

Chapter 2

Holism and Ethics

The task of reason is to fathom the deeper depths of the many-sidedness of things. We must not expect simple answers to far-reaching questions. However far our gaze penetrates, there are always heights beyond which block our vision.

The art of progress is to preserve order amid change, and to preserve change amid order. Life refuses to be embalmed alive. The more prolonged the halt in some unrelieved system of order, the greater the crash of a dead society.

—Alfred North Whitehead

2.1 Evolutionary Holism: The Emergence of Reason and Freedom

THE ethics of holism is scientific and cosmic, reflecting, as it does, the fundamental holistic principle of the universe as discovered by contemporary science. It recognizes human beings as integral to the cosmic process, not a mere accident of despair and hopelessness as modeled, for example, in much of Existentialism. A human being represents a new whole which is “a qualitative leap” that cannot be explained in terms of its parts. The ethics

of holism encompasses traditional ethics but goes beyond the anthropocentric orientation of much traditional ethics (and beyond the transcendental command structure of much religious ethics) to affirmation of this cosmic framework, which means that a tremendous revolutionary hope is arising in humankind: the realization that “practical utopia” is indeed possible. Our gigantic hope is based on the vision of the very real possibilities for a new world, new institutions, and a new era of peace, justice, and sustainability for our planet.

Although some philosophers make a stipulative distinction between ethics and morality, for my purposes in this chapter this is not necessary. Ethics (or morality) is about relationships; it is about how human beings creatively behave in relation to others and to the world around them, not just toward other persons but toward all of reality. As Michael von Brück points out in his book *The Unity of Reality*, a person is not the same as an *individuum*. Individual unities are ontologically distinct from other such entities: “*Person*, on the other hand, is a center of relationships. The personal center unites within itself a theoretically infinite number of relational structures” (1991: 197). Each person lives as a developing, growing center of relationships whose very being (as self-aware) involves a synthesis and transcendence of those relationships.

Ethics today, therefore, is understood as deriving not only from human practical reason, and from the human rational will with its desire for basic human goods. Ethics is also derived from our place in the cosmos, from the emergent wholeness of our selves within the communities formed by humanity, nature, evolution, and the cosmos. Reason, intuition, and love emerge together within human life from the very heart of cosmic existence. Similarly, Moltmann concludes that “modern anthropocentrism is deadly for human beings themselves”:

The modern split into soul and body, subject and object, person and thing, does justice neither to the totality of human beings, nor to their natural living community with the

Earth. If the modern fissure is rigorously pushed through, human bodiliness is destroyed and the natural community of life is ruined. (2012: 222)

Ethics needs to be cosmos-centered, reuniting fact and value, integrated into “the natural community of life.” Unlike traditional virtue ethics (formulated by thinkers such as Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, and our contemporary, John Finnis), the ethics of holism understands human flourishing not only as anthropocentric, linked only to claims about “human nature,” or to human practical reason, but as truly universal and cosmic. This larger perspective by no means negates virtue ethics, but rather encompasses it within the holistic and cosmic framework that has emerged since the 20th century.

The principle that animates human reason is also the fundamental organizational principle of the cosmos itself, which is relational through and through. The universe is not only organized as a series of evermore complex and evolving systems of parts-within-wholes up to, and including, the ultimate, encompassing wholeness of the cosmos itself (and beyond that to the One beyond name and form), but human beings are themselves such wholes as individuals, while at the same time parts functioning within the holism of the human species, planetary nature, and the cosmos.

Human reason both discerns this holism everywhere in nature and is itself a manifestation of it. “The important point,” Harris writes, “is that reflective intelligence and reason are seen as intrinsic and essential to the universe as a whole” (2000a: 280). The drive (or *telos*) within nature is toward ever-greater forms of holism and the *telos* within us is likewise toward ethical and intellectual holism. In Whitehead’s language, this *telos* might be alternatively expressed as “the lure for feeling”: “The primary element in the ‘lure for feeling’ is the subject’s prehension of the primordial nature of God” (1978: 189).

In either case, the early-modern conception of a universal deterministic causality of the past over the future is broken and we

are open to the “lure” or call of the whole. Jonas concludes: “Since the dissolution of classical determinism by quantum theory, this ‘openness’, i.e. the causal giving-way for such purposive spontaneous interventions, is no longer a prohibitive problem theoretically” (1996: 211). Here again, it is not “pure reason” alone that lures or functions as a *telos* for human ethical freedom. It is the wholeness of our being: including reason, intuition, feeling, desire, and love—these, in turn “lured” by the holistic structures of the cosmos. The wholeness of our responses to existence become integrated into the networks of relationships that make up our lives. As Kara Mitra expresses this:

All of us, individually and as members of a group, culture, society, or in whatever way we want to identify ourselves, are what we are in relationship to all time, all space, all humans, all nonhumans, and we are not substantive in the sense of being independent and solely self-determined. We are all networks of relationships. Each individual or group is a specific yet dynamic network. Some of these networks may be more inclusive or less inclusive; yet each is a specific network, which is also in relationship to all the rest of the networks. (In Swidler, 1987: 252)

Holism means that mind, just as much as matter, is now understood as integral to the emerging complexity of the universe. Our “minds” are not simply autonomous subjective centers of thought and value. Rather, our minds are now inseparable from the dynamic relationships in which we participate: family, community, society, humanity, the natural world, and the cosmos. We participate in these relationships through the wholeness of our being, which includes reason, intuition, feeling, desire, and love. We need to articulate for ethics a new “*humanum*,” as Hans Küng expresses this (in Swidler, 1987: 248), a *humanum* in which our common existential situation of relationship becomes expressed in values shared simply because we are all human.

The material that we have to work with is the rich historical material of the great religious and ethical traditions as well

as the rich diversity of our capacity for creative participation in the relationships that make up our lives, especially reason, intuition, and love. What has uniquely emerged from the cosmic process in us that we call “reason” appears as a self-aware capacity to conceptualize, universalize, and represent our situation to ourselves (as I will discuss further in chapters Four, Eight, and Nine). From this self-aware reasoning process, it appears that freedom has emerged into the cosmos, freedom as a deeply mysterious openness to the future in which we now exist as centers of relationship not only to the many elements in the cosmos but in relationship to a future as well. We appear to be under a “lure” or, for many, a “command” to actualize a transformed future for human beings and the Earth.

This means that human desires, emotions, intuitions, and feelings must be included within the scope of our ethics, not separated off from the rational moral will as Kant insists in his 18th century dualistic ethics. Kant’s “categorical imperative” (1964), however, correctly understood the intrinsic dignity of human beings. Recognizing this dignity, reason commanded that one should “always treat every person as an end in themselves, never merely as a means.” This is indeed a fundamental principle of ethics. In formulating this principle, Kant understood that the only moral laws that can be obeyed without question are moral laws that we *legislate for ourselves* according to the principles of universality and logical consistency given by the categorical imperative. In this he represents a significant advance because he brings human creative freedom into the heart of living responsibly through responding to the multiplicity of our situations and relationships to others, society, nature, and the cosmos.

However, Kant conceived of the body and its desires as part of the determined, mechanistic, empirical world, a view he thought necessitated by early-modern science. Morality required that we do our duty “regardless of our inclinations.” Holism overcomes this dualism between rationally willed ethical principles and irrational or arational emotions and desires. As John Finnis affirms in

his 1983 book *Fundamentals of Ethics*: “When we fill out Kant’s inadequate conception of humanity that must be respected in every act, and identify basic goods intrinsic to humanity. . .we are not adulterating or diverging from the principle of respect for persons. We are simply treating persons in their non-dualistic wholeness” (125).

Kant’s tacit mind-body dualism took the form of a “reason versus inclinations” dualism: it was reason alone that understood the categorical imperative and required a “good will” to do what is right “regardless of inclinations.” The body and its inclinations were part of the mechanistic, determined physical universe. However, such a dualism is not correct, and no longer rationally necessary to secure the categorical imperative. Freedom does not break into our determined world from the unknowable “noumenal” world, as Kant assumed. Bloch describes this situation:

Kant himself, whose ethics developed completely as an autonomy of the *human will*, of a *human spontaneity*, posits freedom outside the realm of empirical appearances and its rigorously determined natural necessity. Freedom only comes from the “intelligible character,” that is, man as a “citizen of intelligible worlds,” and as the condition of moral behavior (as the faculty of conforming to the moral law in all circumstances), it is not an object of empirical knowledge, but a postulate of transcendent faith. (1986b: 161)

For Bloch, freedom is non-dualistically integral to our humanity. There is one aspect of Kant’s thought, however, that recognizes holism and points forward to the holism of the self and the world. Kant explicitly recognizes that the “ideal of pure reason” (that is the ideal of knowledge and science) is the whole. The human being as knower *presupposes* the whole as the totality implicit in all investigations. The world appears to us as a coherent process of bodies and relationships within the totality we call the universe. Holism is implicit in the self-aware human mind from the beginning (1965b: 133-149).

