only of the abyss of nothingness, indicative, as he put it, of the Earth becoming unchained from its sun, hurtling lost through empty space, where it only becomes colder, darker and evermore lost in the abyss of nothingness.

The privilege of studying Wittgenstein with H. L. Finch made possible my seeing the Wittgensteinian project in a Kantian light: just as Kant had shown the limits of knowledge so Wittgenstein revealed the limits of language and made possible an awakening to the unsayable dimensions that permeate human life. My study of Wittgenstein culminated not only in *From Nietzsche to Wittgenstein* but also in my article on "The Religious Nature of Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy" published in *Philosophy Today*, fall 1988, which articulates this spiritual dimension of Wittgenstein's thought. So too, perhaps my study of Nietzsche culminated not only in this book that resulted from the dissertation but in my article "Deconstruction and Breakthrough in Nietzsche and Nagarjuna," published in the volume *Nietzsche and Asian Thought* (1991).

My studies of Zen Buddhism, at that time, and the reading of books by Zen Buddhist philosophers of the Kyoto school like Masao Abe, Keiji Nishitani and Nishida Kitaro, led me to understand the radical unsayability and the overwhelming immediacy of the *suchness* that embraces our lives. These philosophers were also addressing the nihilism of Nietzsche, and they were articulating a "nothingness" or an "emptiness" (*sunyata*) that was not the abyss of nihilism but revelatory of the overwhelming fullness and sufficiency of the unsayable depths of the present moment. My work was also deeply influenced by thinkers like Nicolas Berdyaev, Erich Gutkind, Ernst Bloch, and Immanuel Levinas, thinkers concerned with the corresponding eschatological depth of our human situation.

After coming to Radford University in 1985, I immediately joined Concerned Philosophers for Peace (CPP) and International Philosophers for Peace (IPPNO), going to their conferences and presenting papers that expressed my attempts to coalesce the several issues described above into coherent

contributions to the peace dialogue and literature. I also led activism on the RU campus in protest of the US sponsored wars in Central America and worldwide. Every semester we would hold "Central America Awareness Week," bringing in speakers and activists directly familiar with the US role in the atrocities and wars in Guatemala, El Salvador, and Nicaragua. I also organized week-long events around well-known peace leaders and activists, bringing to campus as keynote speakers Noam Chomsky, Helen Caldicott, Howard Zinn, and Ramsey Clark, among many others.

Meanwhile my wife and I became the US center for a development project in northern Nicaragua called the New River Bocay Project. In 1992, I began the initiative to create an interdisciplinary program in Peace Studies at RU, which was finally became part of the curriculum in 1994. Now an officer of the International Philosophers for Peace, I helped organize an international conference in San Jose, Costa Rica, the first of many such conferences I was to organize. In Costa Rica, I also was invited onto the International Advisory Board of Radio for Peace International, located on the campus of the UN University for Peace. Peace activism and critical social protest were natural and inevitable consequences of the development of my philosophical thought during these years.

During this period I subscribed to many left periodicals such as *Monthly Review* and *In These Times*, as well as philosophy journals like *Philosophy Today* and the *Eastern Buddhist*. In was in 1995 that I found a full page ad in *In These Times*, placed by the World Constitution and Parliament Association (WCPA), based at that time in Denver, Colorado. I contacted them, and soon flew out there to meet with the then Secretary-General, Philip Isely, some of the staff, and international guests such as Dr. Mujibur Rahman from Bangladesh, who was to become my life-long friend. It was the first I had heard much about the movement for democratic world government that went all the way back to World War One and included some of the greatest thinkers for the 20th century, such as Albert Camus and Albert Einstein. It was also the first time that I had heard about the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth*, written by hundreds of world citizens between 1968 and 1991.

