

Globalization: The Path to Liberty, the Path to Captivity

The last decade has witnessed an unprecedented integration of economies, cultures, and political systems, driven by spectacular advances in communications and transportation technologies. One need not look far to see how these forces have transformed our daily lives, our communities, and our planet. Globalization is the term used to express the profound and diverse changes that humanity is currently experiencing. Perhaps it is unfair to burden a single term with so much meaning because, as we have seen, globalization has become the rallying cry for both an impressive cadre of supporters and a burgeoning mass of critics.

The developments referred to as globalization have the potential to offer great challenges and opportunities. Thomas Friedman, author of *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, explains “Globalization is much like fire. Fire itself is neither good nor bad. Used properly, it can cook food, sterilize equipment, form iron, and heat our homes. Used carelessly, fire can destroy lives, towns, and forests in an instant.”¹ Whereas globalization’s critics argue that the same fire has been used to cook the food of some while destroying the homes of others, supporters maintain that its destructive uses will eventually be restrained by its beneficial ones. Neither the zero-sum approach of the critics nor the ‘wait your turn’ approach of the supporters seems just or sustainable. Surely there must be a reachable equilibrium between these two poles.

If we seek a form of globalization that is more equitable than that which currently exists, it would be important to truly understand the present state of the globalized culture and the global economy. What are the advantages of globalization and are these advantages being made available to all global citizens? Are the traditional roles of the citizen, state, and market being altered by globalization and, if so, do the changes strengthen or weaken democracy, social justice, diversity, and community? In this paper, I intend to examine the forces of globalization as they relate to people, profit, politics, and the planet. In an attempt to reconcile the polarized debate over globalization, I also seek to reveal the potential that lies beneath its flaws.

The Global Culture: Kaleidoscope or Monochrome?

Culture is often interpreted through the lens of the branded iconography of popular culture. With few exceptions, culture is explored through food, commercialized travel, and to a lesser degree language, music and film. Such cultural entry points are not only enjoyable but the least threatening to one’s dominant culture.

Take, for example, the West’s growing interest in ‘exotic’ cuisine. While American fast-

food chains have secured an unshakable global foothold, an increasing number of Americans are bypassing their own Pizza Huts and Taco Bells and taking a seat at the global buffet table. Behold the soaring popularity of ‘fusion’ cooking – hybrids of Szechwan and Jamaican, Mexican and Thai. Wayne Ellwood, the author of the *No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization*, comments “many in Britain believe globalization and the resulting ‘fusion’ cooking is the best thing to happen to English cooking in the past 500 years.”²

Although food dwarfs other aspects of cultural exploration, travel is an increasingly popular way of declaring one’s interest in other peoples and lands. While some bohemian travellers still head to the Himalayas without so much as a Sherpa in tow, many are paying top dollar for carefully designed adventures. Mazatlan and Hawaii have been deposed by Bhutan, Vietnam, and Iran as ‘exotic’ destinations *de rigueur*. Recently, a *Globe and Mail* travel reporter tempted readers with the following description of Vietnam:

*How can you not be smitten by a country whose national food is chicken noodle soup? It’s called pho and the Vietnamese have a bowl from a street vendor almost every morning. The sumptuous mix of flavours and textures is like the country itself – an exotic blend, energizing, and aromatic.*³

Critics claim that, by introducing tourism to such traditional and pristine parts of the planet, indigenous peoples and their way of life will be compromised. After all, the ‘diversity’ travel industry is commercially driven and, as such, is exposed to the same boom-bust cycles and fad-like seasonality that drive our capitalist economy.

How sincere is the West’s desire to explore other cultures when destinations are often determined by foreign exchange rates? Witness the spike in travel to Southeast Asia following the 1997 financial crisis. While tourists have the option of jet-setting back home, local peoples are often left dealing with the economic, social, and environmental instability created by their visit.