Kant also recognizes that all the disparate thoughts and perceptions within the human mind could never represent a coherent world within which we could operate socially, culturally, technically, or scientifically without the “synthesis of the manifold of perceptions” in the unity of human consciousness. Thus a direct link is established in his thought between the holism of the universe (presupposed in the very concepts of knowledge and science) and the holism of the human self. Like the holism implicit in knowledge, the holism implicit in human consciousness is called an “ideal of pure reason” (1965b: 485-495). To be a “self” at all requires that the manifold of thoughts and perceptions be integrated into a coherent unity, and our perception of the unity of the world that we perceive is directly linked to that unity of the self. The holism of the self and that of the world imply one another.

Kant lived before Darwin, whose 1859 book *On the Origin of Species* propelled civilization forward toward the contemporary understanding that *everything* evolves, that everything is in *relationship* to everything else, and that everything is part of *the universe story*. Darwin’s 19th century also began to understand the geological age of Earth, lending coherence to the general evolutionary thesis. By the 20th century, scientists realized that humans have biologically emerged from the very long process of the evolution of life on Earth. Like most other higher animals, we tend to be very social, ultimately developing the genetic predisposition to speak language, which ability cements us to the human community to the point where we understand that our personhood (our individuality) is inseparably united to all of civilization. Our very essence as human beings is to be both individual and inseparably bound to the human community. The holism of the human community and that of the human personality mutually imply one another.

What has evolved out of the cosmic process of evolution that resulted in the creation of Earth and our solar-system some five billion years ago, and in the “immense journey” of the evolution of life on the Earth over the past three and a half billion years, is

not only the human “mind,” creatures self-aware who can become an “object to themselves” as George Herbert Mead expresses this, but the *social character* of language-speaking beings who are a necessary condition for the emergence of the human mind.

Our biological-psychological bodies and minds have evolved over millions of years, and from this same process, human societies have emerged, exhibiting the coherence and order characteristic of mind. From this very long process (given that life itself is approximately one third to one fourth the age of the entire universe) a new level of mind has emerged: the self-aware capacity not only to know, but to be self-aware that we know. As Jonas summarizes: “It follows from this that final causes, but also values and value-distinctions, must be included in the (not utterly neutral) concept of the cause of the universe, and that they occur there as a potentiality for them and at the same time as a tolerant openness for their intervention into the determining system of efficient causes” (1996: 173)

Knowledge necessarily involves both a knowing relation to the world and the self-awareness of that relation, a relation that includes final causes and values. We can now envision the world as a whole as the ultimate object of human knowledge (although in some respects the world cannot be “objectified” as we will see in Chapter Nine). We can self-consciously know ourselves as knowers of this process through the unity of our consciousness, deriving final causes and values as part of this knowing.

Kant first clearly articulated what has been confirmed by the 20th century sciences. It is this capacity for self-knowledge that makes each of us a human personality and gives us immeasurable dignity and human rights. The ultimate principle of interpretation, of truth, is *coherence*, the coherence of holism. The fact (of holism) and human values (the values of harmony, peace, and holistic integration) emerge together. “The ultimate principle of interpretation,” Harris states, “is, in consequence, the principle of value.” (1954: 206)

For Harris, this is because the holistic process of evolution in the universe can now be understood *teleologically*: progressively greater levels of coherence and order emerging out of the process. Processes are understood in terms of the wholes within which they operate and toward which they develop within the contexts of the holistic fields that make them what they are. In terms of evolution on planet Earth, a human being is the highest development of this process that we know. Teleological purposes in nature “constitute an order of ascending grades of value” (ibid. 205). A human being as the highest end of evolution that we know is also the bearer of intrinsic value. Indeed, through us the universe becomes aware of itself and blossoms into freedom and responsibility.

Reason, therefore, need not be a specific anthropocentric feature of humanity mysteriously linked to the unknowable intelligible world, as Kant concluded. Reason emerges as our self-aware ability to cognize relations in the world, to critically, empirically, evaluatively, and dialectically examine and participate in these relations, to build on the work of past investigators, and to produce books and other media that preserve our investigations for future generations. These in turn can be critically examined and integrated into the on-going process of articulating the multiplicity of relations and processes that make up the universe. Reason manifests the holism of the universe that has emerged to self-awareness in the human phenomenon. The hidden processes and relations of the universe emerge into greater actuality as they are articulated and embodied in human knowledge. Harris writes:

The objective complements the subjective and supplies its shortcomings, confronting it as an opposite; yet each includes the other, and although the objective transcends the limits of the subjective, it also requires and depends upon it. The organization of social life is the work of reason, but rational self-consciousness can only arise within the social milieu. (1992: 40)

Cosmic evolution has produced the human body, society, mind, and reason as integral parts of this process. Individual reason and reason as embodied in civilization and in nature mutually imply one another. Descartes' opposition of mind and body as two different kinds of substance is mistaken. Mind and reason are as natural to the cosmic process as is bodily evolution. Mind and reason emerge as aspects of the cosmic "universe story" localized, as far as we know for sure, in the human phenomenon. This evolutionary holistic understanding applies to freedom as well. It is no longer necessary, as Kant thought, to posit freedom as breaking into the deterministic mechanistic world from the unknowable intelligible (noumenal) world. Freedom, responsibility, the ability to consider choices and alternative courses of action, all emerge with the concomitant emergence of society, mind, reason, and self-awareness.

Hegel recognized this holistic aspect of Kant's thought that I have been describing. However, he also recognized that the complementary and interrelated holisms of self and world were not static and timeless features of existence but that they were evolving dialectically—this holistic situation emerged, for Hegel, in the historical becoming of "being" and continued dialectically toward ever-greater knowledge and understanding of the whole. The differentiated parts within holistic fields relate to one another through dynamic conflicts that are transformed with the emergence of higher levels of wholeness in which the relations of the parts are simultaneously canceled yet preserved within the higher synthesis (a process he called *Aufheben*). He also recognized that freedom is integral to this dialectical process, not something that breaks into a determined world from an unknowable "noumenal" realm, as Kant had argued. In this regard, he argued, the history of humanity is the history of the emergence of freedom. Freedom naturally emerges from the world-process.

Today, we are beginning to understand that freedom indeed emerges out of the holism of the evolving universe. Laszlo writes: "There is more to human freedom in the world than a science

based on the old paradigm would have us believe. We are an organic part of a nonlocally interconnected universe, and we interact not only with its manifest dimension, but also with its Akasha dimension" (2014: 61). Freedom can be considered an "openness" to the future, as Bloch puts it (1986b:162), in which the future is not merely a product of past deterministic causes but rather is teleologically (or eschatologically) summoned by the structures and meanings of the wholes in which all things participate. As Theologian Paul Tillich puts it (see Chapter Eight), we are summoned by the future, and our decisions can creatively respond, or not respond, to that summons.

Human responsibility, moral imperatives, and distinctions between right and wrong emerge from the evolutionary processes of the universe as part of the openness of the world itself toward the future. As von Brück describes this process: "Realization of the personal implies freedom and creativity. For while new relationships are integrated by being brought into meaningful connections with the present crystalized forms (without which no integration would be possible), integrating the new also alters the structure of the person: the person *is* the alteration, and its continuity is dialectical" (1991: 198). Each of us as persons, as a dialectical synthesis of relationships involving not only other persons but the whole of existence, moves into the future through a holistic process of integration. Ethics is in large measure our responsibility for this process, both its action in the present and its outcomes in the future.

Ethics, therefore, is transformed from a process of merely obeying principles formulated by some cultural or religious authority to a process of creatively responding to life. Each person, like the cosmos itself, becomes an emerging process of holistic freedom involved with innumerable relationships with persons, nature, society, and the world. Just as Kant had placed creative freedom at the core of ethics by affirming that the moral law is *self-legislated* by each free, rational being in relation to an ever-changing concrete situation comprised of inner inclinations and

outer circumstances, so holism transcends Kant's dualism but not this immense responsibility for creatively, humanly, and compassionately responding to life in an on-going process of holistic development toward harmony, peace, justice, freedom, and sustainability.

Jonas even imagines the evolutionary process as the working out of the destiny of God: "entering into the adventure of space and time, the deity held nothing back of itself: no uncommitted or unimpaired part remained to direct, correct, and ultimately guarantee the devious working out of its destiny in creation" (1996: 134). For Jonas, this imagery suggests "the transcendent importance of our deeds." The human person becomes a "moral trustee of an immortal cause" (ibid. 128), for the future of the deity is, in part, delegated to us. However one imagines the deeper features of *the universe story*, the parameters of holism and the integral arising of mind and freedom as "natural" features of the cosmic process remain, today, widely accepted (cf. Chapter Nine).

