HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Today, historians both male and female try not to restrict their work to the activities or testimonies of men. Yet, because men dominated politics, war, and industry for many years, oftentimes important historical studies have ignored women. Historians now attempt to research and write more complete, balanced historical accounts, addressing topics in which women have played important roles. Such topics include the history of the family, sexuality, privacy, popular culture, domesticity, and work, among others. In recent years, women’s history and women’s studies have become vibrant fields of specialization and discovery.

This chapter offers readings that, taken together, constitute a history of women since 1950. We will read women’s accounts from various parts of the world, as they describe aspects of their lives and those of other women. We begin, however, with the Chinese Marriage Law of 1950 so we might consider the new legal baseline for one-fifth of the world’s population. (This law was replicated in many other countries as well.) We then turn to the emerging women’s movement in the United States, spearheaded by a far-reaching book, *The Feminine Mystique* (1963). Next, an Algerian novelist reflects on youth, adolescence, and family. Then an unemployed Brazilian talks about her life. Finally, we move from the personal to the political, with letters from Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma, a U.N. document on women in politics, and an unusual news story.

All of the women featured in this chapter are articulate, literate, self-conscious writers. Their eloquence allows us to reflect on the power of words for women, as well as for men.
THINKING HISTORICALLY

Constructing Theory

The notion of "constructing theory" may seem much more demanding than it is. It is little more than bringing together ideas that explain phenomena in history. Put simply, a theory offers a possible answer to a question or an explanation of a problem. Theories are not necessarily true; they are guesses, called hypotheses, and have to be tested and supported with evidence. Theories might come to us from reading either primary or secondary sources, but ultimately a theory must make sense of the primary sources, the raw experience of history. A theory organizes experience in a way that makes it more comprehensible. It seeks patterns or an explanation of patterns: causes, consequences, connections, relationships, reasons.

Ultimately, of course, a theory must be tested with new evidence. A good theory will interpret or incorporate new evidence without needing much change. In this chapter, you are asked only to focus on constructing theory. Occasionally, you will be reminded of the limitations of the sources included here, but our emphasis will be on conceiving and expressing theories that give meaning to the material at hand.

As you read these selections, try to construct a theory about the history of women over the last fifty or sixty years. You might begin with the very basic question: Did the lives of women improve during this period? If you think they have, or have not, you might develop a theory as to why. It could be more modest than that. You might, for instance, develop a theory about why women’s lives improved in a particular kind of society, but not in some other type of society. It might be something unrelated to the larger question of improvements for women. You might have a theory about particular kinds of women, or gender relations somewhere, or voting for women, or whatever springs from the readings and answers some question that the readings pose for you.
The Marriage Law of the People's Republic of China

Chinese revolutionaries in the twentieth century frequently called for women's rights and equality. The "women question" was at the forefront of the Nationalist revolution of 1911 and, again, of the Communist revolution of 1949. Women who had been active in the revolution of 1911 sought women's suffrage and an end to such patriarchal practices as foot-binding, the concubine system, child marriage, and prostitution. But the visions of Chinese revolutionaries often remained promises in word only.

The government of Chiang Kai-shek passed major resolutions in 1924 and 1926 to enact laws that would codify many of the aspirations of the women's movement: legal equality, right to own property, freely entered marriage, right to divorce, even equal pay for equal work. But in 1927, Chiang's Nationalist party broke its alliance with the communists and identified them with women's issues to smear them. In fact, many of the founders of the Communist party, including Mao Zedong, were proponents of family reform (free marriage and free love) before they were Marxists. Despite this, as they sought supporters and volunteers throughout China after 1927, especially in the more traditional and male-dominated countryside, they quickly dropped their calls for reform of the marriage and family laws.

When the Communists came to power in China in 1949, marriage reform again surfaced as a high priority in constructing a new society. The 1950 Marriage Law, excerpted here, led to a widespread debate on the role of women in Chinese communist society. What practices did the Chinese Communists seek to curb with this law?

Thinking Historically

Construct a theory about how different groups of people in China might respond to this law. Among the groups you might consider are rich men, poor men, rich women, poor women, young and old, city and country people.

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Chapter I. General Principles

Article 1. The arbitrary and compulsory feudal marriage system, which is based on the superiority of man over woman and which ignores the children's interests, shall be abolished.

The new democratic marriage system, which is based on free choice of partners, on monogamy, on equal rights for both sexes, and on protection of the lawful interests of women and children, shall be put into effect.

Article 2. Bigamy, concubinage, child betrothal, interference with the remarriage of widows, and the exaction of money or gifts in connection with marriage shall be prohibited.

Chapter III. Rights and Duties of Husband and Wife

Article 7. Husband and wife are companions living together and shall enjoy equal status in the home.

Article 8. Husband and wife are in duty bound to love, respect, assist, and look after each other, to live in harmony, to engage in production, to care for the children, and to strive jointly for the welfare of the family and for the building up of a new society.

Article 9. Both husband and wife shall have the right to free choice of occupation and free participation in work or in social activities.

Article 10. Both husband and wife shall have equal right in the possession and management of family property.
BETTY FRIEDAN

*From* The Feminine Mystique

This book elicited an enormous response from women in the United States and around the world when it was published in 1963. What Friedan called "the problem that has no name" was immediately understood and widely discussed. What name would you give to the problem? What were its causes? Do women still feel it today?

**Thinking Historically**

In what ways were the needs of American women after World War II like those of Chinese women? In what ways were they different? Which do you find more striking, the similarities or the differences? What theories would explain why Chinese and American women had different problems in the 1950s and 1960s?

The problem lay buried, unspoken, for many years in the minds of American women. It was a strange stirring, a sense of dissatisfaction, a yearning that women suffered in the middle of the twentieth century in the United States. Each suburban wife struggled with it alone. As she made the beds, shopped for groceries, matched slipcover material, ate peanut butter sandwiches with her children, chauffeured Cub Scouts and Brownies, lay beside her husband at night — she was afraid to ask even of herself the silent question — “Is this all?”

For over fifteen years there was no word of this yearning in the millions of words written about women, for women, in all the columns, books, and articles by experts telling women their role was to seek fulfillment as wives and mothers. Over and over women heard in voices of tradition and of Freudian sophistication that they could desire no greater destiny than to glory in their own femininity. Experts told them how to catch a man and keep him, how to breastfeed children and handle their toilet training, how to cope with sibling rivalry and adolescent rebellion; how to buy a dishwasher, bake bread, cook gourmet snails, and build a swimming pool with their own hands; how to dress, look, and act more feminine and make marriage more exciting; how to

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*free DAN

keep their husbands from dying young and their sons from growing into delinquents. They were taught to pity the neurotic, unfeminine, unhappy women who wanted to be poets or physicists or presidents. They learned that truly feminine women do not want careers, higher education, political rights—the independence and the opportunities that the old-fashioned feminists fought for. Some women, in their forties and fifties, still remembered painfully giving up those dreams, but most of the younger women no longer even thought about them. A thousand expert voices applauded their femininity, their adjustment, their new maturity. All they had to do was devote their lives from earliest girlhood to finding a husband and bearing children. . . .

In the fifteen years after World War II, this mystique of feminine fulfillment became the cherished and self-perpetuating core of contemporary American culture. Millions of women lived their lives in the image of those pretty pictures of the American suburban housewife, kissing their husbands goodbye in front of the picture window, depositing their stationwagonsful of children at school, and smiling as they ran the new electric waxer over the spotless kitchen floor. They baked their own bread, sewed their own and their children's clothes, kept their new washing machines and dryers running all day. They changed the sheets on the beds twice a week instead of once, took the rug-hooking class in adult education, and pitied their poor frustrated mothers, who had dreamed of having a career. Their only dream was to be perfect wives and mothers; their highest ambition to have five children and a beautiful house, their only fight to get and keep their husbands. They had no thought for the unfeminine problems of the world outside the home; they wanted the men to make the major decisions. They gloried in their role as women, and wrote proudly on the census blank: "Occupation: housewife." . . .

If a woman had a problem in the 1950s and 1960s, she knew that something must be wrong with her marriage, or with herself. Other women were satisfied with their lives, she thought. What kind of a woman was she if she did not feel this mysterious fulfillment waxing the kitchen floor? She was so ashamed to admit her dissatisfaction that she never knew how many other women shared it. If she tried to tell her husband, he didn't understand what she was talking about. She did not really understand it herself. For over fifteen years women in America found it harder to talk about this problem than about sex. Even the psychoanalysts had no name for it. When a woman went to a psychiatrist for help, as many women did, she would say, "I'm so ashamed," or "I must be hopelessly neurotic." "I don't know what's wrong with women today," a suburban psychiatrist said uneasily. "I only know something is wrong because most of my patients happen to be women. And their problem isn't sexual." Most women with this problem did
not go to see a psychoanalyst, however. "There's nothing wrong really," they kept telling themselves. "There isn't any problem."

But on an April morning in 1959, I heard a mother of four, having coffee with four other mothers in a suburban development fifteen miles from New York, say in a tone of quiet desperation, "the problem." And the others knew, without words, that she was not talking about a problem with her husband, or her children, or her home. Suddenly they realized they all shared the same problem, the problem that has no name. They began, hesitantly, to talk about it. Later, after they had picked up their children at nursery school and taken them home to nap, two of the women cried, in sheer relief, just to know they were not alone.

Gradually I came to realize that the problem that has no name was shared by countless women in America. As a magazine writer I often interviewed women about problems with their children, or their marriages, or their houses, or their communities. But after a while I began to recognize the telltale signs of this other problem. I saw the same signs in suburban ranch houses and split-levels on Long Island and in New Jersey and Westchester County; in colonial houses in a small Massachusetts town; on patios in Memphis; in suburban and city apartments; in living rooms in the Midwest. Sometimes I sensed the problem, not as a reporter, but as a suburban housewife, for during this time I was also bringing up my own three children in Rockland County, New York. I heard echoes of the problem in college dormitories and semi-private maternity wards, at PTA meetings and luncheons of the League of Women Voters, at suburban cocktail parties, in station wagons waiting for trains, and in snatches of conversation overheard at Schrafft's.¹ The groping words I heard from other women, on quiet afternoons when children were at school or on quiet evenings when husbands worked late, I think I understood first as a woman long before I understood their larger social and psychological implications.