Beyond global menus and travel itineraries, the West remains the dominant contributor to the cultural dimension of the global mosaic. In no realm is this more visible than in the entertainment world where Hollywood reigns supreme. In his early work on globalization, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, Benjamin Barber tracks the national origin of the top-grossing films in 22 countries for the year 1993. In all but two countries, an American film landed the top spot. Argentineans, Chileans, the Japanese, and the Malaysians flocked to see *Terminator 2* while the Swiss, Spanish, Dutch, and Egyptians opted for *Dances with Wolves*. In contrast, the Finns and the Italians chose films of domestic origin, *Mr. Numbskull* and *Johnny Stecchino* respectively.⁴ How many North Americans have either heard of these films let alone seen them?

American pop culture merchandise is another highly prized commodity in the pursuit of Holly-

wood-style culture. Multi-national corporations (MNCs) now sell to supra-national market niches that have been standardized according to such universal demographics as age and gender. Disney, the patent-holder of several global idols, can sell Mickey Mouse as easily to Europeans as it does to North Americans. And if it weren't for that vexing problem of purchasing power, parents from South-east Asia and Sub-Sahara Africa would be buying Mickey in similar droves for their Disney-hungry children. Can we really convince ourselves that such unilateral 'sharing' of culture and consumerism is turning the world into a harmonious and tolerant global village?

English, the language of science, commerce, pop culture, and the Internet, is the world's most commonly spoken second language. If our global *lingua franca* were chosen democratically, we would be learning Mandarin, the language spoken by nearly one in six humans. But the selection of English resulted from Britain's colonial legacy, America's post-war economic dominance, and America's status as the founding nation of the Internet.

If not for the homogenizing force of the globe's *lingua franca*, one could remain more optimistic about the non-English world's chances of maintaining its cultural identity. The National Geographic Society estimates that, between 1990 and 2100, the world's pool of linguistic diversity will shrink from 4,000 to 2,000 languages.⁵ Consider that it previously took almost two millennia for the same proportion of languages to shrink. And it is not just localized language groups like the Basques of Northern Spain or the Cree of Western Canada that are vulnerable. The French, for example, remain highly vigilant against this linguistic encroachment and have created a language *gendarme* to resist the invasion of Anglicized words.

Our global Anglicization is reinforced by our universal dialect – the language of our branded world – which contains hundreds of internationally identified corporate hieroglyphics. According to Adbusters Media Foundation, the average person recognizes just 10 species of plants but 1000 corporate logos.⁶ The ubiquitous presence of English and its branded dialect will only intensify, leading us further from a global linguistic mosaic and closer to the reality of a homogenized linguistic code.

This brief analysis of how the world's cultures are coping with globalization has spanned our dinner tables, travel itineraries, entertainment choices, merchandising, and linguistic influences. Yes, we may be willing to tempt our palate with fusion cuisine or to trot off to exotic holiday destinations. Yet we remain virtually impenetrable when it comes to non-American entertainment, merchandise, and language – the very beachheads of cultural dominance.

Distribution of Wealth? What about Distribution of Poverty?

Despite the obvious impact of globalization on culture, some observers continue to define globalization in purely economic terms. Economist Charles Hill, for example, describes globaliza-

tion as “moving toward a world in which national economies are merging into an interdependent global economic system.”⁷ This interconnected global economy “creates opportunities for businesses to expand their revenues, drive down their costs, and boost their profits.”⁸ It is worth noting that Hill’s marketing pitch for globalization completely ignores the state, the planet, and the individual.

From Hill’s perspective, globalization has two corporate-driven components – the globalization of markets and of production. I believe that the globalization of markets is very much tied to the earlier discussion about the cultural consequences of globalization as it presumes that the tastes and preferences of consumers in different nations are converging onto a global norm. As such, I will focus on the globalization of production and its impact on labour, land and resources, trade, and capital flows.