It is important to observe that in all these formulations that freedom and responsibility exist as *my* freedom and responsibility. There is no impartial, objective "science of ethics," as Utilitarianism would have it, that can equate my responsibility with some objectively describable action that can be evaluated independently of me by some consequentialist calculus. In this some of the Existentialists such as Kierkegaard had it right: I am responsible for my actions; I am responsible to treat every person as an end in themselves; I am a free and responsible holistic center of relationships. Yet my freedom is also our (human) freedom. We are also collectively responsible for the kind of future that is now being created.

This world is a whole, and does not require appeal to another unknowable world to account for freedom—for this appeal carries the unfortunate consequence that human beings become a kind of wayfarer or sojourner in a world alien to their deepest needs and desires. *This world* is the place where the drama of an emergent and as yet unknown future is played out, requiring real

consciousness-raising and effective participation by human beings themselves. We are not the playthings of another world, nor victims of an absolute determinism inherent in this world. Our burgeoning freedom makes us the emerging focus and “leading shoot” of evolution itself.

In saying this, I am not denying a transcendent-immanent dimension to the world, as I will make very clear in Chapters Eight and Nine. Traditional theology always recognized both the immanence and transcendence of the Infinite, as, for example, both Meister Eckhart and Nicholas of Cusa make clear in very different ways. Some thinkers have spoken of “immanent transcendence and transcendent immanence,” suggesting recognition of the “depths” of things in ways that do not violate the holism of reality (Brück, 1991: 116). As Ken Wilber declares: “The Absolute is both the highest state of being and the ground of all being; it is both the goal of evolution and the ground of evolution; the highest stage of development and the reality or suchness of all stages of development. . . . If Spirit is completely transcendent, it is also completely immanent” (1996: 289).

But holism understands that the meaning of the present, and the meaning of the emergent future, are not mere appearances of some other world but are the genuine reality of whatever is happening in the universe. In *Process and Reality* Alfred North Whitehead called this movement the “consequential nature of God.” Something (of which we now may only have a dim apprehension), having to do with the meaning of the whole, the Ground of Being, and human freedom is emerging through the process. In terms of planet Earth, some thinkers, such as Enrique Dussel, José Miranda, Mahatma Gandhi, and Martin Luther King, Jr., call this the eschatological demand for “the beloved community,” the beloved community as local, human, planetary, and cosmic.

The reconciliation of mind and body does not mean that self-discipline and the sublimating of our desires and inclinations into the ends recognized by reason, intuition, and love are not necessary. Plato understood and outlined the necessary process for

the development of virtue through Socrates' speech in the *Symposium*. Desire can be creatively sublimated at ever-higher levels consonant with our cognitive, spiritual and moral growth. And Kant also recognized that virtue requires the molding of desires and inclinations to conform with the principles of moral action.

However, the central *telos* within us is directed toward the same holism and harmony that reason also recognizes. The holism recognized by science and the *telos* for holism within us complement one another. We are the principle of holism manifest in human form, not simply some contingent cosmic accident. Irrational impulses and instincts need to be molded by reason and the *telos* for harmony into genuine virtues.

2.2 The Reintegration of Fact and Value

A fundamental concept in this new ethics is creative harmony. Unlike deontic and Kantian ethics, the ethics of holism does not create a dualism between the mind and body, nor between reason and human inclinations. It heals these problematic dualisms that have plagued much ethical thought for centuries. Similarly, unlike the alternative modern ethical tradition called Consequentialism or Utilitarianism (first formulated in the 19th century by Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill and followed today by thinkers such as Garrett Hardin and Peter Singer), holistic ethics does not sacrifice the integrity of human beings: who can be used as a means for some imagined ideal end under the maxim: "what is right is what promotes the greatest good of the greatest number of people." There is no temptation to sacrifice this person or these people for the greater good of some abstract majority.

Holism sees every human being as having intrinsic and inviolable dignity, as does the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights. This dignity does not separate us from the rest of the empirical world (as does Kantian ethics) but unites us to the dignity of existence inherent in all things, a dignity compacted like a laser beam in our human form. Each human being expresses both the

dignity of his or her existence as a concrete, individual person (as Michael Rosen emphasizes in his 2012 book on dignity), and each shares the dignity of being part of humanity (as George Kateb emphasizes in his 2011 book on dignity).

For holism, such different dimensions are no longer mutually exclusive alternatives. Nor does holism necessarily deny the otherness of other persons, their infinite depths, so to speak, that is emphasized by Emmanuel Levinas (1969). Finally, holism has no need to deny Kierkegaard's existentialist sense of the infinite significance of making decisions and facing the absolute seriousness of this life in the here and now. There is, of course, for finite beings living time-bound between past and future, a level on which our decisions are either/or rather than both/and, as Kierkegaard insisted. As Jonas expresses this: "*In moments of decision, when our whole being is involved, we feel as if acting under the eyes of eternity*" (1996: 120). Nevertheless, holism remains the framework for all of this.

The human mind, like the human body, reflects the holism of nature and the universe and, in turn, discerns this holism. We are at once both all humanity and a unique perspective on that totality. Moreover, mind and body are not two different kinds of things but two aspects of one emerging reality. Fact is no longer separated from value, for what is valuable is now discerned by science and reason as holistic and harmonious: cosmic, ecological, economic, social, and personal harmony. The intrinsic dignity of parts cannot be separated from the intrinsic dignity of wholes. A totalitarian denial of individuality becomes as impossible as the egoistic denial of community. Errol E. Harris writes:

The new metaphysic abolishes the opposition of fact to value, for the criterion of truth and value is the same: coherent order and unity. No fallacy is involved in deducing what ought to be, and to be done, from the general nature of the world and its organizing principle, which, when it becomes self-conscious, characterizes and defines human nature. For what ought to be done is what promotes health,

unity, and harmony, as well in the biosphere, as in human history. (2000a: 261-62)

The pervasive positivism of much political and ethical thought throughout the past century has derived in part from the historic, apparently unbridgeable, distinction between fact and value, between what is the case and what should be the case. This distinction was made by such 18th century thinkers as Kant and David Hume and is integral to the early-modern paradigm. This paradigm, we have seen, found no place for the human mind within its epistemology of objective observation and empirical testing. A trained observer ignored his or her values, feelings, and personal beliefs and just observed the facts. Subjective thoughts, feelings, and desires had nothing to do with the objective facts. Within the objective set of facts, no value was observed, attributions of value were considered merely subjective assessments imposed upon the impersonal reality of the situation.

The book that launched the career of Jürgen Habermas as a major thinker, *Knowledge and Human Interests* (1972), by contrast, effectively revealed the primordial connections between values and facts in three major areas of concern: the technical interest in the control of nature, the historical-hermeneutical interest of the social sciences and humanities, and in the cognitive interest of all humanity in human emancipation to freedom, autonomy, and responsibility. Habermas summarizes this process as “the insight that the truth of statements is linked in the last analysis to the intention of the good and true life” (1972: 317).

The contemporary holistic paradigm has discovered that the human mind is an integral part of the reality investigated by science, that science, in relation to values, arises from a primordial human “life-world” that includes an “intersubjective” dimension from which the distinction between objectivity and subjectivity subsequently arises. Jonas affirms that “to ground the ‘good’ or ‘value’ in being is to bridge the alleged chasm between ‘is’ and ‘ought’” (1984: 79). A human being is an integral part of the holism of the world, grounded in being, a “participator” as Fritjof

Capra puts it, not simply an objective observer. Mind has emerged from this process of evolutionary holism just as much as have life, sensation, perception, and feeling (all of which are aspects of mind that we share with other creatures on Earth). And this means that the values that arise from mind as part of its holistic response to life are a real part of the world, not “merely subjective.” Capra writes:

During the scientific revolution in the seventeenth century, values were separated from facts, and ever since that time we have tended to believe that scientific facts are independent of what we do and are therefore independent of our values. In reality, scientific facts emerge out of an entire constellation of human perceptions, values, and actions—in one word, out of a paradigm—from which they cannot be separated. (1996: 11)

The new holistic paradigm understands values as arising from human reasoning, intuition, and love just as much as scientific thought. Both modes of reasoning are part of the “entire constellation” of our response to the world and are intertwined with one another. Like mind itself, values arise naturally from human reasoning, social interaction, and our deeper relation to the ultimate principle of the Cosmos, and are not “merely subjective.” Many traditional thinkers, such as Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, and Thomas Aquinas, affirmed similar views.

