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Cultivating Unity

Contribution to GTI Forum [An Earth Constitution: Has the Time Come?](#)

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Thinking of a world government as a way towards a Great Transition might only reinforce the ongoing hubristic direction taken by current government models if we do not first ask axiological questions. As communities, we need to set an intention to determine the direction in which we will be moving. What will happen depends primarily on the decisions we make. Suppose communities worldwide are basing their government model on eco-social values shared by the global population. In that case, a world government will not be necessary to advocate, especially as this one could not support the multi-cultural dimension of our societies. Therefore, it could be best to promote local political strategies with a foundation of globally shared values.

If the global government is not a necessity when communities agree on the same fundamental values, then international law, and the redefinition of the concept of democracy according to those laws, could be, on the other hand, essential. To what extent can we be free? What are human beings' fundamental rights, and how do we preserve them? Could what we call the natural world have rights too?

Those questions could be rationally and democratically debated based on the world's current situation to help us think about what we want now, from what we know, and what must be done. We must think of what sacrifices we are ready to make towards a common desirable future and then decide on the laws that will structure our existence. For example, we are all ready to accept a restriction on freedom when it comes to murdering someone by accepting the law that prevents it. However, could we accept a restriction on freedom when it comes to changing our habits that serve only our personal interests, such as unlimited global plane travel?

In France, unprecedented democratic action has been initiated lately. The Citizen's Convention on Climate gathers a drawn diversified population that is directly involved in the preparation of the law.¹ Those citizens have no personal interests in the decision-making but must make decisions for the common good. This action, still experimental now, could be a model for other communities.

So, to go forward, a few fundamental questions to ask ourselves are, on which value system will our decisions rely? Can we globally agree on those values? How do we create a common global culture that withdraws from the Anthropocene to enable the Ecocene? Do we all agree on those questions, on what they mean, and on what they imply?

The capitalistic and colonialist contemporary occidental culture has subjugated otherness for its own pleasure and despises any other form of culture that is not its own. This relation to the world and understanding of it has had disastrous consequences. Unless the common value system is mutated towards something ethical and sustainable and our imperialistic ideas abandoned, this deadly spiral will go on.

How can we understand the world differently and reach a consensus? A good start would be to realize that we are all this world and that our actions are suicidal and terrorist. This mad pursuit of progress and growth has dazed us to the point that we have lost all contact with the real world. Nevertheless, we need that deep and intimate connection with the world to make grounded decisions. We need a new ontological model to redefine our way of being in this world. This crisis is not only a social and ecological one but also equally a crisis of culture, imagination, and senses. We are in a desperate need for beauty, for connections, for existential meaning, for belonging. Amid the current crisis, the arts have an essential role to play, as they can raise our eco-social and aesthetic consciousness. They invite us to be grounded in this world and trigger a dialogue by letting us experience our interconnection with the world. Arts in all their form can raise our sensibility and help us imagine what could be, enabling a shift of paradigms.

As beautifully said by Per Espen Stoknes, "by realigning ourselves in a sensitive way to the shapes and expressive forms of more than human nature, we unlearn our destructive dualistic habits. Moreover, we relearn in a practical way to align with the presence and processes of the Earth itself."²

A connection with life phenomena is thus precious if we want to change the way we are in this world. However, one crucial question remains, do we have time for it?

Endnotes

1. For more on this, see <https://www.conventioncitoyennepourleclimat.fr/en/>.
2. Sally Atkins and Melia Snyder, *Nature-Based Expressive Arts Therapy, Integrating the Expressive Arts and Ecotherapy* (London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2017), 14.

About the Author



Taina de Carvalho is an art therapist and educator. She works at the Finish creative workers' association Painovoima and Lahti Academy of Liberal and Fine Arts, focusing on exploring possibilities for the arts in personal and societal change. She has developed an art-based eco-social pedagogy for use in primary schools.

About the Publication

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