For all the fanfare about the opportunities offered by the new global economy, more and more people are finding themselves chronically unemployed or under-employed. According to Bernard Lietaer, former Belgian central banker, “jobless growth for major corporations is not a forecast, but an established trend.”⁹ William Greider adds that “the world’s 500 largest corporations have managed to increase their production and sales by 700% over the past 20 years, while at the same time *reducing* their total workforce.”¹⁰

Today’s pool of ready labour is polarized between the stressed-out white collar workers who understand that “workaholism has become a tacit job requirement”¹¹ and the burgeoning mass of people trying to peddle crafts and trades that have been automated or rendered unprofitable. Even tradespeople lucky enough to hold onto a job have been forced to accept a major undervaluing of their work. According to Noreena Hertz, Cambridge business professor and author of *The Silent Takeover*:

*A fifth of American employees work at rates below the official poverty level, making a mockery of the low official unemployment rates...In the late 1980s, the union wage for removing asbestos insulation from old buildings was \$31 an hour, but by the 1990s the rate had collapsed to \$12 - \$15 an hour – and workers were willing to do the job without respirators.*¹²

While economists like Hill laud the ability of business to keep costs down by securing the lowest costs for labour, the reality faced by workers is hardly cause for celebration. Hertz describes the corporate practice of ‘bottom fishing’ whereby corporations shift production, typically via subcontractors, from one sweatshop zone to the next in search of the best deal on human labour.¹³ These labourers toil for poverty wages and no benefits, accepting temporary and sporadic work and encountering verbal and physical abuse. Attempts at unionization are met with dismissal and, often, threats of death or ‘disappearance’. While most Westerners work under vastly better conditions, we should

not forget that it is our demand for cheap consumer products and our expectation of double-digit returns from our mutual funds that permit these villainous practices.

Globalization's footprint on the earth and its resources is profound and intractable. While the expropriation of the earth's bounty is not a new phenomenon, the pace and scope of this extraction is unprecedented. Human consumption of the planet's land and riches is vastly disproportionate across nations, classes, and ethnicities. According to Hertz, the average North American consumes six times as much as the average Mexican, ten times as much as the average Chinese, and thirty times more than the average Indian.¹⁴

The ecologist and economist William Rees describes this inequity in terms of total available productive land. He estimates that 10-14 acres of land are required to maintain the consumption of the average person in the West even though the total productive land yields only 4.25 acres per global citizen. Rees describes this regional gluttony as "an unaccounted ecological deficit – populations are either appropriating ecological capacity from elsewhere or from future generations."¹⁵

If humans were sincere stewards of the planet, we would assess costs to those who damage land, water, air, and resources. Yet international accounting standards are preoccupied with a single, economic bottom line approach to balance sheets and income statements. For many, the answer lies with a more comprehensive approach to cost accounting that considers social and environmental performance. Triple-bottom line accounting has received only modest response from the business community but other stakeholders remain optimistic. Organizations such as the Global Reporting Initiative are working to elevate sustainability reporting practices to a level equivalent to those of financial reporting. Real progress will require concerted pressure from consumers and shareholders, and the support of public agencies and industry associations.

A recent report from NAFTA's environmental watchdog condemns North America for ignoring the environmental instability caused by overuse of natural resources. It reads: "by 'spending' natural capital without replenishing it, or by damaging processes and living systems that cannot be fixed by technology, we are living off our capital rather than the interest."¹⁶ This finding is all the more disturbing when we extrapolate the environmental damage linked to a trade agreement among three nations to the proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) which would bring in the remaining thirty 'democratic' nations of the hemisphere. Perhaps Cuba, as the only country in the hemisphere to be excluded from the FTAA, will become the ecological sanctuary of the region.

Deregulated global capital markets have produced the booming industry of currency speculation which involves the "short-term movement of funds from one currency to another in hopes of profiting from shifts in exchange rates."¹⁷ Once the cottage industry of the financial world, currency speculation now accounts for over 90% of all foreign exchange transactions amounting to *daily* trad-

ing volumes in excess of US\$1.5 trillion dollars. Unlike investments in goods and services, currency speculators make money from money alone and do not contribute to the development of physical infrastructure or human capital. In 1998, the global trade in merchandise and services was US\$6.5 trillion – equal to only 4.3 days of trading on foreign exchange markets.¹⁸

Critics of this global currency casino argue that its pinball-like movements create volatility which can destabilize the economies of the developing world. Who could forget the financial crises in Indonesia, Russia, and Brazil which deepened social divisions and created political tensions? These countries had been, just years earlier, “star pupils of the so-called Washington Consensus, deregulating their capital accounts as a way of enticing foreign investment and kick-starting the development process.”¹⁹ Even George Soros, provocateur of the 1992 run on the British pound, blames “market fundamentalists for reducing human and social relations to the common denominator of money.”²⁰