The human mind makes value judgments and some of these, at least, derive from its being a creative expression of the fundamental organizing principle of the universe. In the words of Jonas, in them we hear the voice of *being*, which is the voice of harmony, unity-in-diversity, and responsibility. The holism and rationality of the mind embody the same holism and rationality that are manifest in the order of nature and in the very fact of existence. Holism, we have seen, means that we participate in *internal relations* with other people, nature, and ultimately all things. Mind is no longer divorced from nature, and fact and value are now

understood as integral aspects of the same holistic reality. Jonas writes:

To ground the “good” or “value” in being is to bridge the alleged chasm between “is” and “ought.” For the good or valuable, when it is this of itself and not just by the grace of someone’s desiring, needing, or choosing, is by its very concept a thing whose being possible entails the demand for its being or becoming actual and thus turns into an “ought” when a will is present that can hear the demand and translate it into action. . . . In that case, axiology becomes a part of ontology. (1984: 79)

The consequence of this is that harmony and holism themselves have become the new “categorical imperative” of ethics. *Our responsibility is to discern our internal relationships with others and with the orders of living and natural things. From this careful assessment of these relationships, we can discern the principles of ethical action and apply these to specific situations.* What attitudes, actions, and institutions promote health and harmony in the family, the community, the nation, and the world? We confront a world of particular cultures, races, nations, and individuals that often appear antithetical to one another, but emergent and evolutionary holism discerns the larger patterns of wholeness and acts to unite the particulars into evermore encompassing harmonious wholes in ways that do not deny the integrity of the particulars but rather fulfills them. Stapp indicates the impact of the newfound wholeness on values:

What we find, therefore, are not elementary space-time realities, but rather a web of relationships in which no part can stand alone; every part derives its meaning and existence only from its place within the whole. . . .

More appropriate to this forum is a discussion of the impact on human values of the penetration into general human awareness of the quantum mechanical conception of nature. The importance of developments in this area can

hardly be overstated. For human values control human decisions, and human decisions control the future of all life on this planet. (In Kitchener, 1988: 54-56)

The “static holism” of the ancients did not separate fact from value. For Plato, the ontologically real forms (*eidos*), such as justice, courage, beauty, etc., were also the source of value: we should discern their reality (*ousia*) and conform our lives to it. For the Stoics, the cosmos itself, the ultimate reality, was the source of the moral law. Rather than an anthropocentric ethics, Bloch points out, their ethics was a “cosmomorphic: participation in the reason of the universe” (1986b: 14). For the Stoics, the natural law involved “the *unity* of all people as members of the international community, that is, the rational empire of love. Stoicism is enormously democratic here: Its natural law is uniquely philanthropic, its state is brotherhood” (ibid. 13).

In his noteworthy book, *Fundamentals of Ethics*, John Finnis, who accepts the distinction between fact and value (but argues that *objective values* can be discerned by reason and need not be derived from facts to be objective), insists that Aristotle did not derive values from facts in spite of the fact that he is often interpreted that way by contemporary philosophers. Aristotle is often seen as identifying the characteristic activity of humans, our unique “function” (rationality) from which he derives the imperative to develop intellectual and moral forms of virtue. Finnis argues that this misinterprets Aristotle’s argument in the light of a number of things he says elsewhere (1983: 10-23).

This may well be true. However, that Aristotle understood ethics in relation to a holistic universe that profoundly influenced his thinking should not be in doubt. Everything (in the static holism that characterized Aristotle’s world view), from the Unmoved Mover (God), to the descending levels of being, to the entelechies inherent in all things, to the participation of human beings in the cosmic hierarchy of being, to the drive inherent in the human form to actualize its rational potential, provided material

for how human beings should be living their lives. Fact and value appeared integrated and complementary to Aristotle.

Today, science has discovered a new holism, very different in its understanding of how the universe works, but the principles of holism in relation to ethics remain deeply similar. The new holism, however, is emergent and dynamic, not static. It understands that there are yet higher levels of holism that human beings can aspire to, that are not just a matter of conformity with "the way things are." Human freedom has a profound role in the development of a harmonious "Kingdom of Ends," as Kant put it. It has a profound role in bringing the Kingdom of God to Earth, as Jesus put it. Fact and value are again integrated, for they were never, in fact, actually separated, but we now have a critical social theory emerging that can help assess our deepest problems in terms of lack of holism and point to emergent levels of holism that can address these problems.

Our values, the values of our *humanum*, critically understand that the facts of war, violence, hatred, and terror that we experience in the world are wrong, immoral, in violation of the wholeness and harmony that should exist. Our reason, intuition, and love (and therefore our creative freedom) experience the demand for transformation, for moving into a future characterized by peace, justice, and harmony. Holism becomes an imperative for moving to higher levels, for individuals and for humanity.

Before the rise of the early-modern paradigm, facts and values were not systematically separated but considered part of both philosophical and everyday experience. Even today, our everyday experience is that the facts are value-laden for us: every aspect of our lives and our experience of the world elicits value judgments. Human beings are awakening to their relation to the wholes of which they are part: the family, the community, the nation, all humanity, the planet, and, ultimately, the truth of the whole cosmos (in which we participate and insofar as this can be known and/or experienced). Facts are not just isolated atoms of experience; they are elements of systems of relationships within which we are em-

bedded: family, community, humanity, planet, and cosmos.

All of these elicit value responses in us, not as “merely subjective” reactions, but as integrated responses to the wholes within which we are embedded. Our values derive from these wholes at the same time that they are responses to these wholes. In any holistic relation values arise in this dialectical way. Fact and value were never separated in reality at all. The early-modern paradigm was mistaken in deriving this separation. As philosopher Joseph Kockelmans describes our situation:

The importance of philosophy for any ethical view must be found first and foremost in the fact that it shows that man, existing in the truth of the Whole, must primarily concern himself with the Whole, and that only insofar as man is concerned with the Whole, can the assigning of all the directions which must become value, law, and norm for man come from the Totality of meaning itself. One could say, also, that this philosophy is inherently ‘ethical’ in that it urges man to be concerned with two things which are essentially connected with one another: his own authenticity and the unconcealment of the genuine meaning of the Whole in his world. . . .

Philosophy should certainly be concerned with the values things have for us, but existential philosophy suggests a completely different approach to the value problem. First of all it tries to convince us that the distinction between fact and value rests on an abstraction. On the level of our prephilosophical experience we never experience things without values, nor do we ever experience values which are not the values of things. . . .

But, more importantly, one must also realize that values are never experienced in isolation; we experience them in contexts, in a certain horizon of meaning, and, in the final analysis, within the totality of all possible meaning, as this now manifests and hides itself in our Western civilization. (In Wood, 1970: 246-47)

It is not entirely clear why Kockelmans identifies “Western civilization” as a horizon of meaning where the truth of the

whole both “manifests and hides itself.” For, by his own argument, meaning derives from wholes, and planetary civilization is a much more fundamental whole than Western civilization, as dozens of thinkers today are pointing out. Nevertheless, he clearly recognizes that the early-modern paradigm created a false “abstraction” in separating fact and value. The human mind is an integral aspect of reality, having evolved as a manifestation of the order and structure of the cosmos itself, and with that mind, value emerges into clarity, the values of practical and theoretical reasoning, integration, harmony, reciprocity, love, friendship, and compassionate justice. The wholes and systems of the universe both elicit and manifest value. As Kockelmans asserts, values are never experienced in isolation, but in contexts, as integral to the meaning of situations and the dynamic wholes of family, community, humanity, planet, and cosmos.

Of course, the emergence of value in and through human experience does not mean that the judgments of each individual or group are veridical. Just as the process of progressively accumulating scientific knowledge and philosophical understanding of the world is inherently communal and dialectical, so the process of articulating and clarifying values is communal and dialectical. (And, of course, each of us is continually growing and learning.) This is one of the fundamental insights arising through the work of Habermas: we are in a social process of articulating values; ethics, in some fundamental ways, is communicative.

No (describable) aspect of ourselves is entirely personal and separate from the social and biological construction of our selves. The criterion of objective truth (coherence) and the criterion of value (harmony and coherence through dialogue directed toward mutual understanding) are fundamentally the same. As Harris concludes: “Since objectivity has turned out to be systematically integrated wholeness, if that also proves to be the hallmark of value, its criteria will be just as objective and universal in their validity as are the standards of truth” (1987: 245).