Just what was this problem that has no name? What were the words women used when they tried to express it? Sometimes a woman would say "I feel empty somehow . . . incomplete." Or she would say, "I feel as if I don't exist." Sometimes she blotted out the feeling with a tranquilizer. Sometimes she thought the problem was with her husband, or her children, or that what she really needed was to redecorate her house, or move to a better neighborhood, or have an affair, or another baby. Sometimes, she went to a doctor with symptoms she could hardly describe: "A tired feeling . . . I get so angry with the children it

¹A popular restaurant. [Ed.]
scares me . . . I feel like crying without any reason.” (A Cleveland doctor called it “the housewife’s syndrome.”) A number of women told me about great bleeding blisters that break out on their hands and arms. “I call it the housewife’s blight,” said a family doctor in Pennsylvania. “I see it so often lately in these young women with four, five, and six children who bury themselves in their dishpans. But it isn’t caused by detergent and it isn’t cured by cortisone.” . . .

If I am right, the problem that has no name stirring in the minds of so many American women today is not a matter of loss of femininity or too much education, or the demands of domesticity. It is far more important than anyone recognizes. It is the key to these other new and old problems which have been torturing women and their husbands and children, and puzzling their doctors and educators for years. It may well be the key to our future as a nation and a culture. We can no longer ignore that voice within women that says: “I want something more than my husband and my children and my home.”

ASSIA DJEBAR

Growing Up in Algeria

Excerpted from a novel by Algerian author Assia Djebar*, this selection is about growing up in Algeria just before the revolution for independence from France, which began in 1954. To the extent to which her account is autobiographical, what do you think it was like to grow up in Algeria as a young teenage girl around 1950? How typical do you think this girl’s life and concerns were?

The author discusses how her experiences in the French and Koranic religious school pulled her in different directions. What were they? Writing and reading were very important to her, but they both meant different things in Arabic Muslim culture and French culture. In the Koranic schools, young people learn the Koran by reciting and memorizing it (just as Mohammed did). What was the meaning of reading in French

*AHS yuh jeh BAHR

for the author? What were the different meanings of writing for her? Do you think this exposure to both languages was making her more Arabic or French? Which identity was more real for her?

In what ways were the needs and interests of this teenage girl similar to, or different from, those of an American teenage girl in the same period? Do you think their lives have become more alike since then?

**Thinking Historically**

Construct a theory that answers one of the questions posed above. Keep in mind that a theory is not an answer — it is a guiding principle for an answer. So, for instance, if you choose to consider the question, “Which identity was more real for her?” an answer might be “Arabic,” and a theory could be that “a person’s mother tongue determines who she is.” A theory is a general principle supported by evidence. (For example, you could interview bilingual people to find out if their first language played a greater role than their second in shaping their identities.) Keep in mind that many different theories are possible in answer to each question.

At the age when I should be veiled already, I can still move about freely thanks to the French school: Every Monday the village bus takes me to the boarding school in the nearby town, and brings me back on Saturday to my parents’ home.

I have a friend who is half Italian and who goes home every weekend to a fishing port on the coast; we go together to catch our respective buses and are tempted by all sorts of escapades... With beating hearts we make our way into the centre of the town; to enter a smart cake-shop, wander along the edge of the park, stroll along the boulevard, which only runs alongside common barracks, seems the acme of freedom, after a week of boarding school! Excited by the proximity of forbidden pleasures, we eventually each catch our bus; the thrill lay in the risk of missing it!

As a young teenager I enjoy the exhilarating hours spent every Thursday in training on the sports field. I only have one worry: fear that my father might come to visit me! How can I tell him that it's compulsory for me to wear shorts, in other words, I have to show my legs? I keep this fear a secret, unable to confide in any of my schoolfriends; unlike me, they haven't got cousins who do not show their ankles or their arms, who do not even expose their faces. My panic is also compounded by an Arab woman's "shame." The French girls whirl around me; they do not suspect that my body is caught in invisible snares.

"Doesn't your daughter wear a veil yet?" asks one or other of the matrons, gazing questioningly at my mother with suspicious kohl-rimmed
eyes, on the occasion of one of the summer weddings. I must be thirteen, or possibly fourteen.
   “She reads!” my mother replies stiffly.
   Everyone is swallowed up in the embarrassed silence that ensues. And in my own silence.
   “She reads,” that is to say in Arabic, “she studies.” I think now that this command “to read” was not just casually included in the Quranic revelation made by the Angel Gabriel in the cave . . . “She reads” is tantamount to saying that writing to be read, including that of the unbelievers, is always a source of revelation: in my case of the mobility of my body, and so of my future freedom.

When I am growing up — shortly before my native land throws off the colonial yoke — while the man still has the right to four legitimate wives, we girls, big and little, have at our command four languages to express desire before all that is left for us is sighs and moans: French for secret missives; Arabic for our stifled aspirations towards God-the-Father, the God of the religions of the Book; Lybico-Berber which takes us back to the pagan idols — mother-gods — of pre-Islamic Mecca. The fourth language, for all females, young or old, cloistered or half-emancipated, remains that of the body: the body which male neighbours’ and cousins’ eyes require to be deaf and blind, since they cannot completely incarcerate it; the body which, in trances, dances or vociferations, in fits of hope or despair, rebels, and unable to read or write, seeks some unknown shore as destination for its message of love.

In our towns, the first woman-reality is the voice, a dart which flies off into space, an arrow which slowly falls to earth; next comes writing with the scratching pointed quill forming amorous snares with its liana letters. By way of compensation, the need is felt to blot out women’s bodies and they must be muffled up, tightly swathèd, swaddled like infants or shrouded like corpses. Exposed, a woman’s body would offend every eye, be an assault on the dimmest of desires, emphasize every separation. The voice, on the other hand, acts like a perfume, a draft of fresh water for the dry throat; and when it is savoured, it can be enjoyed by several simultaneously; a secret, polygamous pleasure . . .

When the hand writes, slow positioning of the arm, carefully bending forward or leaning to one side, crouching, swaying to and fro, as in an act of love. When reading, the eyes take their time, delight in caressing the curves, while the calligraphy suggests the rhythm of the scansion: as if the writing marked the beginning and the end of possession.

Writing: Everywhere, a wealth of burnished gold and in its vicinity there is no place for other imagery from either animal or vegetable kingdom; it looks in the mirror of its scrolls and curlicues and sees itself
as woman, not the reflection of a voice. It emphasizes by its presence alone where to begin and where to retreat; it suggests, by the song that smoulders in its heart, the dance floor for rejoicing and hair-shirt for the ascetic; I speak of the Arabic script; to be separated from it is to be separated from a great love. This script, which I mastered only to write the sacred words, I see now spread out before me cloaked in innocence and whispering arabesques — and ever since, all other scripts (French, English, Greek) seem only to babble, are never cathartic; they may contain truth, indeed, but a blemished truth.

Just as the pentathlon runner of old needed the starter, so, as soon as I learned the foreign script, my body began to move as if by instinct.

As if the French language suddenly had eyes, and lent them me to see into liberty; as if the French language blinded the peeping-toms of my clan and, at this price, I could move freely, run headlong down every street, annex the outdoors for my cloistered companions, for the matriarchs of my family who endured a living death. As if . . . Derision! I know that every language is a dark depository for piled-up corpses, refuse, sewage, but faced with the language of the former conquerer, which offers me its ornaments, its jewels, its flowers, I find they are the flowers of death — chrysanthemums on tombs!

Its script is a public unveiling in front of sniggering onlookers . . . A queen walks down the street, white, anonymous, draped, but when the shroud of rough wool is torn away and drops suddenly at her feet, which a moment ago were hidden, she becomes a beggar again, squatting in the dust, to be spat at, the target of cruel comments.

In my earliest childhood — from the age of five to ten — I attended the French school in the village, and every day after lessons there I went on to the Quranic school.

Classes were held in a back room lent by a grocer, one of the village notables. I can recall the place, and its dim light: Was it because the time for the lessons was just before dark, or because the lighting of the room was so parsimonious? . . .

The master’s image has remained singularly clear: delicate features, pale complexion, a scholar’s sunken cheeks; about forty families supported him. I was struck by the elegance of his bearing and his traditional attire: A spotless light muslin was wrapped around his head-dress and floated behind his neck; his serge tunic was dazzling white. I never saw this man except sitting.

In comparison, the horde of misbehaving little urchins squatting on straw mats — sons of fellaheen [peasants] for the most part — seemed crude riffraff, from whom I kept my distance.

We were only four or five little girls. I suppose that our sex kept us apart, rather than my supercilious amazement at their behaviour. In
spite of his aristocratic bearing, the *taleb* [teacher] did not hesitate to lift his cane and bring it down on the fingers of a recalcitrant or slow-witted lad. (I can still hear it whistle through the air.) We girls were spared this regular punishment.

I can remember the little impromptu parties my mother devised in our flat when I brought home (as later my brother was to do) the walnut table decorated with arabesques. This was the master’s reward when we had learnt a long *sura* by heart. My mother and our village nanny, who was a second mother to us, then let out that semi-barbaric “you-you.” That prolonged, irregular, spasmodic cooing, which in our building reserved for teachers’ families—all European except for ours—must have appeared incongruous, a truly primitive cry. My mother considered the circumstances (the study of the Quran undertaken by her children) sufficiently important for her to let out this ancestral cry of jubilation in the middle of the village where she nevertheless felt herself an exile.

At every prize-giving ceremony at the French school, every prize I obtained strengthened my solidarity with my own family; but I felt there was more glory in this ostentatious clamour. The Quranic school, that dim cavern in which the haughty figure of the Sheikh was enthroned above the poor village children, this school became, thanks to the joy my mother demonstrated in this way, an island of bliss—Paradise regained.

Back in my native city, I learned that another Arab school was being opened, also funded by private contributions. One of my cousins attended it; she took me there. I was disappointed. The buildings, the timetable, the modern appearance of the masters, made it no different from a common-or-garden French school...

I understood later that in the village I had participated in the last of popular, secular teaching. In the city, thanks to the Nationalist movement of “Modernist Muslims,” a new generation of Arab culture was being forged.

Since then these *madrasas* have sprung up everywhere. If I had attended one of them (if I’d grown up in the town where I was born) I would have found it quite natural to swathe my head in a turban, to hide my hair, to cover my arms and calves, in a word to move about out of doors like a Muslim nun!

After the age of ten or eleven, shortly before puberty, I was no longer allowed to attend the Quranic school. At this age, boys are suddenly excluded from the women’s Turkish bath—that emollient world of naked bodies stifling in a whirl of scalding steam... The same thing happened to my companions, the little village girls, one of whom I would like to describe here.