Countries can escape the profit-making wrath of currency speculators by dropping their national currency and signing onto the stable, liquid currency of another nation. In the spirit of the *lingua franca*, the US Federal Reserve and the Bank of England are the bankers of choice. Referred to as ‘dollarization’, such a fate has been accepted by El Salvador, Ecuador and, perhaps in short order, Argentina. Canadians should not be too smug; our transition to the greenback has not been ruled out.

Trade liberalization is the marquee activity of the global economy. It drives labour-less growth, incites environmental destruction, and spins capital. Trade was originally based on the principle of ‘comparative advantage’ whereby a people with a talent for cultivating grains, for example, would trade with those good at smelting iron. The introduction of such asymmetrical externalities as subsidies, quotas, tariffs, and predatory pricing put an end to this *quid pro quo* arrangement.

In 1950, the industrialized world, led by the United States, launched a process of trade liberalization. It began as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) and grew into the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 1996. The WTO is a rules-based system policing the international trade activities and domestic policies of its 130-plus members. It is the final pillar in the free-trade trinity. Flanked by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB), the WTO offers yet one more platform from which the industrialized world can guide the global economy.

Critics abound. Nobel prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz was fired from his position as Chief Economist of the World Bank for speaking out against what he saw as the collusive policies of the international financial institutions. In a recent interview, he explained that the IMF/WB prescription for poverty reduction is a euphemism for trade liberalization. Stiglitz likened the WTO style of free trade to the Opium Wars which were also used to open markets. He said: “As in the 19th cen-

tury, Europeans and Americans today are kicking down the barriers to sales in Asia, Latin America, and Africa while barricading their own markets against Third World agriculture.”²¹

The trade liberalization agenda suffered a set-back in November of 1999 when 50,000 protesters descended upon Seattle and interrupted the WTO Ministerial, intended as a free-trade *fait accompli*. So, the WTO chose Doha, Qatar as the inaccessible locale for its 2001 Ministerial. The meeting ran as scripted and resulted in China’s accession to the club despite well-founded concerns about its dismal record on human rights and democracy. Apparently, such regimes must be ‘constructively engaged’ and placed on the free-trade path to democracy. If this is indeed a tenet of trade dogma, shouldn’t Cuba allowed to ‘democratize’ via entry into the Free Trade Area of the Americas? One can only assume that, in select cases forwarded by the interests of certain states, *realpolitik* will always trump free trade.

Admittedly, the workings of the global economy are difficult to dissect. I have attempted to highlight globalization’s impact on the factors of production and the ability of free trade to exacerbate this impact. We have seen that economic growth occurs without commensurate growth in jobs, further polarizing the overworked and the unemployed. Globalized production’s relationship with the planet and its resources is abusive and unsustainable. Unrestricted capital flows scour global markets for rapid returns, often leaving a multitude of victims in its wake.

The consequences of the global economy create a loathsome image of our so-called global village. Neighbors in this global economic village hoard employment opportunities from each other, steal each other’s share of resources and land, and profit from each others’ financial woes. If we agree that such actions are neither legal nor humane within a community then why do we tolerate it among nations?

The Dilemma of the Individual: Body or Soul?

One can indeed lament the awesome power of globalization and its agents to sculpt our collective culture and economy. One, too, can mourn the loss of the world’s cultural diversity, the destruction of the Amazon rainforest, and the abhorrent conditions of workers in export processing zones. But many in the overdeveloped world concede that they are just too busy shuttling kids to soccer games, tending to aging parents, and finding ways to manage double-income households to pay attention to the problems of people they have never met or places they have never seen. After all, they wearily confess, it is hard to complain about globalization when we are benefiting from its offerings. Yet it is not difficult to see that this economically-induced exuberance is but a thin veil over mounting social and emotional discontent.