There are exceptions to these statements that should be pointed out: in his *Tractatus Logico Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein identifies “what is true about solipsism” and in *Totality and Infinity* Levinas identifies an “infinity” reflected in the human face that *cannot be subsumed to the relations found in the totality of being*. Both of these exceptions bear on the question of value in fundamental ways, some of which we will explore further in Chapters Eight and Nine. Nevertheless, Habermas and Harris are correct in general that ethics is a communicative and dialogueical enterprise. We are all involved with one another as parts of our common human project and need one another to clarify the value that we find arising all around us: in every culture, religion, community, ideology, and science. We need to discuss values through a perpetual asking of questions and dialogueuing with one another concerning the answers and through the attempt to actualize ever greater levels of harmony as we move into the future.

What kind of human actions promote the integrity and harmony of the biosphere? Again we find that the biosphere cannot be protected both while human actions are not in harmony with its delicate ecological patterns but also while human beings themselves remain fragmented and divided from one another. What is a sustainable relationship to the ecology of the Earth? How can we promote the emergence of human harmony in conformity with these scientific realities? What kind of political and economic institutions promote harmony with nature as well as integrity and harmony among human beings? How can love, friendship, and compassionate justice be promoted worldwide leading toward a peaceful, just, and fulfilled human community? We are in a holistic relationship with both nature and humanity, and these two aspects, human harmony and harmony with nature, necessarily go together.

The holistic emphasis is on the study of relationships and the fields within which these relationships operate with a view to maintaining, enhancing, and enlarging their harmony. The emphasis in ecology is on understanding the fields of interrelation-

ships and interdependencies and conforming human activity to these patterns. The emphasis in human relationships is on seeing the issues from the point of view of the other person, culture, or nation with whom I realize I am internally related. In the process of understanding the other's point of view, we look for mutualities, larger unities, and commonalities that unite us, and then work to actualize these in ways that are mutually fulfilling. These principles today are fundamental to much of the work of peace studies programs worldwide and to theories of nonviolence, such as Marshall Rosenberg's theory of nonviolent communication (2005).

Perhaps the first principle of an ethics of holism is to realize that *the other is you and you are the other* on a very fundamental level. Or as Harris expresses this in a related sense: "Each is at once itself and all the rest" (1992: 19). As Whitehead affirms: "Every actual entity is present in every other actual entity. The philosophy of organism is mainly devoted to the task of making clear the notion of 'being present in another entity'" (1978: 50). We are already established in fundamental commonalities and need to evolve these commonalities into actualized, living wholes.

Fox writes that "the entire insight upon which compassion is based is that the other is *not* other; and that I am *not* I. In other words, in loving others I am loving myself and indeed involved in my own best and biggest and fullest self-interest" (1990: 33). Laszlo declares: "The other is also me and I'm the other. The world is not beyond or outside of me; it's inside me just the same way as I'm inside the world. There are no absolute boundaries between me and what I see as the world" (2014: 79). These are no mere values apart from facts, for fact and value arise together in authentic human experience. The truth of this process is revealed in a variety of ways in today's thought, and it needs to be elaborated and articulated systematically in ways that go beyond the present volume.

Already, philosophers of language such as Steven Pinker (1995), Noam Chomsky (1998), and Jürgen Habermas (1998) have

shown the universality of language and its necessary connections with the selfhood of each of us. My self cannot be divorced from the human capacity for language that is part of our universal humanity. Similarly, biologists have shown that all human beings are more than 99.9 percent genetically identical, psychologists have shown that an amazing communion of human consciousness is possible between people (Laszlo, 2007), and anthropologists have shown the astonishing similarities of people everywhere (Brown, 1991).

On these holistic principles, my relationship with other persons will be *internal* relationships, not external as currently widely assumed. This means that my actions, beliefs, and goals affect the other and those of the other affect me, not simply externally but in our very being. My consciousness of myself is no longer that of an egoistic atom promoting my selfish interests, but that of a creative and cooperative participator, working with others to enhance the emergent well-being of all. We are internally related to one another and with the whole of humanity. To be a *person*, we have seen, is to be precisely a synthesis of such relationships. The principle guiding action should be that of harmony, operating at all levels, from the personal to the family to the nation to the world.

The traditional expressions of the Golden Rule, found in all the great world religions (Hick, 2008), form an early expression of this principle. But the ethics of holism would need to go deeper: it is not only a matter of doing to others what you would want done to you, but also the realization that what you do unto others you are doing to yourself. In *Oneself as Another*, Ricoeur writes: "*Oneself as Another* suggests from the outset that the selfhood of oneself implies otherness to such an intimate degree that one cannot be thought of without the other, that instead one passes into the other. . . . I should like to attach a strong meaning, not only that of a comparison (oneself similar to another) but indeed that of an implication (oneself inasmuch as being other)" (1992:3).

Mahatma Gandhi, in seeing every person as an expression of the Atman, lived from one understanding of this principle. Non-

violence is mandatory because the other person in a very real sense is me and I am him or her. Gandhi's ultimate goal was to actualize this awareness in the world. *Satyagraha* (clinging to truth) was his principle of action for creating ever-greater wholes and ever-deeper harmony on Earth. Something similar is expressed by Socrates' famous principle that "it is better to be a victim of evil than to do evil." For Socrates, if I harm you I am simultaneously harming myself, since both of us exist in internal relationships with one another, mutually participating in the "Good" (*Agathos*) that transcends us both. If I do evil to you, I am violating my own selfhood as well as yours, for we are united in deeper ways that transcend any apparent sayable differences.

While each of us includes a dimension that is deeply and ontologically individual (I am this *individuum* that is unique within the entire universe in a way that transcends all describable differences), each of us is simultaneously one with all the others. Ricoeur states that: "My field of motivation is open to the whole range of the human. My humanity is my essential community with all that is human outside myself: that community makes every man my like. My character is not the opposite of that humanity: my character is that humanity seen from somewhere, the whole city seen from a certain angle, the partial totality" (1967: 93)

Holistic ethics is the relation between myself as "partial totality" and that "essential community." There are some excellent contemporary formulations of a "global ethics" that articulate implications of these first principles, for example, the universal ethics suggested by Leonard Swidler and Paul Mojzes in their book *The Study of Religion in the Age of Global dialogue* (2000: 288-294). They correctly speak of both the Golden Rule as well as the "inherent equal dignity" of all persons and derive from this the Kantian principle that each person always be treated as an end, never merely as a means. And they add that global ethics must encompass this Kantian principle with a larger principle of "love." These are various expressions of an ethics of holism.

We have seen that Harris points out that the ethics of holism encompasses several of the traditional ethical theories as well as their identification of a positive role for emotions and desires within ethics. However, as above, there is a larger response that properly characterizes the ethics of holism that can be named “compassion” or “love.” Matthew Fox says of compassion: “While it includes ethics, as all true spirituality must, it blossoms and balloons to something greater than ethics—to celebration of life and relief, where possible, of others’ pain” (1990: 30). He quotes Thomas Merton’s last lecture, two hours before his death, in which Merton says: “The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another and all involved in one another” (23-24).

The more we embrace holism, the more we become directly aware of the interconnections, not only with living beings but with the whole of the cosmos, and the proper term for the response that this direct awareness elicits in us is compassion. A holistic ethics blossoms in love and compassion, in a solidarity with all of life and the fundamental principle of the cosmos itself. A global ethics recognizes the Golden Rule not from an egoism in which my self-interest dictates that I would not do what I don’t want done to me, but from a compassion in which I realize that myself and the other are deeply one on multiple levels. The Kantian recognition of dignity undergoes a similar expansion in which I recognize the dignity of others, of living beings, and of the cosmos not only because human beings are free moral agents (as Kant says) but also because they participate in the dignity of all things as manifestations of the fundamental cosmic principle.

2.3 An Ethics of Liberation

MOLTMANN also points out that a global golden rule in itself is not sufficient for a global ethics, for it implies a world of equality in which people can really conceive of others not doing

to them what they would not want done. In a world of vast inequality and injustice, the few live with structural impunity with respect to what they do to others. He argues that such a world requires that global ethics include an ethics of liberation:

Without the liberation of the oppressed, the raising up of the weary and heavy-laden, and the rights of the humiliated and insulted, the golden rule cannot be realized. A 'global ethics' based only on this is an ideal, even if a fine one. A realistic global ethics in the face of the world's present conditions can only be an ethics of liberation on the side of the poor and the Earth. (2012: 176)

A holistic ethics of compassion is also an ethics of liberation that goes beyond the imagining of doing to others what I would want done to me to an envisioning of system-change. Ethics cannot be private morality alone (doing as you would be done by) since the systems of Earth make us all guilty, all beneficiaries or victims (or both in different ways) of unjust planetary systems. As Albert Camus (1986) expressed this, we do not want to be either "victims or executioners."