The daughter of the Kabyle baker must, like me, have attended the French school simultaneously with the Quranic school. But I can only
recall her presence squatting at my side in front of the Sheikh: side by side, half smiling to each other, both already finding it uncomfortable to sit cross-legged! . . . My legs must have been too long, because of my height: It wasn’t easy for me to hide them under my skirt.

For this reason alone I think that I would in any case have been weaned from Quranic instruction at this age: There is no doubt that it’s easier to sit cross-legged when wearing a seroual; a young girl’s body that is beginning to develop more easily conceals its form under the ample folds of the traditional costume. But my skirts, justified by my attendance at the French school, were ill adapted to such a posture.

When I was eleven I started secondary school and became a boarder. What happened to the baker’s daughter? Certainly veiled, withdrawn overnight from school: betrayed by her figure. Her swelling breasts, her slender legs, in a word, the emergence of her woman’s personality transformed her into an incarcerated body!

I remember how much this Quranic learning, as it is progressively acquired, is linked to the body.

The portion of the sacred verse, inscribed on both sides of the walnut tablet, had to be wiped off at least once a week, after we had shown that we could recite it off by heart. We scrubbed the piece of wood thoroughly, just like other people wash their clothes: The time it took to dry seemed to ensure the interval that the memory needed to digest what it had swallowed . . .

The learning was absorbed by the fingers, the arms, through the physical effort. The act of cleaning the tablet seemed like ingesting a portion of the Quranic text. The writing — itself a copy of writing which is considered immutable — could only continue to unfold before us if it relied, clause by clause, on this osmosis . . .

As the hand traces the liana-script, the mouth opens to repeat the words, obedient to their rhythm, partly to memorize, partly to relieve the muscular tension . . . The shrill voices of the drowsy children rise up in a monotonous, sing-song chorus.

Stumbling on, swaying from side to side, care taken to observe the tonic accents, to differentiate between long and short vowels, attentive to the rhythm of the chant; muscles of the larynx as well as the torso moving in harmony. Controlling the breath to allow the correct emission of the voice, and letting the understanding advance precariously along its tight-rope. Respecting the grammar by speaking it aloud, making it part of the chant.

This language which I learn demands the correct posture for the body, on which the memory rests for its support. The childish hand, spurred on — as in training for some sport — by willpower worthy of an adult, begins to write. “Read!” The fingers labouring on the tablet
send back the signs to the body, which is simultaneously reader and servant. The lips having finished their muttering, the hand will once more do the washing, proceeding to wipe out what is written on the tablet: This is the moment of absolution, like touching the hem of death's garment. Again, it is the turn of writing, and the circle is completed.

And when I sit curled up like this to study my native language it is as though my body reproduces the architecture of my native city: the medinas with their tortuous alleyways closed off to the outside world, living their secret life. When I write and read the foreign language, my body travels far in subversive space, in spite of the neighbours and suspicious matrons; it would not need much for it to take wing and fly away!

As I approach a marriageable age, these two different apprenticeships, undertaken simultaneously, land me in a dichotomy of location. My father’s preference will decide for me: light rather than darkness. I do not realize that an irrevocable choice is being made: the outdoors and the risk, instead of the prison of my peers. This stroke of luck brings me to the verge of breakdown.

I write and speak French outside: The words I use convey no flesh-and-blood reality. I learn the names of birds I’ve never seen, trees I shall take ten years or more to identify, lists of flowers and plants that I shall never smell until I travel north of the Mediterranean. In this respect, all vocabulary expresses what is missing in my life, exoticism without mystery, causing a kind of visual humiliation that it is not seemly to admit to . . . Settings and episodes in children’s books are nothing but theoretical concepts; in the French family the mother comes to fetch her daughter or son from school; in the French street, the parents walk quite naturally side by side . . . So, the world of the school is expunged from the daily life of my native city, as it is from the life of my family. The latter is refused any referential rôle.

My conscious mind is here, huddled against my mother’s knees, in the darkest corners of the flat which she never leaves. The ambit of the school is elsewhere: My search, my eyes are fixed on other regions. I do not realize, no-one around me realizes, that, in the conflict between these two worlds, lies an incipient vertigo.
CAROLINA MARIA DE JESUS

From Child of the Dark:
The Diary of Carolina Maria de Jesus

This selection is from the diary of a common — and extraordinary — woman in Brazil in 1958. Carolina Maria de Jesus* was born in 1913 in a small town in the interior of Brazil. Her mother, unmarried and unemployed, insisted that Carolina attend school, which she hated until the day she learned to read. She remembers reading out loud every sign and label she could find. It was the beginning of a lifetime fascination with words, but she was forced to leave school after the second grade.

When Carolina was sixteen, her mother moved to the suburbs of São Paulo.† Carolina worked in a hospital, ran away to sing in a circus, and was employed in a long succession of jobs as cleaning woman and maid when, in 1947, she became pregnant. Her lover had abandoned her, and the family she worked for refused to let her into their house. Desperate, she moved into a *favela* (slum) in São Paulo, building her own shack with cardboard and cans taken from a Church construction site. In the next ten years she had two more children. In order to keep from thinking of her troubles, she wrote. Poems, plays, novels, “anything and everything, for when I was writing I was in a golden palace, with crystal windows and silver chandeliers.” She also kept a diary that reveals the actual details of her daily life. It is a life still lived by many women in the *favelas* of Brazil.

What does the diary tell you about the lives of the poor in Brazil?

*Thinking Historically*

Carolina Maria de Jesus is an articulate and thoughtful woman whose writing has helped her shape her own ideas. If you asked her what caused such poverty in her country, what might she say? Does she offer any theories about this? What is your theory for the existence of such poverty? How do you think she would respond to *The Feminine Mystique*? Do you have a theory about that?

*kah roh LEE nah mah REE ah dub jay SOOS
†sown POW loh
‡fah VEL uh

May 2, 1958 I'm not lazy. There are times when I try to keep up my diary. But then I think it's not worth it and figure I'm wasting my time.

I've made a promise to myself. I want to treat people that I know with more consideration. I want to have a pleasant smile for children and the employed.

I received a summons to appear at 8 P.M. at police station number 12. I spent the day looking for paper. At night my feet pained me so I couldn't walk. It started to rain. I went to the station and took José Carlos with me. The summons was for him. José Carlos is nine years old.

May 3 I went to the market at Carlos de Campos Street looking for any old thing. I got a lot of greens. But it didn't help much, for I've got no cooking fat. The children are upset because there's nothing to eat.

May 6 In the morning I went for water. I made João carry it. I was happy, then I received another summons. I was inspired yesterday and my verses were so pretty, I forgot to go to the station. It was 11:00 when I remembered the invitation from the illustrious lieutenant of the 12th precinct.

My advice to would-be politicians is that people do not tolerate hunger. It's necessary to know hunger to know how to describe it.

They are putting up a circus here at Araguaia Street. The Nilo Circus Theater.

May 9 I looked for paper but I didn't like it. Then I thought: I'll pretend that I'm dreaming.

May 10 I went to the police station and talked to the lieutenant. What a pleasant man! If I had known he was going to be so pleasant, I'd have gone on the first summons. The lieutenant was interested in my boys' education. He said the favelas have an unhealthy atmosphere where the people have more chance to go wrong than to become useful to state and country. I thought: If he knows this why doesn't he make a report and send it to the politicians? . . . Now he tells me this, I a poor garbage collector. I can't even solve my own problems.

Brazil needs to be led by a person who has known hunger. Hunger is also a teacher.

Who has gone hungry learns to think of the future and of the children.

May 11 Today is Mother's Day. The sky is blue and white. It seems that even nature wants to pay homage to the mothers who feel unhappy because they can't realize the desires of their children.

The sun keeps climbing. Today it's not going to rain. Today is our day.

Dona Teresinha came to visit me. She gave me 15 cruzeiros and said it was for Vera to go to the circus. But I'm going to use the money to buy bread tomorrow because I only have four cruzeiros.

Yesterday I got half a pig's head at the slaughterhouse. We ate the meat and saved the bones. Today I put the bones on to boil and into
the broth I put some potatoes. My children are always hungry. When they are starving they aren't so fussy about what they eat.

Night came. The stars are hidden. The shack is filled with mosquitoes. I lit a page from a newspaper and ran it over the walls. This is the way the favela dwellers kill mosquitoes.

May 13 At dawn it was raining. Today is a nice day for me, it's the anniversary of the Abolition. The day we celebrate the freeing of the slaves. In the jails the Negroes were the scapegoats. But now the whites are more educated and don't treat us any more with contempt. May God enlighten the whites so that the Negroes may have a happier life.

It continued to rain and I only have beans and salt. The rain is strong but even so I sent the boys to school. I'm writing until the rain goes away so I can go to Senhor Manuel and sell scrap. With that money I'm going to buy rice and sausage. The rain has stopped for a while. I'm going out.

I feel so sorry for my children. When they see the things to eat that I come home with they shout:

"Viva Mama!"

Their outbursts please me. I've lost the habit of smiling. Ten minutes later they want more food. I sent João to ask Dona Ida for a little pork fat. She didn't have any. I sent her a note:

"Dona Ida, I beg you to help me get a little pork fat, so I can make soup for the children. Today it's raining and I can't go looking for paper. Thank you, Carolina."

It rained and got colder. Winter had arrived and in winter people eat more. Vera asked for food, and I didn't have any. It was the same old show. I had two cruzeiros and wanted to buy a little flour to make a virado.1 I went to ask Dona Alice for a little pork. She gave me pork and rice. It was 9 at night when we ate.

And that is the way on May 13, 1958, I fought against the real slavery — hunger!

May 15 On the nights they have a party they don't let anybody sleep. The neighbors in the brick houses near by have signed a petition to get rid of the favelados. But they won't get their way. The neighbors in the brick houses say:

"The politicians protect the favelados."

Who protects us are the public and the Order of St. Vincent Church. The politicians only show up here during election campaigns. Senhor Candido Sampaio, when he was city councilman in 1955, spent his Sundays here in the favela. He was so nice. He drank our coffee, drinking right out of our cups. He made us laugh with his jokes. He played with our children. He left a good impression here

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1A dish of black beans, manioc flour, pork, and eggs.
and when he was candidate for state deputy, he won. But the Chamber of Deputies didn’t do one thing for the **favelados**. He doesn’t visit us any more. . . .