Becoming aware of this movement and the *Earth Constitution* was perhaps the crucial element in the development of a comprehensive philosophy of human liberation that had been the implicit trajectory of my life since early on. It served as a final component in the nexus of concepts required for a theory of human liberation that embraced a paradigm-shift from immature and outdated ways of being on the Earth to patterns of planetary maturity that encompassed transformative spiritual growth, transformative economic wisdom, transformative political understanding, and transformative cultural development. I became part of the Executive Council of WCPA and began participating in their events and activities, the first major event being the 4th session of the Provisional World Parliament held in Barcelona, Spain in 1996.

Ten years later in 2005 *Millennium Dawn* announced a comprehensive paradigm-shift as the fundamental solution to the multiple "planetary crises" that were threatening the very future of human life on this planet. My 1999 article "A Planetary Paradigm for Global Government," which appeared as the first chapter in *Toward Genuine Global Governance: Critical Reactions to "Our Global Neighborhood,"* pointed forward toward *Millennium Dawn*. Yet *Millennium Dawn* involved a complete examination of our human situation in the light of these crises, demonstration of the interlinked nature of the crises, and it showed that their solution required a similar integrated transformation. It called this holistic

transformation “planetary maturity.” Throughout the book these several dimensions of transformation (spiritual, economic, eschatological, political, and cultural) were woven into every chapter and contrasted with the “deep violence” and suicidal trajectory of the present system dominating the world. Chapters Eleven to Thirteen elaborated aspects of the conversion to democratic world law, and the last chapter (Fourteen) outlined 10 practical steps for a transformative praxis that could and should be embraced everywhere on Earth.

The new “counter-Copernican Revolution” here involved the shift from fragmentation to holism. Perhaps all my philosophical work since that time could be seen as a working out the implications of this paradigm-shift to holism. My next major book, *Ascent to Freedom: Practical & Philosophical Foundations of Democratic World Law* (2008), begins with a detailed investigation of the new paradigm of holism discovered by all the 20th century sciences from anthropology to psychology to cosmology. It contrasts this with the outdated “early-modern paradigm” that continues to dominate human thought and institutions. It proceeds to outline the history of Western thought in relation to ideas of government and the movement towards ever-more adequate conceptions of global government (from ancient thinkers to Habermas and contemporary thinkers), showing that this thought culminates in the imperative for global democracy. It then proceeds to describe the fragmentation of contemporary institutions of government that dominate our world (global capitalism and the system of sovereign nation-states) and shows in some detail how and why world government under the *Earth Constitution* will address our most fundamental problems and give us genuine democracy for the first time.

One member of the Executive Council of WCPA (and International Philosophers for Peace) with whom I began to correspond was the prominent rationalist philosopher, Errol E. Harris. I met Harris in person twice: first at an international WCPA sponsored meeting in London in 1998 and then at the 5th session of the Provisional World Parliament on the island of Malta in 2001. During his lifetime Harris published some 34 books and many articles; he taught advanced philosophy in a number of major US universities. Later, I had the privilege of editing two of his books: *Earth Federation Now! Tomorrow is Two Late* (2005), for which I also wrote an introduction to the Second Edition, and *Twenty-First Century Democratic Renaissance: From Plato to Neoliberalism to Planetary Democracy* (2008), for which I wrote the Foreword. This relationship stimulated me to go deeply into Harris’ many books with the effect that I began to understand clearly not only the unsayable *suchness* that takes us beyond nihilism but the dimensions of human rationality articulated in his work that point in the same holistic and transformative direction.

My third major theoretical work was called *Triumph of Civilization: Democracy, Nonviolence, and the Piloting of Spaceship Earth* (2010). In some ways this book was intended as a more accessible, and somewhat less theoretical, presentation of the basic themes of *Ascent to Freedom*. However, this book also uniquely emphasized the many connections between democracy and the philosophy of nonviolence. It argues that the way out of our current set of interdependent crises and systemic violence is to establish an Earth Federation through actualizing, under a world constitution, the three most fundamental features of authentic democracy: positive freedom, reasonable economic equality, and a global community premised on the many “human universals” that we all share, as well as a focus on the common good of the Earth and future generations.