My compassionate identification with the victims of the current world systems (systems most notably identified as global capitalism and the system of warring nation-states) leads me to demand the transformation of these systems of injustice and exploitation to compassionate, inclusive systems of cooperation, sharing, and mutual participation. The ethics of holism under present conditions is creative and revolutionary holism: We are morally required to transform the systems of Earth to ones of justice, reasonable equality, respect for human dignity, and ecological sustainability.

Since nothing is excluded from the ethics of holism, it is clear that political life within democratic societies, international relations between nations, as well as economic and business relations, must be guided by ethical principles of holism and harmony. Harris compares the ethics of holism to the universal principle of love (*agape*) taught by Jesus: "Genuine rational love, therefore, must

extend to the entire human race. . . . Love of neighbor, in the full sense, transpires as love of the entire community and devotion to the ideal Kingdom of Ends" (1988: 163-64). Jesus taught the bringing of the Kingdom of God to Earth. Preparing the way for the kingdom of God means global system change. Dussel calls the present world system a "system of sin":

In the totality of the systems of practices of the world, as objective and social reality, the "carnal" subject or agent desires the permanency of order, which, however, attempts to legitimate itself by appealing to the "gods" as its foundation. The "flesh" is idolatrized in the "kingdom of this world," and promulgates its own law, its own morality, its own goodness. . . . This system is closed in upon itself. It has replaced the universal human project with its own particular historical project. Its laws become natural, its virtues perfect, and the blood of those who offer any resistance—the blood of the prophets and heroes—is spilled by the system as if it were the blood of the wicked, the totally subversive. . . . Essential to an ethics of liberation is a clear understanding of the starting point of the praxis of liberation. The starting point is sin, the world as a system of sin, the flesh as idolatrous desire, and a system that nevertheless is "moral," having its own morality and a justified tranquil conscience. . . . (1988: 30-31)

The system generates its own self-justifying ethics, its own conception of "natural" laws and virtues. These virtues normally include the golden rule as an ideal: "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you while ignoring the fact that you participate in global systems of injustice and domination that make this impossible." The ethics of holism requires critical analysis of systems of exploitation, hidden behind the "tranquil conscience" and self-justifying conventional morality of the dominant world order. The dominant world order generates "its own law" (so-called international law), "its own morality" (the naïve liberal idea that we can work within the system to evolve it toward greater justice),

and “its own goodness” (e.g., the idea our military promotes and protects democracy worldwide).

Holism requires the critical social thought that was most clearly developed within the Marxist tradition. We do not want the illusion of holism (the false morality of the dominant system) but to establish real holistic systems of justice, dignity, and freedom for the Earth. Ethical holism is an ethics of liberation. The *fact* of global systems of violence, domination, and exploitation, exposed by those of critical integrity devoted to human liberation, generates a corresponding insight into *value*: the system must be transformed into one premised on universal justice, dignity, and freedom. Fact and value reunite in the authentic quest for human liberation. Authentic holism is *revolutionary holism*. Küng writes:

In the past decades it has emerged more clearly than before that a religion can contribute not only to human oppression but also to human liberation: not only in psychological and psychotherapeutic terms, but also politically and socially. Here there is no longer propagation of a class morality (of a bourgeois stamp) of the kind that Marx and Engels rightly criticized in the last century; here—from Latin America to Korea, from South Africa to the Philippines, from East Germany to Rumania—there is a struggle for a humane society. (1991: 46)

Not only can religion embrace this new paradigm and the reintegration of fact and value, Kant taught that the social implication of the categorical imperative (that every person be treated as an end in themselves) is the ideal of the “Kingdom of Ends,” the ideal of a union of all human beings in a community of moral relationships. The ethical principle of the categorical imperative alone necessarily also gives us the social-political principle of a universal, just human community. Harris (2005) is also stating that the ethics of holism, of rational love, implies the ideal of a moral world order of freedom, peace, justice, and harmony. To achieve this we must expose the lies of the self-justifying ideology of the current world system of sin. Küng states: “It has become

abundantly clear why we need a new global ethic. For there can be no survival without a world ethic" (1991: 69).

A "world ethic" will by no means come from Christianity or Western thinkers alone. The work of such Eastern creative thinkers as Rabindranath Tagore (Martin, 2013b), Swami Vivekananda, and Sri Aurobindo is also fundamental. Insight into the interdependence of all being has long been a foundational theme of the great thinkers of Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and Hinduism. As von Brück expresses this:

Thus ethics has its basis not in a forever grounded ought, but in a real transformation, which includes being aware of the interdependence of all being, and this, in turn, has consequences for their behavior towards the whole of nature. . . . Two aspects which such a new experience has to include are the "autonomous worth of creatures" and the "interdependence of all beings." If the West represents especially the "autonomous worth of creatures," Eastern thinking takes place in the context of the experience of interdependence. The dialogueical community of the two could thus be important in working out our destiny. (1991: 273, 275-76)

Implicit in the new holistic paradigm is the vision of a cooperative and participatory world order in which war and exploitation have been abolished and replaced by peace, cooperation, rational love, and mutual economic and political efforts for the common good. And, indeed, it must be a *world* order, rather than one fragmented into autonomous warring economic and political units. The world of the early-modern paradigm, fragmented into conflicting national power interests and a multiplicity of conflicting economic interests, is gone forever from the most advanced conceptual and scientifically confirmable levels of holism. A true world *order* emerges that has truly emergent properties due to its higher levels of wholeness and integration. It will become clear that such a "true world *order*" necessarily involves planetary unity-in-diversity through democratic world law.

2.4 The Present World Disorder as the Denial of Internal Relationships

YET the nightmare of conflict and disharmony remain very much with us today in the form of the system of militarized sovereign nation-states and the exploitation and domination of global capitalism. Right from the very beginning of this system, Western thinkers have pointed out that the nation-state system is *inherently* a war system. It is not that nations sometimes go to war to promote their interests. Rather, the system is structured to make strategic manipulation, deception, economic rivalry, power struggles, and ultimately war inevitable in the relations between nations.

Thomas Hobbes maintained that all nations confront one another in the “posture of Gladiators.” Baruch Spinoza pointed out that “Two [sovereign] states are enemies by nature.” G.W.F. Hegel saw the relation of states as a conflict of wills that, ultimately, “can only be settled by war.” Immanuel Kant concluded that sovereign nation-states were in a perpetual condition of “war” even when they were not fighting one another (see Martin, 2010a: 73-74). As Emery Reves expressed this: “*War takes place whenever and wherever non-integrated social units of equal sovereignty come into contact*” (1945: 121, italics in original).

The international structure is premised on an atomism of sovereign nation-states engaged in an amoral and immoral struggle of conflicting interests and power politics. So also, the global structure is dominated by transnational corporations with conflicting interests and competing with one another for control of cheap resources, markets, cheap labor, and political influence over governments. The dynamics of this system are best described by World Systems Theory as found in the works of such thinkers as Immanuel Wallerstein (1983), Christopher Chase-Dunn (1998), James Petras (2005), and others. Sociologist Thomas Richard Shannon sums up some of the systemic relations between global capitalism and sovereign nation-states:

A central goal of international competition is for each state to obtain the best possible conditions and opportunities for its national capitalists. A successful national capitalist class contributes to state power by providing the necessary economic resources for state activities. World-system theorists point out that states in which the struggle for power resulted in a politically powerful capitalist class were the states that succeeded best in the quest for national power. The political power of the capitalist class reinforces the tendency for the state to support the national capitalist class. As a consequence of this interstate competition, the world-system has been characterized by repeated wars and shifting military alliances. (1989: 35)

World-systems theorists show that the capitalist system developing over the past five centuries is a *global* system that is simultaneously organized around sovereign nation-states competing with one another in the promotion of the interests of their respective capitalist ruling classes. The result has been unending wars and the division of the world into economic zones made up of collections of states: core states (wealthy, powerful, militarized, high tech), semi-periphery states (often in struggle to become part of the core), and periphery states (subject to super-exploitation of labor and natural resources) (ibid. 24-25). The relations between the states in this system is defined by economic and military "power," not by moral principles or respect for human dignity.

What paradigm or set of fundamental assumptions operates behind this system that makes possible such an unjust and violent world disorder? The system arose as part of the institutional development of the early-modern paradigm and the "rationalization" process that we have been exploring. Both sovereign nation-states and capitalist corporate entities claim to stand primarily in *external relationships* to their competitors and to their victims.

The world system is predicated on the idea of an economic and political atomism, as if the primary entities in the world (capitalists, corporations, and nations) existed as units relatively independent of one another in a competition that can result in abso-

lute winners and losers. And this set of assumptions is still defended around the world by outdated positivists, politicians, career militarists, academics, journalists, and economist mandarins who place their professional lives in the service of arbitrary power and wealth. We will see further in Chapter Eight that the system “totalizes” itself to the point of rejecting any non-idolatrous forms of transcendence from disrupting its puerile and outdated presuppositions.