*May 22* Today I’m sad. I’m nervous. I don’t know if I should start crying or start running until I fall unconscious. At dawn it was raining. I couldn’t go out to get any money. I spent the day writing. I cooked the macaroni and I’ll warm it up again for the children. I cooked the potatoes and they ate them. I have a few tin cans and a little scrap that I’m going to sell to Senhor Manuel. When João came home from school I sent him to sell the scrap. He got 13 cruzeiros. He bought a glass of mineral water: two cruzeiros. I was furious with him. Where had he seen a **favelado** with such highborn tastes?

The children eat a lot of bread. They like soft bread but when they don’t have it, they eat hard bread.

Hard is the bread that we eat. Hard is the bed on which we sleep. Hard is the life of the **favelado**.

Oh, São Paulo! A queen that vainly shows her skyscrapers that are her crown of gold. All dressed up in velvet and silk but with cheap stockings underneath — the **favela**.

The money didn’t stretch far enough to buy meat, so I cooked macaroni with a carrot. I didn’t have any grease, it was horrible. Vera was the only one who complained yet asked for more.

“Mama, sell me to Dona Julita, because she has delicious food.”

I know that there exist Brazilians here inside São Paulo who suffer more than I do. In June of ’57 I felt sick and passed through the offices of the Social Service. I had carried a lot of scrap iron and got pains in my kidneys. So as not to see my children hungry I asked for help from the famous Social Service. It was there that I saw the tears slipping from the eyes of the poor. How painful it is to see the dramas that are played out there. The coldness in which they treat the poor. The only things they want to know about them is their name and address.

I went to the Governor’s Palace.² The Palace sent me to an office at Brigadeiro Luis Antonio Avenue. They in turn sent me to the Social Service at the Santa Casa charity hospital. There I talked with Dona Maria Aparecida, who listened to me, said many things yet said nothing. I decided to go back to the Palace. I talked with Senhor Alcides. He is not Japanese yet is as yellow as rotten butter. I said to Senhor Alcides:

“I came here to ask for help because I’m ill. You sent me to Brigadeiro Luis Antonio Avenue, and I went. There they sent me to the Santa Casa. And I spent all the money I have on transportation.”

“Take her!”

²Like most Brazilians, Carolina believes in going straight to the top to make her complaints.
They wouldn't let me leave. A soldier put his bayonet at my chest. I looked the soldier in the eyes and saw that he had pity on me. I told him:

"I am poor. That's why I came here."

Dr. Osvaldo de Barros entered, a false philanthropist in São Paulo who is masquerading as St. Vincent de Paul. He said:

"Call a squad car!"

The policeman took me back to the favela and warned me that the next time I made a scene at the welfare agency I would be locked up.


May 27 It seems that the slaughterhouse threw kerosene on their garbage dump so the favelados would not look for meat to eat. I didn't have any breakfast and walked around half dizzy. The daze of hunger is worse than that of alcohol. The daze of alcohol makes us sing, but the one of hunger makes us shake. I know how horrible it is to only have air in the stomach.

I began to have a bitter taste in my mouth. I thought: Is there no end to the bitterness of life? I think that when I was born I was marked by fate to go hungry. I filled one sack of paper. When I entered Paulo Guimarães Street, a woman gave me some newspapers. They were clean and I went to the junk yard picking up everything that I found. Steel, tin, coal, everything serves the favelado. Leon weighed the paper and I got six cruzeiros.

I wanted to save the money to buy beans but I couldn't because my stomach was screaming and torturing me.

I decided to do something about it and bought a bread roll. What a surprising effect food has on our organisms. Before I ate, I saw the sky, the trees, and the birds all yellow, but after I ate, everything was normal to my eyes.

Food in the stomach is like fuel in machines. I was able to work better. My body stopped weighing me down. I started to walk faster. I had the feeling that I was gliding in space. I started to smile as if I was witnessing a beautiful play. And will there ever be a drama more beautiful than that of eating? I felt that I was eating for the first time in my life.

The Radio Patrol arrived. They came to take the two Negro boys who had broken into the power station. Four and six years old. It's easy to see that they are of the favela. Favela children are the most ragged children in the city. What they can find in the streets they eat. Banana peels, melon rind, and even pineapple husks. Anything that is too tough to chew, they grind. These boys had their pockets filled with aluminum coins, that new money in circulation.

May 28 It dawned raining. I only have three cruzeiros because I loaned Leila five so she could get her daughter in the hospital. I'm confused and don't know where to begin. I want to write, I want to work, I
want to wash clothes. I’m cold and I don’t have any shoes to wear. The children’s shoes are worn out.

The worst thing in the favela is that there are children here. All the children of the favela know what a woman’s body looks like. Because when the couples that are drunk fight, the woman, so as not to get a beating, runs naked into the street. When the fights start the favelados leave whatever they are doing to be present at the battle. So that when the woman goes running naked it’s a real show for Joe Citizen. Afterward the comments begin among the children:

“Fernanda ran out nude when Armin was hitting her.”

“Oh, I didn’t see it. Damn!”

“What does a naked woman look like?”

And then the other, in order to tell him, puts his mouth near his ear. And the loud laughter echoes. Everything that is obscene or pornographic the favelado learns quickly.

There are some shacks where prostitutes play their love scenes right in front of the children.

The rich neighbors in the brick houses say we are protected by the politicians. They’re wrong. The politicians only show up here in the Garbage Dump at election time. This year we had a visit from a candidate for deputy, Dr. Paulo de Campos Moura, who gave us beans and some wonderful blankets. He came at an opportune moment, before it got cold.

What I want to clear up about the people who live in the favela is the following: The only ones who really survive here are the nordestinos. They work and don’t squander. They buy a house or go back up north.

Here in the favela there are those who build shacks to live in and those who build them to rent. And the rents are from 500 to 700 cruzeiros. Those who make shacks to sell spend 4,000 cruzeiros and sell them for 11,000. Who made a lot of shacks to sell was Tiburcio.

May 29 It finally stopped raining. The clouds glided toward the horizon. Only the cold attacked us. Many people in the favela don’t have warm clothing. When one has shoes he won’t have a coat. I choke up watching the children walk in the mud. It seems that some new people have arrived in the favela. They are ragged with undernourished faces. They improvised a shack. It hurts me to see so much pain, reserved for the working class. I stared at my new companion in misfortune. She looked at the favela with its mud and sickly children. It was the saddest look I’d ever seen. Perhaps she has no more illusions. She had given her life over to misery.

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3Forced by land-parching droughts and almost no industry, the poor of the north swarm into cities like São Paulo and Rio looking for work. Needing a place to live, they choose the favelas and end up worse off than they were before.
There will be those who reading what I write will say — this is untrue. But misery is real.
What I revolt against is the greed of men who squeeze other men as if they were squeezing oranges.

85

AUNG SAN SUU KYI*

From Letters from Burma

The author of these letters heads the democratic political party that won election in Burma in 1980. In consequence, she was placed under house arrest by the brutal military junta (SLORC, for State Law and Order Restoration Council), which has continued to rule. Despite her receipt of the Nobel Prize in 1991 and continued devotional support from the Burmese people, the generals have refused to let this daughter of Aung San — Burma’s national hero who was assassinated in 1947 just before Burma achieved independence — take office and sometimes even leave her house.

In these letters, written to a Japanese newspaper in 1996, Suu Kyi reveals an unusual combination of the personal and political, some might say the patriotic without the patriarchal. Is this a view of politics that a male politician would be unlikely to hold?

Thinking Historically

Is there such a thing as women’s politics? Do women vote differently than men? If so, what is that difference? Construct a theory that explains it.

Some people have pointed to the relatively large number of women presidents and prime ministers in South Asia in recent years. Women have been elected to govern India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, as well as Burma. Can you formulate a theory that might explain this?

Many would say that particular women who have governed South Asia — Indira Gandhi of India, Benazir Bhutto of Pakistan, Sirimavo Bandaranaike of Sri Lanka — have not governed any differently from

* ong sahn soo KYEE

men. Perhaps politics has more to do with social background, interests, wealth, and class than it does with gender. Try to formulate a theory about women in politics that is based on the readings of this chapter.

The Peacock and the Dragon

The tenth day of the waning moon of the month of Tazaungdine marks National Day in Burma. It is the anniversary of the boycott against the 1920 Rangoon University Act which was seen by the Burmese as a move to restrict higher education to a privileged few. This boycott, which was initiated by university students, gained widespread support and could be said to have been the first step in the movement for an independent Burma. National Day is thus a symbol of the intimate and indissoluble link between political and intellectual freedom and of the vital role that students have played in the politics of Burma.

This year the seventy-fifth anniversary of National Day fell on 16 November. A committee headed by elder politicians and prominent men of letters was formed to plan the commemoration ceremony. It was decided that the celebrations should be on a modest scale in keeping with our financial resources and the economic situation of the country. The programme was very simple: some speeches, the presentation of prizes to those who had taken part in essay competitions organized by the National League for Democracy, and the playing of songs dating back to the days of the independence struggle. There was also a small exhibition of photographs, old books, and magazines.

An unseasonable rain had been falling for several days before the sixteenth but on the morning of National Day itself the weather turned out to be fine and dry. Many of the guests came clad in pinni, a hand-woven cotton cloth that ranges in colour from a flaxen beige through varying shades of apricot and orange to burnt umber. During the independence struggle pinni had acquired the same significance in Burma as khaddi in India, a symbol of patriotism and a practical sign of support for native goods.

Since 1988 it has also become the symbol of the movement for democracy. A pinni jacket worn with a white collarless shirt and a Kachin sarong (a tartan pattern in purple, black, and green) is the unofficial uniform for “democracy men.” The dress for “democracy women” is a pinni aingyi (Burmese style blouse) with a traditional hand-woven sarong. During my campaign trip to the state of Kachin in 1989 I once drove through an area considered unsafe because it was within a zone where insurgents were known to be active. For mile upon mile men clad in pinni jackets on which the red badge of NLD [National League for Democracy] gleamed bravely stood as a “guard of honour” along the route, entirely unarmed. It was a proud and joyous sight.
The seventy-fifth anniversary of National Day brought a proud and joyous sight too. The guests were not all clad in pinni but there was about them a brightness that was pleasing to both the eye and the heart. The younger people were full of quiet enthusiasm and the older ones seemed rejuvenated. A well-known student politician of the 1930s who had become notorious in his mature years for the shapeless shirt, shabby denim trousers, scuffed shoes (gum boots during the monsoons), and battered hat in which he would tramp around town was suddenly transformed into a dapper gentleman in full Burmese national costume. All who knew him were stunned by the sudden picture of elegance he presented and our photographer hastened to record such an extraordinary vision.

