

# Planetary Maturity and Our Global Social Contract

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March 2014

On the surface of it – in this early 21<sup>st</sup> century – our planet seems to be descending into global war and planetary chaos. The so-called ‘war on terror’, the fragmentation of some 193 supposedly ‘sovereign’ nation-states, the egoism and greed of the tiny ruling class that controls 50% of the world’s wealth and most of its power, the spread of weapons, wars, and violence around the globe – all these phenomena give the impression of a divided world that cannot conceive of a viable, coherent, and peaceful future. Books such as *Globalistan: How the Globalized World Is Dissolving Into Liquid War* by Pepe Escobar tend to underline this perception.

However, these surface phenomena may lead us to ignore the deep coherence and interconnections that continue to emerge worldwide pointing to a new planetary maturity. Everywhere people are recognizing the right, the necessity, and the beauty of people to be different – to look different, to have different traditions, cultures, religions, and ways of life. Everywhere people are ever-more aware of those in other parts of the world – their tragedies, their conflicts, their struggles for survival and a decent way of life. Everywhere the languages of human rights and democracy are being used, even by the rulers of apparently non-democratic nations. This article will argue that we need a global social contract under the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth* to solidify and actualize our planetary coherence and interconnections in such a way that it will both protect and respect our diversity, our freedom, and our future.

For more than a century, the central on-going discovery of all the major sciences has been the deep coherence and holism of our universe. Everything that exists is coherent and deeply integrated into its species and its environment, except for human beings. However, the immense problems of environmental destruction, poverty, and war that are devastating our planet cry out for a paradigm shift from fragmentation to holistic integration. That paradigm-shift would embody a global social contract through which human beings begin cooperating to build a decent future for our planet and all its creatures.

Ever since Einstein discovered the cosmic integration of the space-time-matter-energy continuum that we call our universe, science has been confirming and expanding this insight into the interrelated and interdependent *field-structure* of the universe and everything within it. This interconnectedness of all things has been famously discovered at the micro-cosmic quantum level as well. It exists at every level from the subatomic to the astronomical, encompassing the whole of the universe. Scientists in the late 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> century have also discovered an astonishing inter-coherence in the biological world all the way from the

genome level, through cells, organs, organisms, species, regional ecosystems, to the biosphere of our planet as a whole.<sup>i</sup>

A similar coherence has been shown to be true of human consciousness, human perceptions, and the connections between human bodies. Controlled experiments with what used to be known as “paranormal” communications have shown that prayer for sick people, even strangers, really does make a difference, that an amazing communication takes place between identical twins, or between people deeply in love, or even between strangers who have meditated together.<sup>ii</sup> The coherence and non-verbal communication for which traditional tribes and indigenous peoples are famous continues to exist in contemporary humanity, although suppressed in the modern world by a variety of fragmenting and interfering factors.

In addition, anthropologists, such as Donald E. Brown, have studied the impressive set of “human universals” that all human beings manifest.<sup>iii</sup> And linguists, such as Noam Chomsky and Steven Pinker have shown the universality of the capacity for language in all normal human beings.<sup>iv</sup> While at the same time, philosophers of language, such as Jürgen Habermas, have revealed the universality of the capacity for “dialogue directed toward mutual understanding” that characterizes all users of language.<sup>v</sup>

Similarly, in the realm of the world’s great religions, we have scholars such as John Hick showing, through an examination of the scriptures themselves, the amazing coherence of the underlying ethical vision. It is a vision that emphasizes various versions of the Golden Rule as well as the encouragement of “agape/karuna” (love and compassion) by all the great religions: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism.<sup>vi</sup> Hick, building on the work of Karl Jaspers and others, also described the process of the emergence of the common and universal structures of human consciousness simultaneously all over the world during the famous “Axial Period” of human history from about the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE.<sup>vii</sup>

Similarly, in the area of scholarship concerning ethics, the early 20<sup>th</sup> century age of positivism is significantly over in which thinkers assumed that ethical values were ‘merely subjective’ and/or ‘merely conventional’. Influential and prominent thinkers such as Habermas, John Rawls, and John Finnis are positing universal ethical principles that operate within all persons of ethical maturity and good will.<sup>viii</sup> Human beings live within a universal ‘field’ of valuation. We are all evaluative beings, every day of our lives evaluating things as good or bad, as beneficial or harmful, as beautiful or not. Every human being is a ‘pole’ or ‘node’ of this process, an ‘end’ in his or herself with rights and dignity, at the same time that we are each a wave or fluctuation in the valuational field that is humanity.