Part Two of *Triumph of Civilization*, called “Imperial Domination and Systematic World Disorder,” goes into the deep violence of our current world system much more fully than had been done by *Millennium Dawn* or *Ascent to Freedom*. In Part Three, the book examines in detail what a deeply nonviolent world system would and should look like. It shows that the philosophy of nonviolence as it is widely developed and practiced needs to be expanded into a philosophy of democratic world law. Nonviolence needs to permeate ethics, law, economics, and civilization. It is not just a technique of resistance to injustice, as it largely appeared to be for Martin Luther King Jr. or Mahatma Gandhi. The book describes in some detail how world law can and should integrate with nonviolence and work effectively under the *Earth Constitution*. Like *Ascent to Freedom*, this book includes the *Earth Constitution* as an appendix.

In between these theoretical investigations, I put together several collections of documents (with commentary, introductions, and supplementary chapters) that help spell out in some detail the work that is being done to transform the world disorder into a world peace system, justice system, and sustainability system. These books began with *World Revolution through World Law: Basic Documents of the Emerging Earth Federation* (2005) which includes (among other things) my comprehensive introduction, the “Manifesto of the Earth Federation” (which I wrote and was unanimously approved at the 5th session of the Provisional World Parliament in Chennai, India, 2003 as an official statement of the Parliament), and four shorter essays that I wrote during the period 1999-2005.

Volume One of *Emerging World Law: Key Documents and Decisions of the Global Constituent Assemblies and the Provisional World Parliament* appeared in 2009, edited by Eugenia Almand and myself. I wrote the Introduction and the Conclusion to this book. I think one important feature that makes this book significant is the “History of Emerging World Law” by Dr. Terence Amerasinghe, Co-President and later President of WCPA, who was my good friend and mentor from 1996 to his death in 2007. Together with two chapters by Dr. Reinhart Ruge in Reinhart’s autobiography, *Profiles of Lord Reinhart*, these memoirs by two heroes of the world peace movement (who served as Co-Presidents of WCPA for many years) give us much of the concrete detail of what happened during the early years of this historic movement.

I published an edition of the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth* in 2010 with an *Historical Introduction Commentary and Conclusion*. This book includes my own attempt not only to place the work of WCPA within the larger history of the global movement for democratic world government that began during World War One, but also my account of the history of WCPA up to that time. In addition, my commentary on the *Earth Constitution* shows in some detail the holistic character of the *Constitution* and of the world system that will emerge from its ratification. In 2015, we published a “Compact Edition” of the *Earth Constitution* as well, for which I wrote a new Introduction.

The fourth book that I edited during this period is called *The Earth Federation Movement: Founding a Social Contract for the People of Earth: History, Documents, Philosophical Foundations*. (2011). Part One of this book presents an extended philosophy of ethical, democratic, and political holism that becomes the theoretical foundation for the legitimacy of governments: any and all governments. It shows the illegitimate nature of all existing sovereign states and then underlines the “ethical and metaphysical possibilities” for a transformed world system and world paradigm. Part Two brings

together a number of key documents from the Earth Federation Movement and sessions of the Provisional World Parliament that illustrate these ideas. It includes my document (again, unanimously approved at the 12th session of the Provisional World Parliament) called "A Conceptual Model of the Earth Federation." This document shows in concrete terms the freedom, justice, peace, and sustainability that derive from the *Earth Constitution*. Part Three presents the *Constitution* itself.

My third major theoretical work examined the literature and the theoretical foundations of ecological sustainability. It was called *The Anatomy of a Sustainable World: Our Choice between Climate Change or System Change and How You Can Make a Difference* (2010). This book not only includes study of the major thinkers concerning sustainability and planetary ecological integrity, it also includes a study of the pervasive and interrelated dimensions of our current unsustainable civilization. It shows again that conversion to sustainability will require across the board spiritual, economic, political, and cultural conversion to holism in thought, word, and deed. Sustainability will necessarily require that we transform not only the sovereign nation-state system but the war system, the economic system directed toward the accumulation of private profit, and our system of personal consumerism and bourgeois self-indulgent forms of consumption. This book goes deeply into those many features of the *Earth Constitution* that address this paradigm shift and establish a world-system based on sustainability. The *Constitution* is included here as an appendix as well.