Indeed, in recent decades, there have been many attacks on the tradition of social democracy from the ideological proponents of this system. The tradition of social democratic liberalism (which has many links to holism) tends to assume, first, that politics is and should be an extension of morality and, second, that government should regulate the economy in order to promote the common good and benefit as many citizens as possible. These attacks on social democracy have come from both directions, political and economic. On the one hand, theorists of unfettered capitalism, like Joseph Schumpeter and Friedrich von Hayek, have argued for a free market ideology, removing government interference as much as possible from what they claim as truly free markets. They affirm a competitive world animated by external relationships.

In contrast, Christian thinker Enrique Dussel points out in *Ethics and Community* that the rich, under capitalism, try to deny their internal relationships with the poor, internal relationships that should be and are expressed within genuine “communities.” In their insistence on external relationships, on their “right” to enjoy the wealth they have accumulated at the expense of the poor, they deny the human community, even though ultimately they cannot deny their responsibility for this horrific situation:

The life of the poor is accumulated by the rich. The latter live the life of the rich in virtue of the death of the poor. The life of the sinner feeds on the blood of the poor, just as the idol lives by the death of its victims. . . . The strength, wealth, beauty, culture, and so on, of the dominant group to which one belongs is consciously known, enjoyed, and affirmed. Humiliation, weakness, cultural deprivation, serf-

dom, and so on, are consciously known and consented to by the despised poor. Thus it is that, day by day, dominators take on personal, individual *responsibility* for their sin of domination. After all, they daily assert the privileges and the potential (the opportunities) accruing to them in virtue of this inherited sin. And never again will dominators be able to claim innocence of that of which they have the use and enjoyment. (22-24)

Capitalism has been institutionalized as a *system* that supposedly operates according to objective, impersonal, amoral economic laws. Those who benefit from this system hide behind the ideology of impersonal economic laws to deny their personal responsibility for living off the blood, misery, and death of those whom the system uses to produce their wealth. The system emphasizes external relationships, embodied in the blind, mechanical operation of economic laws, behind which the rich take shelter. It denies the real internal relationships at the heart of capitalism.

Dussel makes this relationship explicit: "The life of the poor is accumulated by the rich." Your wealth is the condition of their poverty. Social democracy (brought now to a global vision through the new holistic paradigm) takes issue with this deception. It insists that both economics and politics fall within the scope of universal morality, the morality of social justice, peace, and universal harmony. Government and politics fall within the scope of morality and they are responsible to see that economics is also informed by moral principles.

Christian theologian David Ray Griffin calls this global economic empire, dominated by the United States, "demonic," a global evil that is covered over by free market ideology:

What other term can be used for a state that seeks to impose its will on the entire world, that oversees a system of global economic control that kills more people every decade than were killed by Hitler and Stalin combined, that refuses to eliminate the threat of nuclear holocaust, and that refuses to take action to reduce the likelihood that human civilization will be brought to an end by global warming within

the present century? If such a state should not be called demonic, than nothing should. (2006: 154)

As Griffin shows, this global empire operates according to the principles of “realism” or “neorealism,” which are also demonic (ibid. 105-113). Attacks against social democracy not only come from the advocates of an unfettered “free market” but also from political theorists like Carl Schmitt and Hans Morgenthau, who argue that there are major differences between morality and politics. Schmitt (who was the chief legal theorist for the Nazi regime) makes the argument that the democratic ideal of rational discussion among informed parliamentarians concerning the content of laws, the common good, and the best way to proceed into the future involves a false ideology obscuring what is really going on: the struggle among the parties for power and influence.

Morality therefore plays no part in politics. Since law is inevitably *general*, Schmitt declares, its *specific* applications require an arbitrary decision by some authority, whether judicial, legislative, or executive. Thus dictatorship, the development of “the total state,” he asserts, is more realistic and preferable to democracy. It effectively corrects the inherently indecisive character of the law through issuing commands, enforceable by the authorities (1988).

Morgenthau (whose thought appears to serve as a chief ideological cover for US imperialism) also asserts the primacy of power in his “six principles of political realism” developed in his 1948 book *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*. Morgenthau’s theory involves a form of positivism claiming that political realism derives from *objective* laws of human nature, not from moral ideals. The objective laws of human nature, when applied to international politics, reveal that the interests of nations are defined in terms of power.

Moral ideals do not apply in international relations, only power politics: the strong dominate the weak, might makes right. The system of sovereign nation-states constitutes the objective structure of world order through which the struggle for power in the service of national self-interest takes place. This is the human

situation, according to Morgenthau, and the attempt to moralize this situation only leads away from objectivity toward confusing the “autonomous” realm of politics with other areas of human life, or, if leaders of nations take moral principles seriously, toward failure of the nation within the international struggle for power, wealth, and national interests.

The many followers of such political realism today (as manifested in the worldwide relationships among nations) show that the fragmented early-modern paradigm is far from dead. On the other hand, holistic thinker Errol E. Harris writes:

The notion of the field is holistic, for every variation in the field is determined by the pattern of the whole and is necessarily and inseparably connected with every other, and the field in principle extends over the whole of space-time. In wholes such as this, whose parts determine one another mutually and are interrelated in an ordered system, all relations are internal to their terms, a condition firmly established by the theory of relativity. (2000b: 77-78)

Ethics and politics have never justifiably been separable, for the common good of the whole is as much a political as a moral end. Hence political obligation has a moral source which is not just the obligation to fulfill a contract but is the universal duty to serve one another and the good of the social whole. . . . It follows that the determinant of personality and its rights is the sociopolitical whole, and the result of thinking holistically in politics is far different from that of the individualism of the seventeenth century. (104 & 106)

The economic health and success of every country is dependent on that of all the others, so the world economy has to be seen as a single system and must be treated as a whole. Further, the conception of profit must be transformed: It must be socialized rather than individualized. Production and supply have to be viewed as a cooperative enterprise rendering service to the community, rather than a venture undertaken for personal gain. (107)

Morality is no longer considered a mere subjective feature of human emotions operating within an objective, value free mate-

rial world. It is an aspect of the internal relations that all things have with one another, and certainly that all human beings have with one another. The gigantic systems of which we are part (both capitalism and sovereign nation-states) tend to institutionally deny these internal relationships.

Under the emerging holistic paradigm, institutions that deny our ethical relationship with one another and with all of humanity are increasingly understood as *illegitimate*. Under the new holism, the absolute mind-body dualism has disappeared, as well as the reductionism of mind to matter, and with these the value-fact dualism. Out of the holistic scientific paradigm there arises a new ethics, a new politics, a new economics, and a new conception of human life and civilization.

Jonathan Glover, from whose book *Humanity: A Moral History of the 20th Century* I quoted in Chapter One, expresses a genuine perplexity over the ease with which ordinary moral persons slide into participation in genocides or massacres, from Cambodia to Rwanda to Sarajevo and beyond, throughout the century. We need to grow to a higher level of existence, to recover morality at a deeper level than that which we inherited from the early-modern paradigm, to overcome our assumption that our relation with others is merely external. Holism makes possible the transcendence of the outdated world-system of the past five centuries predicated on the struggle for naked wealth and power. It makes possible rapid growth toward a new planetary maturity.

A fundamental feature of our global crises today is that both capitalism and the system of sovereign nations institutionally deny this contemporary scientific understanding of holism, and, as we have seen, they have many articulate followers and spokespersons. These pundits actively advocate the war system worldwide. Gabriel Marcel declares that "the modern worship of the state, again, is simply one aspect of the extension of the notion of function; an extension which is really pathological in its extravagance" (1951: 38). The state is part of the early-modern obsession with functionalist, instrumental, and technological ra-

tionalization. Our future depends on rapidly converting to the new paradigm of holism and harmony: personally, culturally, ecologically, economically, and institutionally.

Emery Reves asserts that our situation (as of the mid-20th century) is a “Copernican” one: We need a “Copernican Revolution” that changes the disastrous outmoded paradigm. At the moment, he writes, the world is a multiplicity of incommensurable points of view between different nation-states: “A picture of the world pieced together like a mosaic from its various national components is a picture that never and under no circumstances can have any relation to reality” (1945: 22). Reality is the holistic integration of a world economically, humanly, and culturally interdependent.

The atomized world of sovereign nation-states and its so-called “realism” is sheer fantasy, Reves asserts. From a global and truly human point of view we need a truly planetary point of view and set of institutions that transcend the multiplicity of illusions that make up our pre-Copernican, atomized view of reality. This system institutionally denies our internal relationships with the rest of humanity. Each nation believes that the world around which “all the problems and events outside our nation, the rest of the world, supposedly rotate, is—our nation.” To move beyond this “geocentric world of nation-states” (ibid. 26), we must create the Copernican revolution that understands that our problems are primarily planetary and human and that *realism* requires planetary democracy and the planetary rule of law, in other words, democratic world government (ibid. 139).