This realm of ethical scholarship is complemented by the psychological/cognitive studies of human development – the processes of human growth to higher ethical and cognitive levels. There is an amazing agreement among those who study this, from Abraham Maslow to Lawrence Kohlberg to Carol Gilligan to Habermas to Ken Wilber.<sup>ix</sup> There is a similar coherence of pattern found in the ‘stages of faith’ studied by James Fowler.<sup>x</sup> For Gilligan, for example, the process of ethical growth moves from the Egocentric level to the Ethnocentric level to the

'World-centric' level to a highest 'Integrative level'.<sup>xi</sup> The lower Egocentric and Ethnocentric levels, characterized by self-centeredness and cultural partiality, are superseded, as we grow to maturity, by levels of universality, coherence, compassion, and integration with all persons everywhere.

As John Hick and Karl Jaspers had already pointed out, the development toward maturity in individual persons is paralleled by the development toward maturity of human consciousness and the human species in general. A similar understanding of this multi-faceted development has been advanced in several books by "integral" scholar, Ken Wilber. Wilber divides these advances in our understanding of holistic development into four sectors that he calls the 'I', 'IT', 'WE', and 'ITS' quadrants of Integral Theory. The 'IT' quadrant involves the scientific development of the coherence and holism of everything in the physical universe from the micro to the macro levels.

The 'I' quadrant represents the pattern of growth of the individual consciousness, for example, from the egocentric self to the mythic self to the achiever self to the sensitive, holistic, and, finally 'integral' selves. A similar pattern obtains in the 'WE' quadrant where human beings culturally and collectively advance through stages called power gods, mythic order, scientific-rational, pluralistic, holistic, and 'integral'. Wilber is pointing out the astonishing convergence between science, personal growth, and the evolution of our human species consciousness.

His fourth, 'ITS' (or systems), quadrant largely parallels the first three but appears to be seriously lacking in identification of what is necessary at this stage of human history and development. His stages in this quadrant include early nations, corporate states, value communities, holistic commons, and 'integral mesh networks'. Wilber's 'integral vision', however, lacks the understanding of the urgent need for a global social contract. He correctly sees that human organized 'systems' will continue to evolve in evermore cooperative and coherent ways, but he fails to see the absolutely vital function of democratic world law at this point in history.

In my 2005 book, *Millennium Dawn: The Philosophy of Planetary Crisis and Human Liberation*, I offered a theory of 'planetary maturity' that encompassed this movement toward an integral and coherent planetary civilization on the Earth. I argued that 'planetary maturity' included three components, each of which was necessary and none of which is sufficient alone: a rationally based critical social theory that is complemented by development of compassion, and these together resulting in a transformative 'active nonviolence'. As the above cited thinkers substantially agree, the spiritual/ethical development of human beings includes an ever-increasing compassion for other persons and, ultimately, as the Buddhists put it, for 'all sentient beings'. Carol Gilligan, for example, observes that at the highest level of 'Integration' the caring orientation that predominates in women's development is integrated with the logical-universality orientation that predominates in the development of men. Hence, caring or compassion is fundamental along with rational universality.

Compassion alone is not sufficient because we equally need the development of our critical rationality in the form of what *Millennium Dawn* calls 'critical social theory.' We need to be able to analyze the predominant institutions that dominate our world to the point where we discern their outmoded, violent, regressive, and fragmenting character. Critical social theory, as *Millennium Dawn* articulates it, does not simply mean exposing the fragmenting and exploitative nature of the global economic system, it also means discerning the fragmenting and inherently dangerous nature of the system of sovereign nation-states. It is on this point that Wilber and so many other apparently progressive and visionary thinkers fail.