The large bamboo and thatch pavilion that had been put up to receive the thousand guests was decorated with white banners on which were printed the green figure of a dancing peacock. As a backdrop to the stage there was a large dancing peacock, delicately executed on a white disc. This bird is the symbol of the students who first awoke the political consciousness of the people of Burma. It represents a national movement that culminated triumphantly with the independence of the country.

The orchestra had arrived a little late as there had been an attempt to try to “persuade” the musicians not to perform at our celebration. But their spirits were not dampened. They stayed on after the end of the official ceremony to play and sing nationalist songs from the old days. The most popular of these was Nagani, “Red Dragon.” Nagani was the name of a book club founded by a group of young politicians in 1937 with the intention of making works on politics, economics, history, and literature accessible to the people of Burma. The name of the club became closely identified with patriotism and a song was written about the prosperity that would come to the country through the power of the Red Dragon.

Nagani was sung by a young man with a strong, beautiful voice and we all joined in the chorus while some of the guests went up on stage and performed Burmese dances. But beneath the light-hearted merriment ran a current of serious intent. The work of our national movement remains unfinished. We have still to achieve the prosperity promised by the dragon. It is not yet time for the triumphant dance of the peacock. . . .

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A Baby in the Family

A couple of weeks ago some friends of mine became grandparents for the first time when their daughter gave birth to a little girl. The husband accepted his new status as grandfather with customary joviality,
while the wife, too young-looking and pretty to get into the conventional idea of a cosily aged grandmother, found it a somewhat startling experience. The baby was the first grandchild for the "boy's side" as well, so she was truly a novel addition to the family circle, the subject of much adoring attention. I was told the paternal grandfather was especially pleased because the baby had been born in the Burmese month of Pyatho — an auspicious time for the birth of a girl child.

In societies where the birth of a girl is considered a disaster, the atmosphere of excitement and pride surrounding my friends' granddaughter would have caused astonishment. In Burma there is no prejudice against girl babies. In fact, there is a general belief that daughters are more dutiful and loving than sons and many Burmese parents welcome the birth of a daughter as an assurance that they will have somebody to take care of them in their old age.

My friends' granddaughter was only twelve days old when I went to admire her. She lay swaddled in pristine white on a comfortable pile of blankets and sheets spread on the wooden floor of my friends' bungalow, a small dome of mosquito netting arched prettily over her. It had been a long time since I had seen such a tiny baby and I was struck by its miniature perfection. I do not subscribe to the Wodehousian view that all babies look like poached eggs. Even if they do not have clearly defined features, babies have distinct expressions that mark them off as individuals from birth. And they certainly have individual cries, a fact I learned soon after the birth of my first son. It took me a few hours to realize that the yells of each tiny vociferous inmate of the maternity hospital had its own unique pitch, cadence, range, and grace-notes.

My friends' grandchild, however, did not provide me with a chance to familiarize myself with her particular milk call. Throughout my visit she remained as inanimate and still as a carved papoose on display in a museum, oblivious of the fuss and chatter around her. At one time her eyelids fluttered slightly and she showed signs of stirring but it was a false alarm. She remained resolutely asleep even when I picked her up and we all clustered around to have our photograph taken with the new star in our firmament.

Babies, I have read somewhere, are specially constructed to present an appealingly vulnerable appearance aimed at arousing tender, protective instincts: only then can tough adults be induced to act as willing slaves to demanding little beings utterly incapable of doing anything for themselves. It is claimed that there is something about the natural smell of a baby's skin that invites cuddles and kisses. Certainly I like both the shape and smell of babies, but I wonder whether their attraction does not lie in something more than merely physical attributes. Is it not the thought of a life stretching out like a shining clean slate on which might one day be written the most beautiful prose and poetry of existence that engenders such joy in the hearts of the parents and grandparents of
a newly born child? The birth of a baby is an occasion for weaving hopeful dreams about the future.

However, in some families parents are not able to indulge in long dreams over their children. The infant mortality rate in Burma is 94 per 1000 live births, the fourth highest among the nations of the East Asia and Pacific Region. The mortality rate for those under the age of five too is the fourth highest in the region, 147 per 1000. And the maternal mortality rate is the third highest in the region at the official rate of 123 per 100 000 live births. (United Nations agencies surmise that the actual maternal mortality rate is in fact higher, 140 or more per 100 000.)

The reasons for these high mortality rates are malnutrition, lack of access to safe water and sanitation, lack of access to health services, and lack of caring capacity, which includes programmes for childhood development, primary education, and health education. In summary, there is a strong need in Burma for greater investment in health and education. Yet government expenditure in both sectors, as a proportion of the budget, has been falling steadily. Education accounted for 5.9 per cent of the budget in 1992–3, 5.2 per cent in 1993–4, and 5 per cent in 1994–5. Similarly, government spending on health care has dropped from 2.6 per cent in 1992–3, to 1.8 per cent in 1993–4, and 1.6 per cent in 1994–5.

Some of the best indicators of a country developing along the right lines are healthy mothers giving birth to healthy children who are assured of good care and a sound education that will enable them to face the challenges of a changing world. Our dreams for the future of the children of Burma have to be woven firmly around a commitment to better health care and better education.
UNFPA

Gender Inequality in National Parliaments

The United Nations Population Fund known by the acronym UNFPA (because it was established in 1969 as the United Nations Fund for Population Activities) works with governments and nongovernmental organizations in over 140 countries. As the largest international source for funding of population and reproductive health programs, the Fund is particularly concerned with the lives and needs of women. This reading is drawn from UNFPA’s State of the World 2005 Fact Sheet, which summarizes the global dimensions of women’s health, employment, education, and, in this particular selection, political participation. What do these charts and accompanying explanations tell you about women’s political power in the governments of our contemporary world?

Thinking Historically

Theory construction almost always begins with questions. Look over the numbers in the two charts (Tables 13.1 and 13.2) in this selection and see what questions these numbers raise in your mind. Construct a theory based on the numbers in one or both of the charts. Notice how the accompanying explanations to the charts pose or answer questions. What theories do these explanations offer? How is your theory similar or different from those suggested by the explanations? What other types of sources (aside from this fact sheet and tables) would you look to to reinforce your theory?

Gender Inequality in National Parliaments

The number of women in national parliaments continues to increase, but no country in the world has yet reached gender parity.

A number of factors continue to present challenges to women’s parliamentary representation:

• The type of electoral system in place in a country
• The role and discipline of political parties

• Women’s social and economic status
• Socio-cultural traditions and beliefs about a woman’s place in the family and society.
• Women’s double burden of work and family responsibilities.

Since the early 1990s, women’s share of seats in parliament has steadily increased. Nevertheless, women still hold only 16 per cent of seats worldwide.


Table 13.1 Percentage of Parliamentary Seats Held by Women (single or lower house only),* 1990–2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regions</th>
<th>1990</th>
<th>1997</th>
<th>2005</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>15.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developed regions</td>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>15.6</td>
<td>20.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States, Asia</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>11.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commonwealth of Independent States, Europe</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developing regions</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Africa</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>8.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-Saharan Africa</td>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>11.9</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>19.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Asia</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern Asia</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>8.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-Eastern Asia</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>10.8</td>
<td>15.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Asia</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oceania</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least developed countries</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>12.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landlocked developing countries</td>
<td>14.0</td>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small island developing states</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>11.0</td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Data refer to 1 January of each year.


The largest relative increases in the proportion of women in parliament have been in Northern Africa — where the percentage of women in parliaments tripled since 1990 — followed by Latin America and the Caribbean and sub-Saharan Africa.

There was significant progress also in the developed regions and in Southern and South-Eastern Asia.

In moving towards multiparty democracies, countries in the CIS (former Soviet Union) saw a significant decrease in the number of women in the political arena in the early 1990s. Previously, women's political participation was guaranteed, and their representation was frequently over 30 per cent.

Nordic countries have experienced a sustained and exceptionally high level of women's participation in the political arena, with the percentage of women in parliament well above 30 per cent.

*Strategies for Increased Political Participation of Women*

Many post-conflict countries have recognized the importance of including women in peace-building and reconstruction and have instituted measures to ensure women's participation in new democratic institutions.

- The national constitutions of Rwanda and Burundi now include provisions to reserve seats for women.
- In 2003, elections in Rwanda saw the greatest proportion of women elected to any parliament in history. These elections were the first since the internal conflict of 1994.
- The Rwandan parliament has come closest to reaching an equal number of men and women in parliament.
- In South Africa and Mozambique, the introduction of quota mechanisms by political parties meant that, in 2004, post-conflict and post-crisis countries ranked among the highest in the world in terms of women's representation.
- In Eritrea, Mozambique, and South Africa women comprise between 22 per cent to 35 per cent of the legislature.

The increase in women's parliamentary representation in Latin America and the Caribbean is also attributable to the introduction of affirmative action measures. Various quotas for women's political participation exist in 17 countries in this region. Similar efforts have been made in the Arab world.

In Morocco, the electoral law was amended prior to the 2002 parliamentary elections to reserve 30 seats for women. Thirty-five women were subsequently elected. In Tunisia, the President's party allocated 25 per cent of positions on its electoral list for women, winning them 22.7 per cent of the seats in the Chamber of Deputies in 2004. Consequently, Tunisia leads the regional ranking for women in Arab parliaments. See [http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/goals_2005/goal_3.pdf](http://unstats.un.org/unsd/mi/goals_2005/goal_3.pdf).
Table 13.2 Countries That Have Reached 30 Per Cent Representation by Women in Parliament, as of 1 January 2005

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Percentage of seats held by women</th>
<th>Number of seats held by women</th>
<th>Total number of seats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rwanda</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>45.3</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>349</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norway</td>
<td>38.2</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>38.0</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>37.5</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Netherlands</td>
<td>36.7</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cuba</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>219</td>
<td>609</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>350</td>
</tr>
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**Diane Dixon**

Michelle, Top Woman in a Macho World

On March 11, 2005, Michelle Bachelet* became the first woman president of Chile, a victory made even more impressive by the fact that she was a socialist, an agnostic, and an unwed mother in a traditionally Catholic conservative country. Nor was she the daughter or widow of a previous president. In fact, she had been imprisoned and tortured by the Pinochet government that toppled the socialist

*Bah cheh LEHT

Salvador Allende* in 1973. Like Allende, she is also a medical doctor. This selection is drawn from The Observer, the Sunday magazine, from the British newspaper The Guardian. How would you explain Michelle Bachelet’s popularity and political success? Is there a pattern in the success of the twelve heads of state profiled here?