According to the Summer 2000 issue of *Adbusters*, Americans are suffering from a national

emotional malaise that the authors call “malignant sadness.”²² At the time of the article’s writing, share prices, GDP, and venture capital were soaring along a trajectory of seemingly limitless growth. Yet, the authors found a parallel trajectory of people living not the American dream but on the brink of emotional collapse. The Orwellian response to this collective malaise includes reaching for the remote control and stampeding to the malls. The authors compare the instability of the American psyche to social arrangements in other cultures. They note:

*There are parts of the world not yet thoroughly saturated with postmodern culture, places that still have some lush mental wilderness intact. Places where people still connect – not electronically but physically and emotionally – with one another...There are countries where people do things differently than mainstream Americans, and lo and behold, the sun still comes up in the morning.*²³

Did we really think that spiritual transcendence could be reached through economic excess? Sufi philosophers warn humans about the trade-off between feeding their bodies and feeding their souls. Similarly, Mother Theresa compared the physical poverty in the East to the spiritual poverty in the West.

A counselling service in the Silicon Valley ‘diagnosed’ the emotional burden of excessive wealth by offering therapy sessions for those high-tech millionaires suffering from ‘sudden wealth syndrome’. Eighteen months later, these same people were enrolled in the latest therapy for ‘sudden loss of wealth syndrome’. There remains little doubt that today’s globalization may be feeding some of our bodies, but it is questionable whether it is feeding any of our souls.

The Shrinking Role of the State

Noreena Hertz believes that humanity stands at a critical juncture whereby government and politics are being eroded and replaced by the mechanics of corporate rule. She argues that “over the last two decades the balance of power between politics and commerce has shifted radically, leaving politicians increasingly subordinate to the colossal economic power of big business.”²⁴ Big business has weakened the state’s ability to set independent tax rates, implement foreign policy based on the principles of human security and social justice, and support local social and cultural institutions. In an attempt to cultivate an inviting environment for the private sector, the state is jeopardizing its own legitimacy.

Benjamin Barber also exposes this self-fulfilling obsolescence of the state. In an article published in *Der Tagesspiegel*, Barber writes: “at the very moment when technology is offering the nation state new forms of direct civic engagement, it is pushing the globalization of the economy in

such a manner that undermines the nation-state and its governing democratic institutions.”²⁵ Governments are becoming increasingly unable to defend the common good when the common good contradicts the principles of profit maximization.

Some have written that history will remember September 11th as bringing about the resurrection of the state as our most powerful institution. After all, didn't the events see Fortune 500 CEOs pleading for government intervention in the wake of profit warnings, layoffs, and bankruptcies? I believe that September 11th neither transformed these corporate titans into paper tigers nor replaced the Wall Street bull with the bear. We must not forget that the pre-September 11th economy was already mired in uncertainty caused by the collapse of the high-tech and dot com industries. Alan Greenspan's 'irrational exuberance' of the late 1990s left corporate America and its shareholders in a post-boom tailspin by the fall of 2000.

It is hard not to be cynical about the corporate-state *pas-de-deux* at the best of times let alone since the collapse of the World Trade Towers. Wouldn't corporate America have deferred to the White House if it meant securing post-September 11th tax cuts, stimulus packages, and defense contracts? And what about the President's call to the nation to stand up to terrorism by heading back to the malls, charging up the credit cards, taking the kids to Disneyland, and getting 'America working again'?

I believe that the tenets of democracy – freedom of the press, freedom of association, and the rights of citizenship – are hanging by a very tenuous string. Our rights cannot be tested by our silence. Günther Grass, Nobel Laureate for literature, says that “the first job of a citizen is to keep your mouth open.”²⁶ And so we must reclaim our citizenship and prize it more highly than the consumer-based epaulets of the current global order.

Living in a Material World: The Branded Individual

We are living in a commercialized, commodified, branded bubble of *Truman Show* proportions. Commercial jingles, branded images, and fashion fads have penetrated our collective consciousness. Brand allegiance defines personalities in cultural short-hand.