Indeed, anywhere in the world where I have dialogued with so-called 'progressive' thinkers, I often run into this same blindness. Progressives are often astute at critical analysis of the disastrous global economic system, but they frequently insist that the imperial and neo-colonial nations should 'respect the sovereignty' of the weaker, developing nations. They lack a critical insight into not only the inherent insufficiency of the system of sovereign nations but the ways in which the nation-state system is utterly inseparable from the exploitative and environmentally destructive global economic system. They lack a full-spectrum 'critical social theory'.

Perhaps all intellectually and morally mature persons recognize our common humanity and have adopted a 'world-centric' point of view. However, there is a wide gulf between intellectually recognizing our human unity-in-diversity and freeing oneself from the fragmented systems ingrained in our consciousness since birth. The sovereign nation-state system (commonly understood as first actualized at the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648) *institutionally violates* the interdependent field of our humanity – our astonishing unity-in-diversity of valuation, spirituality, cognitive development, civilizational culture, and communicative capacity.

*Millennium Dawn* goes on to show not only the inseparability of a deeply discerning critical social theory with a developing universal compassion and how the synthesis of these two sides of our human potential is actualized in a transformative 'active nonviolence'. It also explicates a more complete critical social theory. As many thinkers in the 'world federalist' tradition have understood (going all the way back to the leaders of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom during the First World War and their philosophical roots in Kant's "Perpetual Peace" of 1795), global capitalism is not the only problematic institution blocking human advance toward a harmonic world civilization.

There is also the outdated system of sovereign nation-states to which capitalism is joined at the hip, a global disorder which is inherently a war system, and exploitation system, a system of national egoism, and a system of planetary fragmentation. The system of corporate capitalist domination uses the powerful nation-states and their military might to protect and extend its control of markets, governments, resources, land, and labor over the entire planet. Most everyone recognizes this at some level, but few draw the clear, logical conclusions.

My subsequent books, such as *Ascent to Freedom: Practical and Philosophical Foundations of Democratic World Law* (2008) and *Triumph of Civilization: Democracy, Nonviolence, and the Piloting of Spaceship Earth* (2010), explicated the holism emerging from all the sciences and indicated by the phrase ‘planetary maturity.’ These books present an analysis showing how the planetary economic and nation-state system can and must be transformed into a global social contract, embracing the rights, dignity, and freedom of all citizens of the Earth under the democratic rule of a World Parliament premised on the principle of unity-in-diversity. There is simply no other viable way to establish a beneficent world-system that embraces the coherence and integration of human development, protects the planetary environment, establishes sustainable economic principles for the Earth, as well as ends war and disarms the nations to the point where their diversity can be embraced and celebrated rather than fragmented into endless conflicts.

Critics of this idea of global democratic government often project their present experience of the oppressive, militarized, national security-state onto a planetary scale and claim that they fear a global tyranny. But the maturity on which the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth* is based is world-centric, compassionate, universalistic, and transformative. You cannot have the oppressive, militarized, national security state without enemies, and the *Earth Constitution* most fundamentally does away with the concept of national ‘allies’ or ‘enemies’ that functions as the dark underbelly of the concept of a sovereign state recognizing no effective law over itself. Sovereign states, almost by definition, are states in economic and military competition with other states for power, resources, and markets. Global tyranny may come about when one state dominates all the others, putting weapons in space, militarized drones in every continent, and achieving a ‘full-spectrum dominance’ over all air, lands, and oceans. However, the Earth Federation is precisely the structural change designed to prevent such tyranny and make it impossible while, at the same time, empowering the emerging holistic paradigm.

The *Earth Constitution* eliminates this war and this competition-model (the so-called ‘political realism’ by which most nation-states continue to operate today) and initiates the ‘unity-in-diversity’ model of planetary maturity. Since the degree to which institutions condition human consciousness is today common knowledge, it should be clear that the unity-in-diversity model of mature planetary government will quickly transform the thinking of human beings to one of participating in a common future and cooperatively dealing with global issues like food security, education, environmental sustainability, and the ending of war. Just as today’s militarized, national-security states tend to attract thoughtless and immature persons and place them in positions of power so the global social contract will clearly attract, and elect, more mature persons as leaders and officials.