**Thinking Historically**

This selection presents the stories of Michelle Bachelet and those of the eleven other women recently elected heads of state. Collectively they suggest various theories about a wide range of issues. We might ask how women attain such an office, what conditions or cultures make the success of women more or less likely, whether women in office pursue significantly different policies than men, whether women officials significantly improve the lives of women, and many other questions. Choose one of these questions, or ask another, and then suggest a theory to answer it. How would you try to find out if your theory was accurate or mistaken?

Michelle Bachelet remembers the day of her inauguration as Chile’s first woman leader with pride: “They were very beautiful moments. I remember the feeling of joy. In the streets, thousands of women and children put on presidential sashes. It meant everyone was going to La Moneda [the Presidential Palace] together with me.”

With that bright display of solidarity on a warm March day three weeks ago Bachelet became the world’s 11th female elected leader. On Thursday the inauguration of Portia Simpson-Miller in Jamaica made her the 12th, and just over 6 per cent of countries are led by women. Discounting the crowned heads of the past, it is a small but unprecedented number.

What these dozen women have in common — with the exception perhaps of Bangladesh’s Begum Khaleda Zia, who was projected into premiership by her husband’s death — is beating intensely male-dominated odds to achieve power in some fairly conservative societies. As Bachelet said in her victory speech: “Who would have thought, friends . . . 20, 10, or five years ago, that Chile would elect a woman as president?”

And who would have thought that a Catholic country that only legalised divorce a few years ago would elect an agnostic, single mother who promised equality — exactly half of her cabinet appointees are women.

It is an undoubtedly phenomenon that this immensely popular multilingual mother-of-three was able to slash through the bonds of male

*ah YEHN day
political party politics to become Minister of Health and, subsequently, South America's first woman Minister of Defence. But, in an exclusive interview with *The Observer*, Bachelet said she believes the credit does not go so much to the willing patronage of her male politicians as to that of the Chilean people, who commonly call their president by her first name and sing the Beatles tune of the same name to her.

"It was said that Chile was not ready to vote for a woman, it was traditionally a sexist country. In the end, the reverse happened: The fact of being a woman became a symbol of the process of cultural change the country was undergoing. Men voted for me in their majority, but, for the first time, the Concertación [the Centre Left Coalition of which Bachelet was the candidate] also won extensively among women."

"The possibility of my presidential candidacy emerged spontaneously in public opinion polls. For my part, I noticed people's affection when I was doing work on the ground. I think the important thing is that my candidacy was born from citizens themselves, driven by the people and which the parties picked up favourably."

She is the daughter of an air force general, Alberto Bachelet, who, because he remained loyal to Salvador Allende, was killed by his own comrades after the coup that brought Augusto Pinochet to power in September 1973. She herself was a victim, along with her archaeologist mother, Angela Jeria, of the worst abuses of the Pinochet dictatorship, jailed and tortured and exiled first to Australia and then to Germany. Her only brother, Alberto, died in 2001.

In difficult circumstances under the dictatorship, she qualified as a doctor and paediatrician, going on to work with child victims of human rights abuses. But politics were always close to her. Bachelet joined Chile's Young Socialists in her teens, rising through the ranks and campaigning for the return to democracy in Chile, which was achieved in the 1988 plebiscite that ousted the Pinochet regime. When the opposition lambasted Bachelet for being overweight in the physical sense and lightweight in the political, her mother's retort was: "Have they ever looked at her CV!"

Bachelet the girl was renowned for her insistence on having her views heard and, according to Jeria, "was very firm and defended her ideas forcefully. She never accepted being told that no you can't do that. She always demanded an explanation. But at the same time she was a sweet child whose intelligence was noticeable in thousands of details."

And it was in her youth, Bachelet says, that "her most intense moments" came. "Having experienced personally and through my family the tragedy of Chile is something always present in my memory. I do not want events of that nature ever to happen again, and I have dedicated an important part of my life to ensuring that and to the reunion of all Chileans."

By the mid-1990s, she was established as an adviser in the Ministry of Health and started studies in military strategy at Chile's National
Academy for Political and Military Strategy on a course normally the reserve of military commanders. Having graduated, she was awarded a presidential grant of honour which took her to Washington to take an elite course at the Inter-American Defence College, where once again she came first.

"During the transition to democracy, I felt there was a necessity to unite two worlds, the military and the civic. I felt political leaders didn’t know or understand the military world and that it was fundamentally important that political leaders got inside the world of defence to establish a bridge between the two worlds. Given political history in Chile, it seemed to me that there was a critical task of consolidating a democracy and creating healthy civic-military and political-military relationships."

In 2000, Bachelet was made minister of health by President Ricardo Lagos and handed the task of ending within three months the queues for appointments in health centres: "It was about giving a very clear signal of making people the central focus of state services. The state is at the service of people, not the opposite. My impression is that people understood the message very well, they realised the effort that we made."

In January 2002 came another challenge. Lagos took the bold step in macho Latin America of naming her minister of defence: "The truth is that I confronted it with a great deal of calm. My relationship with the armed forces was proper and normal from the beginning, despite the fact I was a woman, a socialist, and a victim of human rights abuses. But I must be honest: There was never any improper attitude towards me in the armed forces for these reasons, quite the contrary. I believe it is important to highlight this.

"In respect of political achievements, the most important thing for me is to have contributed to the consolidation of the first process of reunion between the Armed Forces and society in Chile's modern history. For many decades the military had aligned themselves to an ideology that was not shared by the whole country. Today, the Chilean military have embraced a democratic vision of their profession and are committed to a democratic state of law. I am pleased to have contributed to this process."

Having made the appointment, Lagos asked a close collaborator of Bachelet’s, Carlos Ominami, if he thought she would do well. The response was: "If only we had 20 like Michelle."

Bachelet is also the mother of three children, Sebastián, Francisca, and Sofia, the youngest, who is 12. Two are by her former husband, architect Jorge Davalos, one by a subsequent boyfriend, Dr. Anibal Henriquez. Her mother gave up her own political activities to help with the grandchildren and has become a celebrity in her own right. "Once it took me five minutes to go to the supermarket," she told The Observer, "Now everyone wants to chat and it takes five times that."

And Bachelet recognises the support: "It is undeniable that my current responsibilities demand some changes in my life, but I aspire to
maintaining the most normal family life possible. I hope that not much changes now that I am president. I would like Chileans to remember me as a transparent woman, who always said what she thought and did what she said.”

**Other Female Leaders**

**The Philippines: Undaunted Coup Survivor**

The President of the Philippines may be on the *Forbes* list as the fourth most powerful woman in the world, but Gloria Arroyo, 58, is fighting calls for her resignation after narrowly escaping impeachment for allegedly rigging last year’s presidential election, in which she defeated a popular film star, Fernando Poe. During her first term, she overcame a coup attempt and a Senate investigation of her lawyer husband, Jose Miguel, into alleged money laundering and keeping excess campaign funds. Arroyo, the daughter of former president Diosdado Macapagal and a trained economist, was elected to the Senate in 1992. She came to power in the rollercoaster world of Philippines politics when former film star President Joseph Estrada was toppled in a “people’s revolution.”

**Germany: East Berlin’s “Thatcher”**

Often described as the German Margaret Thatcher, Angela Merkel* is the first female Chancellor of Germany. She is also the first former citizen of the old communist East Germany to head the reunited country. Fluent in Russian and English, she grew up in the countryside north of Berlin. She became involved in the pro-democracy movements that helped bring down the Berlin wall in 1989 and then entered national German politics after reunification. Her old East German party merged with the conservative CDU. She became Chancellor by defeating Gerhard Schroeder in 2005’s narrow elections. After a shaky start, one poll in January showed that Merkel’s popularity ratings were the highest for any German chancellor since 1949. But it has been a long hard struggle all the way for the woman whose childlessness became an election issue for her when critics attacked her for being “incomplete.”

**Liberia: After Exile and Prison, the Chance to Rebuild a Nation**

Liberia’s new 68-year-old female president faces one of the biggest tasks of any world leader: rebuilding her shattered homeland after

*AHN gel ah MAYR kuhl*
decades of civil war. Ellen Johnson Sirleaf has said the problems are so
great that even just restoring electricity to the capital Monrovia will be
an achievement. She also faces a country deeply divided ethnically,
flooded with guns and traumatised child soldiers.

Sirleaf has a German grandfather who married a Liberian market-
woman from a rural village. She went to college in Liberia and then
studied in America, including Harvard. She entered Liberian politics in
1979 and became an assistant minister of finance. During the country’s
multiple civil wars in the 1980s and 1990s Sirleaf spent time in jail, was
exiled to Kenya, and ended up working for the World Bank. She re-
turned with the overthrow of warlord Charles Taylor and won coun-
cretrywide elections last year, defeating footballer George Weah. She was
inaugurated in January.

Jamaica: “Sista P” Breaks Male Monopoly
as She Guns for the Drug Gangs

Portia Simpson Miller, 60, who was sworn in as Jamaica’s new Prime
Minister last Thursday, has become the first female leader of a nation
with a very male political culture. She launched her bid to head first the
People’s National Party and then the country by ignoring her critics.
She was ridiculed in some parts of the island nation’s media as a “serial
kisser” at rallies and an intellectual lightweight. Yet Miller confounded
the nay-sayers, and her genuine popularity at the grassroots level of
politics saw her swept into office.

Known to many as “Sista P,” Miller is seen as someone who can
-crack down on crime, especially the drugs trade, and bring greater eco-
-nomic development to a country still mired in poverty and drug vio-
-lence. She has promised to enlist her friend, star athlete Asafa Powell,
in the quest to end drug-related killings, especially in the slums of the
capital, Kingston.

Miller first entered parliament in 1976. In a male-dominated cul-
ture she fought her way to the top, earning several ministerial portfo-
lios including labour, welfare, and sports. She is married to Errald
Miller, a former chief executive of the Jamaica arm of Cable and Wire-
less. She is a keen fan of boxing and golf.

Miller has criticised some aspects of Jamaica’s tourist industry, saying
the behaviour of some visitors clashes with the island’s traditional morals.

Finland: Radical Leftist Goes on with 90 Per Cent Approval

Finland’s president Tarja Halonen, 61, has just begun her second term
in office. When it expires in 2012, she will have been the Scandina-
vian nation’s head of state for 12 years. Raised in a working-class area of
Helsinki, she represents a radical leftist strand of Finnish politics. She was an unmarried mother — although has since wed her partner.