2.5 Realism versus Utopia

THE mistaken historical separation of fact from value has led some theorists, such as Morgenthau, to argue that being “realistic” is to objectively face the facts of human nature, human self-interest, and the inevitable conflicts among organized groupings such as nation-states. However, “realism” in their usage clearly becomes a normative term, a term of preference: it is supposed

to be normatively better to be “realistic” than to be “hopelessly idealistic.” The fact that “realism” is itself a normative term may illustrate the impossibility of separating fact from value. It may also illustrate that the distinction itself can be used as a cover for imperialism.

Human beings act from purposes. They evaluate and interpret their surroundings and their situation (the facts) in the light of their purposes, whether these be raising their children, survival by growing crops, altering their living conditions for the better, completing their jobs with satisfaction, gaining access to resources in another part of the world, or finding cheap labor to lessen the input costs of production. What we call “the facts,” therefore, are always assessed in the light of human purposes, and this is true even within the sciences, as has often been pointed out.

We call people “unrealistic” who refuse to take their situation carefully or fully into account in their actions. They deny or do not face up to “the facts.” Here “the facts” are themselves considered in an evaluative way: it is considered good to take certain conditions into account in determining one’s course of action. What is valued by realists, therefore, is a careful and properly focused evaluation of the surroundings and situation and the planning of action in relation to these considerations. But this in no way shows that facts exist independently of values.

A scientist will carefully observe, classify, and record the data, but the scientist already does this within a theoretical framework that frames what is to be selected out as relevant data, and the scientist may creatively engage the data in the search for a new and more adequate theoretical framework. The facts and the purposive construction of theoretical frameworks are internally related. All human endeavor is value-laden. Our purposive frameworks not only condition what we select from the welter of experience that will count as facts, but the facts are also themselves theoretically conditioned by our purposes and frameworks. I am by no means arguing that the world does not exist independently of our purposes, nor that truth is somehow “relativistic,” but sim-

ply that human engagement with the world is always purposive and, therefore, always involves the pursuit of something that is valued. Fact and value are also inseparable in this way.

Morgenthau claims that there are “objective laws” of power politics and that nations pursue their self-interest within these laws or else fail because they have ignored the laws. But these conclusions already involve a theoretical construct of the world system that picks out “facts” from within that construct and privileges these as what must be taken into consideration. We saw that Morgenthau is using early-modern atomistic assumptions as part of theoretically envisioning a world-system of autonomous entities each struggling on behalf of its own self-interest, and that in this struggle, he argues, to be successful means to place ethical considerations in the background. His “realism” is therefore heavily value-laden.

By contrast we saw holistic thinker Errol E. Harris interpret this same world situation differently, claiming that the nation-state is constituted within a moral framework and that both politics and economics must be conditioned by that framework. The stance of “political realism” suppresses the evaluative basis of its determinations, the arbitrary nature of what it selects as “reality,” and the way it frames the world-system in the light of this. Holism requires us to focus on the interrelatedness of facts and values with an eye to becoming ever more aware of their complex interpenetration. For our view of what ought to be always involves an evaluation and interpretation of what is.

The ideology of realism tends to criticize as “utopian” those who insist that our world system should be one of peace, justice, equality, freedom, and sustainability. As Enrique Dussel points out, this ideology is much more likely to be promoted by academic mandarins from wealthy and powerful countries than by those within the world’s victim countries (1985: 4). However, we have now seen that the values of peace, justice, equality, freedom and sustainability derive from the deeper holism of our human situation, and that “political realism” is based on a discredited

early-modern paradigm. While all assessments of our human situation are theory-laden, some are more adequate, coherent, and comprehensive accounts of the world than others.

We may coherently define the word “utopian” as a theoretical account of the human situation that takes into consideration our immense possibilities for holistic development and how to creatively actualize these, while at the same time assessing our disastrous current planetary situation as carefully and accurately as possible. If this theoretical account is able to articulate credible options for a transformation from this disastrous situation to a substantially more optimal one, than surely to be utopian in this sense is the new realism, for “realism,” even in the usage of its ideologues, has positive evaluative connotations. In our current human situation, facing as we are the end-time of human history in the very real possibilities of nuclear holocaust or planetary climate collapse, to be utopian in the sense defined may be our primary moral obligation.

If the “categorical imperative” of holism is to create authentic democracy, harmony, justice, and peaceful living for the Earth and its creatures, then we must envision what this would look like and how to actualize it in concrete terms. Fact and value cannot be separated as if the first were “realistic” (a good thing) and the second were hopelessly idealistic (a mere fantasy). When we assess our current planetary situation as “disastrous” and deadly, we are simultaneously generating a more or less coherent theoretical construct about how it could be different. Our very ability to see the horror of the conditions of people living in the third world shows that we know it does not have to be this way. There is nothing “realistic” about passively accepting this. Pope John XXIII writes:

Public authority, as the means of promoting the common good in civil society, is a postulate of the moral order. But the moral order likewise requires that this authority be effective in attaining its end. Hence the civil institutions in which such authority resides, becomes operative and promotes its ends, are endowed with a certain kind of structure and efficacy: a structure and efficacy which make such

institutions capable of realizing the common good by ways and means adequate to the changing historical conditions.

Today the universal common good presents us with problems which are world-wide in their dimensions; problems, therefore, which cannot be solved except by a public authority with power, organization and means co-extensive with these problems, and with a world-wide sphere of activity. Consequently the moral order itself demands the establishment of some such general form of public authority. (*Pacem in terris*, 1963, Sects. 136-137)

Here Pope John XXIII speaks from a “Copernican” point of view similar to that of Emery Reves. He recognizes that our problems are “world-wide” and cannot be solved unless we envision a “universal common good” that is institutionalized in a “public authority” that has the “structure and efficacy” necessary to address these problems and secure that common good. Only five years after this encyclical appeared, 200 citizens from 27 countries and 5 continents were meeting in Interlaken, Switzerland and Wolfach, Germany to begin the process of developing a constitution for the Earth.

They elected a drafting committee of 25 persons and specified what should be included. During the next 23 years, between 1968 and 1991, three more Constituent Assemblies met, and drafts were repeatedly sent out worldwide for critical evaluation. At the 1991 Assembly in Troia, Portugal, the delegates voted the final changes to the draft of the *Earth Constitution* and determined that the world now had a finished template for a public authority, that could view the world from the point of view of a planetary realism, with the “structure and efficacy” necessary to actualize our universal common good (Martin, 2010b: 14-18).

This is why the *Constitution for the Federation of Earth* is perhaps the most important document produced in the 20th century. It sees clearly, to quote its Preamble, that humanity is on “the brink of ecological and social catastrophe,” and that we have an obligation “to posterity to save Humanity from imminent and total

annihilation." It carefully assesses the facts of our situation without illusions, and posits what is clearly within the range of our immense human potentialities: "a new age when war shall be outlawed and peace prevail" and "the Earth's total resources shall be equitably used for human welfare."

And it presents a carefully worked out design and plan for that new age with the means of actualizing it through a ratification and implementation process. It converts our present global institutions, based on the fragmented early-modern paradigm, into practical political and economic institutions premised on holism, inclusive of the Earth and all humanity. The moral authority demands the public authority, and the legitimate public authority itself embodies the moral authority. So-called "political realism" is immoral.

Boswell and Chase-Dunn recognize the crucial role of a utopian vision for establishing a global polity and democratic world system: "The lack of a 'utopian' goal against which to organize criticism and more importantly, to direct progress, has led erstwhile progressives and leftist intellectuals into the nihilism and endless relativism of postmodernism. . . . Getting past this impasse requires a theory of a realistic alternative at the global level, which we find in the idea of global democracy" (2000: 9).

The institutional conversion is crucial. It will not avail us if people personally and culturally embrace ethical holism while remaining globally organized according to capitalism and the system of sovereign nation-states. We need to make holism the presupposition of all our thinking and acting. We need new global institutions with a new, global government and universal rule of law. We need a global social contract democratically embodying the holism of humanity and the Earth.

Albert Einstein wrote that "there can be no compromise possible between preparation for war, on the one hand, and preparation of a world society based on law and order on the other" (in Fox, 1990: 187). There is nothing "utopian" in the negative sense about what Reves, Pope John XXIII, or Einstein are saying. It is

strictly realism to make the Copernican paradigm-shift to a planetary perspective, with a planetary common good, and the planetary set of institutions necessary to address that common good. In Chapter Three, I try to elucidate these new holistic concepts of government and law.