Study of the *Earth Constitution* reveals the multiplicity of ways that unity-in-diversity is not only written into its preamble but designed into the very foundations of the Earth Federation government, drawing, in dozens of ways, on every continent, every country, every race, and every religion in the framing of global laws protecting human rights, ending war (and disarming the nations), protecting the environment (and converting to sustainable economics), and ending poverty and disease worldwide. This principle converts the autonomous, sovereign

nation-states into federated units governing themselves regionally within a democratic constitutional framework for all, and it converts exploitative corporate capitalism to a beneficent global economics promoting sustainability within reasonable economic freedom and equality for all.

The phrase ‘global social contract’ symbolizes the integration and developing maturity of human consciousness. People agree to work together, in a concrete and practical global democracy, to solve our problems and advance from a war and scarcity world-system to a peace and prosperity world-system. That is their ‘contract’ – mutual cooperation, unity-in-diversity, and the rule of democratically legislated due process of law for everyone on Earth. The phrase ‘social contract’ is used this way, for example, by contemporary political theorist Benjamin Barber.<sup>xii</sup> As such, the phrase has positive connotations connected with the development of our human project toward world-centric, coherent, and compassionate relationships. The ‘global social contract’ changes the paradigm by which we understand our Earth and the human project from a war, violence, conflict, and tyranny model to a peace, nonviolence, cooperative, and freedom model.

The ratification of the *Earth Constitution* and the foundation of the Federation of Earth need not be accomplished only by advanced ‘integral thinkers’, nor by exclusively ‘world-centric’ individuals. Nearly every person can understand the advantages of ending war, protecting the environment, and eliminating severe poverty. However, once established, its ‘integral’ and coherent structure will immediately begin moving the people of Earth into the needed paradigm shift (already inherent in the *Constitution*) from fragmentation to unity-in-diversity. Even the world police, under the *Constitution*, are trained in conflict resolution, protection of universal human rights, and nonviolent methods of apprehension.

Neither is the phrase ‘global social contract’ intended here to indicate the specific content of the traditional social-contract theory of John Locke, or any of the other 18<sup>th</sup> century social contract theorists. They popularized the phrase, but the 21<sup>st</sup> century assigns a very different meaning. It no longer means the idea of autonomous individuals who claim a priori rights over and against government and who form government primarily for the protection of their personal ‘life, liberty, and property’. The model of democracy developed by Locke (that is substantially at the heart of the U.S. Declaration of Independence and Constitution) is not the model of democracy as understood by persons of planetary maturity, persons who have developed their ability for an insightful and mature critical social theory, compassion, and active nonviolence.

The Lockean model divides the planet into a collection of sovereign states that, effectively, recognize no law above themselves. In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, not only Locke, but Baruch Spinoza, Thomas Hobbes, Immanuel Kant, and G.W.F. Hegel recognized that the system of sovereign nations was inherently a ‘war-system’, since there was no social contact among the nations themselves, and the system meant that nations recognized no effective laws above themselves – resulting in what Hobbes called a ‘war of all against all’ at the interstate level.

As the present system of neo-Lockean, and neo-Hobbsian nation-states continues to endanger human civilization itself with the possibility of nuclear war, as well as engulfing the world in the perpetual violence of the wars on terrorism and numerous local wars, while at the same time ignoring an ever-spreading global poverty and rapidly escalating climate collapse, we ask what practical options are available to humanity if we wish to establish a viable and decent future for the world's two billion children? The only truly practical and reasonable answer is ratification of the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth*.