Her time in office has put a strong emphasis on pacifism, human rights, and international co-operation. Despite initially coming to office after a narrow election victory, she has become extremely popular with Finns of every political persuasion, regularly enjoying approval ratings in excess of 90 per cent. In 2004 she was the only living person to be placed in the top 10 of a television programme dedicated to the country’s greatest public and historic figures.

Bangladesh: Widow Who Inherited the Mantle of Leadership

As the widow of assassinated president Ziaur Rahman, Bangladesh’s first woman Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia is among the women who have had leadership foisted on them because of their marriage and subsequent widowhood. She was premier from 1991 to 1996 and again from 2001 to the present. Until her husband’s death in a 1981 attempted military coup, Zia had little role in politics. But afterwards she became a senior figure in her husband’s old party, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party. She has made education for girls, particularly those from poor rural families, one of her government’s top priorities.

Others

Vaira Vike-Freiberga, aged 68, President of Latvia. Has been in power since 1999.
Mary McAleese, 54, President of Ireland since 1997.
Luísa Diogo, 47, Prime Minister of Mozambique since 2004.
Helen Clark, 53, Prime Minister of New Zealand since 1999.
Chandrika Kumaranatunga, 60, President of Sri Lanka, in power since 1994.

Women on the Verge

Hillary Clinton, 59, hopes to run as Democratic party candidate in America’s 2008 presidential race.
Ségolène Royal, 52, front runner to be chosen as the Socialist candidate to fight France’s presidential elections next year.
Yulia Tymoshenko, 45, was dismissed as Prime Minister of Ukraine last September. But the results of last month’s parliamentary elections, which brought her success, have brought pressure on President Viktor Yushchenko to reinstate her in a coalition government. He needs her support after suffering a setback.
REFLECTIONS

Can there be a history of women, even a history of women during the last half of the twentieth century? Or are the lives of women too diverse — globally, economically, politically, culturally — to make a single, coherent story? Is the history of women during the last fifty years markedly different from the history of men or the history of humanity?

This chapter gives only a hint of the diversity of women’s lives. We included China’s hopeful marriage law at the beginning of the chapter but nothing about the failures to observe it, or about women who were forced out of work to make room for men, or about girls who were sold into virtual slavery, or about young women forced to work long hours in sweatshops. Nor did we include any discussion of glamorous models in Shanghai, rich capitalists and poor sex workers in Hong Kong, or ordinary mothers, wives, and workers for whom the law of 1950 did make a difference.

While Betty Friedan verbalized the feelings of many American women in 1963, how many women today, exhausted by working long hours that barely cover the costs of child care and commuting, would consider returning to a fifties world of motherhood and housework? How important are national differences? In what sense, if any, does an Algerian woman who is Muslim speak for a Muslim woman in Egypt or Iran or Pakistan, or for a Christian woman in Algeria? We have not even considered women from the Middle East, India, Russia, and Europe. These questions are intended to point to the enormous variety of women’s experiences. Of course, the historian is forever seeking patterns and process, but finding even the general direction of change is not as simple as it might seem.

Have the lives of women improved over the course of the last hundred or the last fifty years? It is commonly thought that the twentieth century was extremely important in freeing women from the bonds of patriarchal limitations. Often, this process is divided into two stages, the first consisting of gaining the vote in the early decades of the century in Europe and America, and the second, the successes of the women’s movement since 1960. This second wave broadened the feminist critique from concerns about elections to issues of equality in the workplace and patriarchy as a social and cultural force, ultimately resulting in a cohesive movement, improved public awareness, and specific legislation regarding women’s rights. In this way, the movement of the sixties became public policy.

Patriarchies continue to oppress women in many parts of the world. Women in Africa, Asia, and Latin America suffer from higher rates of illiteracy, child marriage, spousal abuse, and mortality in child birth than women in the developed world, but recent increases in parliamentary representation by women in the developing world must in-
evitably redress these imbalances. If the campaign for women’s political rights came first to the developed world, some of the countries in the developing world have left Europe and North America far behind. Nor is the second wave or “cultural revolution” for women limited to the rich countries of the West. The success of women like Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma and Michelle Bachelet in Chile suggest that the United States and Europe might still have far to go in achieving true social and political equality for women.

For most women today, the world has been shaped less by political struggles and more by the expanding global market. Poor women in Brazil, Indonesia, China, and the Philippines have seized the opportunity to escape the authority of fathers and village elders to work in modern factories that pay far more than they ever imagined, but barely enough to survive in distant cities after sending money home. The victory of market forces in former “command economies,” like Russia, Poland, and Lithuania (countries where most doctors were women), has been accompanied by drastic declines in the employment of women and men, as well as declines in the percentage of professional women.

If there is not a single history of women that is different from a single history of humanity, there are millions, indeed billions, of histories of women, women’s acts, women’s worlds. The selections in this chapter hint at just a few of those histories. Perhaps the most useful service our brief discussions here can serve is to encourage you to explore women’s stories further.
Globalization and Planetary Health

1960 to the Present

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Globalization is a term used by historians, economists, politicians, religious leaders, social reformers, business people, and average citizens to describe large-scale changes and trends in the world today. It is often defined as a complex phenomenon whereby individuals, nations, and regions of the world become increasingly integrated and interdependent, and national and traditional identities are diminished. Although it is a widely used term, globalization is also a controversial and widely debated topic. Is globalization really a new phenomenon or is it a continuation of earlier trends? Is it driven by technological forces or economic forces, or both? Does it enrich or impoverish? Is it democratizing or antidemocratic? Is it generally a positive or negative thing?

Some limit the definition of globalization to the global integration driven by the development of the international market economy in the last twenty to forty years. Worldwide integration dates back much further, however, and has important technological, cultural, and political causes as well. In fact, all of human history can be understood as the story of increased interaction on a limited planet. Ancient empires brought diverse peoples from vast regions of the world together under single administrations. These empires, connected by land or maritime routes, interacted with each other through trade and exploration, exchanging goods as well as ideas. The unification of the Eastern and Western hemispheres after 1492 was a major step in the globalization of crops, peoples, cultures, and diseases. The industrial revolution joined countries and continents in ever vaster and faster transportation and communication networks. The great colonial empires that developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries integrated the pop-
ulations of far-flung areas of the world. The commercial aspects of these developments cannot be divorced from religious zeal, technological innovations, and political motives, which were often driving factors.

The current era of economic globalization is largely a product of the industrial capitalist world, roughly dating back to the middle of the nineteenth century. We might call the period between 1850 and 1914 the first great age of globalization in the modern sense. It was the age of ocean liners, mass migrations, undersea telegraph cables, transcontinental railroads, refrigeration, and preserved canned foods, when huge European empires dramatically reduced the number of sovereign states in the world. The period ended with World War I, which not only dug trenches between nations and wiped out a generation of future migrants and visitors, but also planted seeds of animosity that festered for decades, strangling the growth of international trade, interaction, and immigration.

Since the conclusion of World War II in 1945, and increasingly since the end of the Cold War in 1989, political and technological developments have enabled economic globalization on a wider scale and at a faster pace than occurred during the previous age of steamships and telegraphs. The collapse of the Soviet Union and international communism unleashed the forces of market capitalism as never before. Jet travel, satellite technology, mobile phones, and the World Wide Web have revived global integration and enabled the global marketplace. The United States, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund led in the creation of regional and international free-trade agreements, the reduction of tariffs, and the removal of national trade barriers, touting these changes as agents of material progress and democratic transformation. Yet these changes have also elicited wide-ranging resistance in peaceful protests, especially against the West’s economic dominance, and violent ones against the West’s political and cultural domination, protest that has taken the form of terrorist attacks like those of September 11, 2001.

Multinational companies are now able to generate great wealth by moving capital, labor, raw materials, and finished products through international markets at increasing speeds and with lasting impact. This economic globalization has profound cultural ramifications; increasingly the peoples of the world are watching the same films and television programs, speaking the same languages, wearing the same clothes, enjoying the same amusements, and listening to the same music. Whether free-market capitalism lifts all boats, or only yachts, is a hotly debated issue today.

Global health may or may not benefit from globalization, but recent developments suggest the well-being of the planet and the welfare of its inhabitants may be in jeopardy. The very integration of the world makes it possible for a virus, whether organic or cyber, to travel fast and infect the most distant areas of the planet. The uniformity of modern life makes it possible to share our dreams and inventions but also
our nightmares and mistakes, and with a global and instantaneous effect as September 11th and subsequent terrorist attacks made abundantly clear. The technology of nuclear energy and war and the impact of our fossil fuel binge on the very atmosphere that supports us are causes of great concern, as are the perceived political and cultural dominance of the West.

**THINKING HISTORICALLY**

*Understanding Process*

What are the most important ways in which the world is changing? What are the most significant and powerful forces of change? What is the engine that is driving our world? These are the big questions raised at the end of historical investigation. They also arise at the beginning, as the assumptions that shape our specific investigations. Globalization is one of the words most frequently used to describe the big changes that are occurring in our world. All of the readings in this chapter assume or describe some kind of global integration as a dominant driver of the world in which we live. This chapter asks you to think about large-scale historical processes. It asks you to examine globalization as one of the most important of these processes. It asks you to reflect on what globalization means, and what causes it. How does each of these authors use the term? Do the authors see this process as primarily commercial and market-driven, or do they view it as a matter of culture or politics? Does globalization come from one place or many, from a center outwards, from one kind of society to another? Is globalization linear or unidirectional, or does it have differing, even opposite effects? What do these writers, thinkers, and activists believe about the most important changes transforming our world? And what do you think?
SHERIF HETATA

Dollarization

Sherif Hetata is an Egyptian intellectual, novelist, and activist who was originally trained as a medical doctor. He and his wife, the prominent feminist writer Nawal El-Saadawi, have worked together to promote reform in Egypt and the larger Arab world. In the following address Hetata outlines the global economy’s homogenizing effects on culture. Through what historic lens does Hetata view globalization? What links does he make between globalization and imperialism? What do you think of his argument?

Thinking Historically

What, according to Hetata, is the main process that is changing the world? Does he think the engine of world change is primarily technological, commercial, or cultural?

As a young medical student, born and brought up in a colony, like many other people in my country, Egypt, I quickly learned to make the link between politics, economics, culture, and religion. Educated in an English school, I discovered that my English teachers looked down on us. We learned Rudyard Kipling by heart, praised the glories of the British Empire, followed the adventures of Kim in India, imbibed the culture of British supremacy, and sang carols on Christmas night.