Tom Peters, the brand equity guru, tells us that to survive in the global economy we must construct our own, personal brand. He gushes: “It's time for you to take a lesson from the big brands, a lesson that is true for anyone who's interested in what it takes to stand out and prosper. We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc....where our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called you.”²⁷

Goodyear Canada is on the lookout for such brand-following sycophants. The company is willing to pay up to \$25,000 to Canadians with the last name Dunlop who legally change their name

to Dunlop-Tire. The prize money will be divided among up to fifty willing name-changers, meaning each could get only \$500 in exchange for “handing their identity over to a manufacturer of all-season radials.”²⁸ If this evokes horror in you, Goodyear tells you to lighten up. “If anyone finds this offensive, then they really don’t have a great sense of humor,”²⁹ says a company representative. Further, the company points to a recent survey by Decima Research which found that 37 percent of Canadians “would adopt a corporate brand name if paid well to do so.”³⁰

And for those willing to take a vow of greater brand allegiance, Disney constructed the archetypal branded bubble called ‘Celebration’. Canadian journalist Michael Valpy wrote about his visit to this town of 4,500 which is a “Disney-planned, Disney-controlled community embodying the founder’s ideals: no government, no democracy, but lots of American high tech married to nostalgic architectural images.”³¹ Disney requires home-owners— and there are seven blueprints to choose from — “to sign an 87-page covenant dealing with everything from the colours of window coverings to the ratio of lawns to perennial plants.”³² The irony is that a mouse called Mickey is the architect for this self-imposed human cage.

We are held captive by our inability to reclaim our individual rights and freedoms, once described by a poet as “fighting for the courage to fight.”³³ We are reluctant to demand the return of our democratic freedoms because we are unwilling to sacrifice our hedonistic desires. Benjamin Barber offers a most fitting analogy to this struggle:

*Modern aficionados of consumer society seem to resemble those self-deluded monkeys caught in a novel African monkey trap designed to exploit their weaknesses of will when egged on by their desires. The trap consists of a sturdy board well-anchored to the ground, that is drilled with a hole just large enough to permit a relaxed primate hand to reach through it on the way to grabbing a large nut resting in a box on the other side. Once the nut is grasped, a stuffed fist is formed that cannot be withdrawn unless the monkey surrenders its booty. But it doesn’t let go. Paralyzed by its desire, its hand already on the prize, it struggles to withdraw its fist, nut in place. It is trapped – by its own powerful and ‘free’ will.... So too we modern consumers in the global marketplace celebrate our liberty – no gun is at our heads to draw us to the malls and infomercials and e.com sites that eat up our time and erode our public freedom – but we cannot seem to let go. Are we free? Yes. Are we unfree? Yes. That is our dilemma.*³⁴

The Peoples’ Protest

With increasing frequency, protest is facing off with profit and politics in the most public of

spaces – the streets. Although it was not the first mobilization against the global order, the protest of the November 1999 WTO meetings in Seattle marked what sociologist Malcolm Gladwell calls the ‘tipping point’³⁵ of social movements. In the heady five days of civil disobedience, the global peoples’ movement experienced a rite of passage. The coming together of 50,000 trade unionists, anarchists, rejuvenated hippies, environmentalists, animal rights activists, and pacifists under one banner took Seattle and the WTO by surprise. Delegates returned home without agreeing on a new round of trade liberalization.

In the fall of 2001, the WTO held its fourth Ministerial, this time in the almost-impenetrable desert kingdom of Qatar. Fewer than 300 visas were issued to civil society organizations so their combined voices registered barely a whisper in the media coverage given to the meetings. Governments were front and centre, perhaps in an attempt to convince viewers that the state remains the key actor on the international stage. But behind the scenes, multi-national corporations were drafting text and lobbying trade ministers. Perhaps, as some of the world’s largest economies, this was the least they could expect never mind the fact that many were platinum-level sponsors of the WTO Ministerial. Could the people be blamed for wondering whether this is what democracy should look like?