Perhaps my most recent comprehensive theoretical work is called *One World Renaissance: Holistic Planetary Transformation through a Global Social Contract* (2016). The first chapter, "Emergent Cosmic Holism," goes into the revelations coming from scientific study of the dimension of the cosmic quantum plenum more deeply than my previous works have done, showing that the human mind, as Physicist Henry Stapp puts it, is "an integral part of the highly nonlocal creative activity of the universe." This book brings together sources from the contemporary literature of holism far beyond what my earlier books included. What are the implications of this fact that the human mind participates directly in the quantum plenum? *One World Renaissance* brings the elucidation of the holistic revolution significantly forward beyond what my previous works had done. It includes the implications of holism for the development of a global ethics and for the development of world law. What are the implications of holism for the concepts of law and government? It shows that democratic world law is *presupposed* by our common humanity and human civilization. It also shows the foundational ethical-political character of universality, unity in diversity, human flourishing, the development of reason and love, and dialogue directed toward mutual understanding (Chapters Three and Four).

Chapter Five draws on *The Anatomy of a Sustainable World* to speak of the holistic economics presupposed by the *Earth Constitution*, comprising a fundamental component for an effective global social contract. Chapter Six goes into the question of war after 9/11 and the major changes that have taken place eroding and distaining the rule of law in favor of raw violence and totalitarian systems. Chapter Seven then addresses the obvious question: "Will not a single world government under the *Earth Constitution* open the threat of global tyranny?" This chapter studies works by Eric Fromm, Hannah Arendt and others on the social conditions that make possible the rise of totalitarianism. It then contrasts these with government under a conversion to the holism embodied in the *Earth Constitution*, showing that the exact opposite of these social conditions will obtain. The consequence of world government under the *Constitution* is substantially greater freedom, not less freedom.

Chapter Eight of *One World Renaissance* is entitled “Holism and Eschatology: Transforming the World’s War System to a World Peace System and Breaking the Hold of One-Dimensional Thinking.” It focuses on our immense human potential, called by some thinkers our “eschatological” potential, and shows that the depth dimension permeating human life points to the very real possibility of humanity awakening to its eschatological potential. It shows that the philosophy of nonviolence needs to be supplemented with actualization of the eschatological imperative. The global social contract for peace, justice, freedom, and sustainability emerges as the concrete result of actualizing this potential in human civilization.

Chapter Nine “Twenty-First Century Renaissance: The Reconciliation of Reason, Intuition, and Love” shows that we need to move beyond the epistemology of isolated human functions or faculties to a holistic comprehension of human awareness as including multiple dimensions, most fundamentally reason, intuition, and love. It describes something of the transformed consciousness that emerges from the synergistic interaction of these three aspects of awareness and focuses on the emergence of love as a major force in our lives and the cosmos. Finally, the Epilogue brings us back to the concrete demand for a global social contract under the *Earth Constitution* that can serve as an emergent imperative, catalyst, and foundation for a truly holistic world civilization.

I am presently doing research for a book on democracy tentatively titled *The Democratic Imperative: Legitimation Crisis and the Changing Foundations of Political Legitimacy*. The literature on democracy is large and varied with a number of fundamental issues discussed and debated. But very little of it links the theory of democracy to the paradigm shift to holism and its revolutionary implications. Even though I have discussed the theory and functional characteristics of democracy in several of the works above, none of these discussions have systematically engaged the current literature and articulated where that literature is lacking an understanding of the emergent and transformatively understood properties of democratic legitimacy. The theory of democracy, like all aspects of our human situation, also needs to be brought under the holistic counter-Copernican Revolution initiated by Kant and further articulated in *Millennium Dawn* and the above subsequent works. Let us hope and pray that humankind can assimilate a truly transformative-holistic mode of being in the world before we have engineered the conditions of our own extinction.

Radford, Virginia, 20 March 2016