The *Constitution* was written through a process of four constituent assemblies between 1968 in Interlaken, Switzerland, and 1991 in Troia, Portugal, each attended by a large international constituency of world citizens, international lawyers, and integral thinkers. It is a document that embodies, in dozens of ways, a critical social understanding of our flawed, Hobbesian world-system, a deep compassion for the equality, freedom, and dignity of all human beings, and the insight concerning how to establish a nonviolent world-system free of both structural and military forms of violence, a world based, as Mahatma Gandhi expressed it, on truth rather than lies.<sup>xiii</sup>

The best way to proceed to establish a global social contract that both stems from and promotes planetary maturity is to work for the ratification of the *Earth Constitution* under the criteria specified in Article 17. It is the only real, viable option available to humanity since all other initiatives, for example, environmental activism, human rights work, disarmament work, etc., form only partial initiatives that will ultimately require the global protection of democratically legislated world law. Not only this, but all partial initiatives tend to leave the global economic and sovereign nation-state system in place, thereby ultimately engaging in positive work that is ultimately defeated by the system itself. Our global social contract, on the other hand, goes right to the heart of our multifaceted and interconnected problems. It places human relationships on the principle of unity-in-diversity and frames these relationships within enforceable, democratically legislated laws.

The *Earth Constitution* is found in many places on the internet and is available from publishers in printed form. It has been translated into some 23 languages and is the best known and most widely admired of the various 'constitutions' that have been proposed for the Earth. We are not talking about some vague, idealistic 'Earth Charter' or unrealizable 'Millennium Development Goals'. We are talking about a real constitution that provides the procedures and protocols for equitable world laws, enforceable over all individuals. The *Constitution* does not abolish the U.N. but integrates the many valuable U.N. agencies into a democratic framework that gives the Earth Federation government the real authority to end war, protect human rights, and protect our global environment. If we really want an 'integral theory of everything' as Wilber proposes, we need to add near the top of his fourth or 'systems' quadrant the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth*. This may not be the highest system that human beings will attain in their development toward ever-higher levels of consciousness and organization, but it is exactly the global social contract that is needed for the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

This is the century that will determine whether we survive to further develop our unimaginably vast human potential. It will not happen unless we establish a real paradigm-shift away from the fragmented systems that now threaten our future on this planet and establish a holistic peace-system, sustainability-system, and justice-system that makes possible that transformed future. The key document for this vital transition of civilization from fragmentation to unity-in-diversity is in our hands, only thirty pages long, ready to go. We need to act from our developing planetary maturity, for the sake of our children and the future, and establish a global social contract through ratification of the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth*.

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Notes:

- i Laszlo, Ervin, *Science and the Akashic Field: An Integral Theory of Everything*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 2007.
- ii Ibid., pp. 30-34.
- iii Brown, Donald E., *Human Universals*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1991.
- iv Pinker, Steven, *The Language Instinct: How the Mind Creates Language*. New York: Harper Perennial, 1994.
- v Habermas, Jürgen, *On the Pragmatics of Communication*. Edited by Maeve Cooke. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998.
- vi Hick, John, *An Interpretation of Religion: Human Responses to the Transcendent*. Second Edition. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004.
- vii Ibid., Chaps. 17 and 18. Cf. Jaspers, Karl, *The Origin and Goal of History*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953.
- viii Habermas, Rawls, and Finnis: The substantial agreement among these thinkers involves their broad universalist orientation. I am not arguing that they agree with one another in all details of ethical theory. See Habermas *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. Thomas McCarthy, trans. Boston: Beacon Press, 1979. Rawls, John, *A Theory of Justice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971. Finnis, John, *Natural Law and Natural Rights*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980.
- ix Wilber, Ken, *The Integral Vision*. Boston: Shambhala, 2007. See also Wilber, *Integral Psychology: Consciousness, Spirit, Psychology, Therapy*. Boston: Shambhala, 2000.
- x Fowler, James, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning*. San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1981.
- xi Gilligan, Carol, *In a Different Voice*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1982.
- xii Barber, Benjamin, "The War of All Against All: Terror and the Politics of Fear," in Verna V. Gehring, ed., *War After September 11*. New York: Roman and Littlefield Publishers, 2003.
- xiii Martin, Glen T., ed., *A Constitution for the Federation of Earth: with Historical Introduction, Commentary, and Conclusion*. Appomattox, VA: Institute for Economic Democracy Press, 2010. See Gandhi, M.K., *Gandhi: An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1993.