June 2002 will witness the meeting of the G8 in Kananaskis, Alberta. Prime Minister Chrétien has announced that the size of country delegations will be strictly limited. Recently, he announced that the meeting, previously scheduled for three days would be shortened to two. The activist community is divided over whether it should stage protests in Kananaskis – a most pristine environment, located on aboriginal land – or stay within Calgary, the closest urban centre. Whatever happens during the G8 meeting and the parallel protest, it is clear that the death of a protester in Genoa and the heightened security fears post-September 11th will profoundly effect the dynamics between the state and its citizens.

Localizing Globalization

If we truly seek to maximize the potential of globalization, we must be objective in assessing its track record to date and not blindly accept the verdicts issued by either its zealous supporters or harsh critics.

In its present form, globalization serves the desires of the few at the expense of the many. Currency speculators, virtual capitalists, cultural expropriators, and marketing gurus reap the benefits of an increasingly integrated network of cultures and economies. Indigenous peoples, the envi-

ronment, sweatshop laborers, future generations, and traditional cultures sacrifice so that others can gain. Yet, in the midst of this damage, globalization has made significant contributions that are more equitably apportioned. The advances in communications and transportation technology, for example, enable people to connect with each other in new and meaningful ways. Still, the digital divide is too wide for many humans to bridge.

The forces of globalization may be skewed but they are not static. They will continue to breed inequity and injustice unless we harness their potential to improve conditions for all global citizens. Noreena Hertz concludes her book by calling individuals to action. She argues: “since neither business nor politics can survive without popular support, we are in a powerful position if we unite and press for change.”³⁶ I believe that the most critical locus for creating this change is at the local level and the most potent actor is the individual. Our efforts can have a catalytic effect - both resonating out to our communities and percolating up through national and international institutions of governance and commerce. Specifically, I support the following agenda for individual action.

First, we must use our influence as consumers and shareholders to push for greater corporate accountability and transparency. We must educate ourselves on the origins of the physical and human capital that is employed to create the goods and services that we purchase. We must learn that our desire for low prices and high dividends results in child labour, environmental destruction, and the expropriation of land and resources from local communities. We must seek alternative models of communication, commerce, and trade – barter systems, complementary currencies, independent and public media, local entrepreneurship – and we must resist the temptation to consume for consumption’s sake.

Second, we must reclaim the true essence of citizenship and participate in the political process at all levels. We must respect the tenets of democracy in our homes, schools, places of worship and we must demand that elected officials serve the common good. I believe that we must push for the redesign of the electoral system to include the principles of proportional representation so that a greater plurality of voices are reflected in debate and in policy.

Third, we must connect with other members of the human family, particularly those in the South, in ways that are genuine and open-minded and not parochial and patronizing. We must transcend the boundaries of race, ethnicity, class, and religion and realize that it is only collective harmony that can guarantee our collective existence.

If we lived our lives based on Ghandi’s call to “be the change we wish to see”³⁷ we would create an abundance of wealth – economic, spiritual, and social – that would be available for all to enjoy. And, like Barber’s captive monkeys, we could choose to release our grasp on the tempting but unsustainable forces of globalization. Then, I would be hopeful that we could

globalize our virtues not our vices, to honor our co-existence with each other and the planet,
to share our spiritual and physical wealth.

1. Thomas Friedman. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. 1999.
2. Wayne Ellwood. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization*. 2001. pp.9.
3. Arlene Perly Rae. "Vietnam: Here and Now." *Globe & Mail*. January 12, 2002. pp.T1.
3. Benjamin R. Barber. *Jihad vs. McWorld*. 1995. pp.307.
3. National Geographic Society. "Voices of the World." August 1999.
3. *Adbusters*. June/July 2000. pp.2.
3. Charles Hill. *International Business: Competing in the Global Marketplace*. 2000. pp.4.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.4.
3. Bernard Lietaer. *The Future of Money: Creating New Wealth, Work and a Wiser World*. 2001. pp.11.
3. *Ibid.* pp.12.
3. *Ibid.* pp.11.
3. Noreena Hertz. *The Silent Takeover: Global Capitalism and the Death of Democracy*. 2001. pp.47.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.47.
3. *Ibid.*, pp.6.
3. Wayne Ellwood. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization*. 2001. pp.92.
3. Alanna Mitchell. "GDP Value Must Reflect Eco-Wealth, Report Says." *Globe & Mail*. January 7, 2002. pp.A7.

3. Charles Hill. *International Business: Competing in the Global Marketplace*. 2000. pp.280.
3. Wayne Ellwood. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization*. 2001. pp.92.
3. Ibid., pp.77.
3. "Money Mavericks." *The New Internationalist*. January-February 2000. pp.14.
3. Greg Palast. "Joseph Stiglitz – the Globalizer who Came in From the Cold." *The Observer*. October 10, 2001. pp.8.
3. Kalle Lasn & Bruce Grierson. "Malignant Sadness." *Adbusters*. June/July 2000. pp. 28.
3. Ibid., pp.38.
3. Noreena Hertz. *The Silent Takeover: Global Capitalism and the Death of Democracy*. 2001. pp.11.
3. Benjamin R. Barber. "The Global Infantilization". *Der Tagesspiegel*. September 9, 2001. pp.B1.
3. Günther Grass. "Last Call." *Utne Reader*. January-February 2002. pp.104.
3. Tom Peters. "The Brand Called You." *Fast Company*. August 1997. pp.83.
3. John Heinzl. "Goodyear on the Lookout for Dunlops." *Globe & Mail*. December 13, 2001. pp.A16.
3. Ibid., pp.A16.
3. Ibid., pp.A16.
3. Michael Valpy. "The Mouse that Walt Built." *Globe & Mail*. December 8, 2001. pp.F4.

3. Ibid. pp.F5.
3. John Broomfield. "Moon." May 2000.
3. Benjamin R. Barber. "The Global Infantilization". *Der Tagesspiegel*. September 9, 2001. pp.B1.
3. Malcolm Gladwell. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. 2000. pp.7.
3. Noreena Hertz. *The Silent Takeover: Global Capitalism and the Death of Democracy*. 2001. pp.212.
3. Mahatma Ghandi.

Bibliography

Barber, Benjamin R. *Jihad vs. McWorld*. 1995

Barber, Benjamin R. "The Global Infantilization". *Der Tagesspiegel*. September 9, 2001. pp. B1.

Ellwood, Wayne. *The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization*. 2001.

"Free Market in Hypocrisy." *Guardian Weekly*. September 13-19, 2001. pp.11.

Friedman, Thomas. *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. 1999.

Gladwell, Malcolm. *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference*. 2000.

Heinzel, John. "Goodyear on the Lookout for Dunlops." *Globe & Mail*. December 13, 2001. pp.A16.

Hertz, Noreena. *The Silent Takeover: Global Capitalism and the Death of Democracy*.

2001.

Hill, Charles. *International Business: Competing in the Global Marketplace*. 2000.

Klein, Naomi. *No Logo*. 2000.

Klein, Naomi. "Signs of the Times." *The Nation*. October 22, 2001. pp.15.

Lasn, Kalle & Bruce Grierson. "Malignant Sadness." *Adbusters*. June/July 2000. pp.28-39.

Lietaer, Bernard. *The Future of Money: Creating New Wealth, Work, and a Wiser World*. 2001.

Mitchell, Alanna. "GDP Value Must Reflect Eco-Wealth, Report Says." *Globe & Mail*. January 7, 2002. pp.A7.

"Money Mavericks." *The New Internationalist*. January-February 2000. pp.14

Palast, Greg. "Joseph Stiglitz – the Globalizer who Came in From the Cold." *The Observer*. October 10, 2001. pp. 8

Peters, Tom. "The Brand Called You." *Fast Company*. August 1997. pp.83.

Rae, Arlene Perly. "Vietnam: Here and Now." *Globe & Mail*. January 12, 2002. pp.T1.

Shorrock, Tim. "Nobel Laureate Encourages Global Justice Movement." www.commondreams.org. October 16, 2001.

"The Tobin Tax: A Bad Idea Whose Time has Passed." *Policy Options*. July-August, 1999. pp.53.

"Time for Tobin." *The New Internationalist*. January-February, 2000. pp.19.

Valpy, Michael. "The House that Walt Built." *Globe & Mail*. December 8, 2001. pp.F4&5.