At the medical school in university, when students demonstrated against occupation by British troops it was the Moslem Brothers who beat them up, using iron chains and long curved knives, and it was the governments supported by the king that shot at them or locked them up.

When I graduated in 1946, the hospital wards taught me how poverty and health are linked. I needed only another step to know that poverty had something to do with colonial rule, with the king who supported it, with class and race, with what was called imperialism at the time, with cotton prices falling on the market, with the seizure of land by foreign banks. These things were common talk in family gatherings,

expressed in a simple, colorful language without frills. They were the facts of everyday life. We did not need to read books to make the links: They were there for us to see and grasp. And every time we made a link, someone told us it was time to stop, someone in authority whom we did not like: a ruler or a father, a policeman or a teacher, a landowner, a maulana (religious leader or teacher), a Jesuit, or a God.

And if we went on making these links, they locked us up.

For me, therefore, coming from this background, cultural studies and globalization open up a vast horizon, one of global links in a world where things are changing quickly. It is a chance to learn and probe how the economics, the politics, the culture, the philosophical thought of our days connect or disconnect, harmonize or contradict.

Of course, I will not even try to deal with all of that. I just want to raise a few points to discuss under the title of my talk, “Dollarization, Fragmentation, and God.” Because I come from Egypt, my vantage point will be that of someone looking at the globe from the part we now call South, rather than “third world” or something else.

A New Economic Order: Gazing North at the Global Few

Never before in the history of the world has there been such a concentration and centralization of capital in so few nations and in the hands of so few people. The countries that form the Group of Seven, with their 800 million inhabitants, control more technological, economic, informatics, and military power than the rest of the approximately 430 billion who live in Asia, Africa, Eastern Europe, and Latin America.

Five hundred multinational corporations account for 80 percent of world trade and 75 percent of investment. Half of all the multinational corporations are based in the United States, Germany, Japan, and Switzerland. The OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development) group of countries contributes 80 percent of world production...

A Global Culture for a Global Market

To expand the world market, to globalize it, to maintain the New Economic Order, the multinational corporations use economic power and control politics and the armed forces. But this is not so easy. People will always resist being exploited, resist injustice, struggle for their freedom, their needs, security, a better life, peace.

However, it becomes easier if they can be convinced to do what the masters of the global economy want them to do. This is where the issue
of culture comes in. Culture can serve in different ways to help the
global economy reach out all over the world and expand its markets to
the most distant regions. Culture can also serve to reduce or destroy or
prevent or divide or outflank the resistance of people who do not like
what is happening to them, or have their doubts about it, or want to
think. Culture can be like cocaine, which is going global these days:
from Kali in Colombia to Texas, to Madrid, to the Italian mafiosi in
southern Italy, to Moscow, Burma, and Thailand, a worldwide net-
work uses the methods and the cover of big business, with a total trade
of $5 billion a year, midway between oil and the arms trade.

At the disposal of global culture today are powerful means that
function across the whole world: the media, which, like the economy,
have made it one world, a bipolar North/South world. If genetic engi-
neering gives scientists the possibility of programming embryos before
children are born, children, youth, and adults are now being pro-
grammed after they are born in the culture they imbibe mainly through
the media, but also in the family, in school, at the university, and else-
where. Is this an exaggeration? an excessively gloomy picture of the
world?

To expand the global market, increase the number of consumers,
makesure that they buy what is sold, develop needs that conform to
what is produced, and develop the fever of consumerism, culture must
play a role in developing certain values, patterns of behavior, visions of
what is happiness and success in the world, attitudes toward sex and
love. Culture must model a global consumer.

In some ways, I was a "conservative radical." I went to jail, but I
always dressed in a classical, subdued way. When my son started wear-
ing blue jeans and New Balance shoes, I shivered with horror. He's
going to become like some of those crazy kids abroad, the disco gen-
eration, I thought! Until the age of twenty-five he adamantly refused to
smoke. Now he smokes two packs of Marlboros a day (the ones that
the macho cowboy smokes). That does not prevent him from being a
talented film director. But in the third-world, films, TV, and other
media have increased the percentage of smokers. I saw half-starved kids
in a marketplace in Mali buying single imported Benson & Hedges cig-
arettess and smoking.

But worse was still to come. Something happened that to me
seemed impossible at one time, more difficult than adhering to a left-
wing movement. At the age of seventy-one, I have taken to wearing
blue jeans and Nike shoes. I listen to rock and reggae and sometimes
rap. I like to go to discos and I sometimes have other cravings, which so
far I have successfully fought! And I know these things have crept into
our lives through the media, through TV, films, radio, advertisements,
newspapers, and even novels, music, and poetry. It's a culture and it's
reaching out, becoming global.
In my village, I have a friend. He is a peasant and we are very close. He lives in a big mud hut, and the animals (buffalo, sheep, cows, and donkeys) live in the house with him. Altogether, in the household, with the wife and children of his brother, his uncle, the mother, and his own family, there are thirty people. He wears a long galabeya (robe), works in the fields for long hours, and eats food cooked in the mud oven.

But when he married, he rode around the village in a hired Peugeot car with his bride. She wore a white wedding dress, her face was made up like a film star, her hair curled at the hairdresser's of the provincial town, her finger and toe nails manicured and polished, and her body bathed with special soap and perfumed. At the marriage ceremony, they had a wedding cake, which she cut with her husband's hand over hers. Very different from the customary rural marriage ceremony of his father. And all this change in the notion of beauty, of femininity, of celebration, of happiness, of prestige, of progress happened to my peasant friend and his bride in one generation.

The culprit, or the benevolent agent, depending on how you see it, was television.

In the past years, television has been the subject of numerous studies. In France, such studies have shown that before the age of twelve a child will have been exposed to an average 100,000 TV advertisements. Through these TV advertisements, the young boy or girl will have assimilated a whole set of values and behavioral patterns, of which he or she is not aware, of course. They become a part of his or her psychological (emotional and mental) makeup. Linked to these values are the norms and ways in which we see good and evil, beauty and ugliness, justice and injustice, truth and falseness, and which are being propagated at the same time. In other words, the fundamental values that form our aesthetic and moral vision of things are being inculcated, even hammered home, at this early stage, and they remain almost unchanged throughout life.

The commercial media no longer worry about the truthfulness or falsity of what they portray. Their role is to sell: beauty products, for example, to propagate the "beauty myth" and a "beauty culture" for both females and males alike and ensure that it reaches the farthest corners of the earth, including my village in the Delta of the Nile. Many of these beauty products are harmful to the health, can cause allergic disorders or skin infections or even worse. They cost money, work on the sex drives, and transform women and men, but especially women, into sex objects. They hide the real person, the natural beauty, the process of time, the stages of life, and instill false values about who we are, can be, or should become.

Advertisements do not depend on verifiable information or even rational thinking. They depend for their effect on images, colors, smart
technical production, associations, and hidden drives. For them, attracting the opposite sex or social success or professional achievement and promotion or happiness do not depend on truthfulness or hard work or character, but rather on seduction, having a powerful car, buying things or people . . .

Thus the media produce and reproduce the culture of consumption, of violence and sex to ensure that the global economic powers, the multi-national corporations can promote a global market for themselves and protect it. And when everything is being bought or sold everyday and at all times in this vast supermarket, including culture, art, science, and thought, prostitution can become a way of life, for everything is priced. The search for the immediate need, the fleeting pleasure, the quick enjoyment, the commodity to buy, excess, pornography, drugs keeps this global economy rolling, for to stop is suicide.

PHILIPPE LEGRAIN

Cultural Globalization Is Not Americanization

Philippe Legrain, an economist, journalist, and former advisor to the World Trade Organization, takes aim at what he calls the myths of globalization in the following article. He argues that globalization brings cultural enrichment, not monotonous conformity, and that the intermixing of cultures is an old story with many happy results. What do you think of his argument? How might Sherif Hetata respond to it?

Thinking Historically

Does the author believe the driving force of globalization is economic or cultural? How important does he think globalization is? How, according to the author, is globalization changing the world? What examples does he cite? How does Legrain's view of America differ from Hetata's?

Fears that globalization is imposing a deadening cultural uniformity are as ubiquitous as Coca-Cola, McDonald’s, and Mickey Mouse. Europeans and Latin Americans, left-wingers and right, rich and poor—all of them dread that local cultures and national identities are dissolving into a crass All-American consumerism. That cultural imperialism is said to impose American values as well as products, promote the commercial at the expense of the authentic, and substitute shallow gratification for deeper satisfaction.

... If critics of globalization were less obsessed with “Coca-colonization,” they might notice a rich feast of cultural mixing that belies fears about Americanized uniformity. Algerians in Paris practice Thai boxing; Asian rappers in London snack on Turkish pizza; Salman Rushdie delights readers everywhere with his Anglo-Indian tales. Although—as with any change—there can be downsides to cultural globalization, this cross-fertilization is overwhelmingly a force for good.

The beauty of globalization is that it can free people from the tyranny of geography. Just because someone was born in France does not mean they can only aspire to speak French, eat French food, read French books, visit museums in France, and so on. A Frenchman—or an American, for that matter—can take holidays in Spain or Florida, eat sushi or spaghetti for dinner, drink Coke or Chilean wine, watch a Hollywood blockbuster or an Almodóvar, listen to bhangra or rap, practice yoga or kickboxing, read Elle or The Economist, and have friends from around the world. That we are increasingly free to choose our cultural experiences enriches our lives immeasurably. We could not always enjoy the best the world has to offer.

Globalization not only increases individual freedom, but also revitalizes cultures and cultural artifacts through foreign influences, technologies, and markets. Thriving cultures are not set in stone. They are forever changing from within and without. Each generation challenges the previous one; science and technology alter the way we see ourselves and the world; fashions come and go; experience and events influence our beliefs; outsiders affect us for good and ill.

Many of the best things come from cultures mixing: V. S. Naipaul’s Anglo-Indo-Caribbean writing, Paul Gauguin painting in Polynesia, or the African rhythms in rock ‘n’ roll. Behold the great British curry. Admire the many-colored faces of France’s World Cup–winning soccer team, the ferment of ideas that came from Eastern Europe’s Jewish diaspora, and the cosmopolitan cities of London and New York. Western numbers are actually Arabic; zero comes most recently from India; Icelandic, French, and Sanskrit stem from a common root.

John Stuart Mill was right: “The economical benefits of commerce are surpassed in importance by those of its effects which are intellectual and moral. It is hardly possible to overrate the value, for the improvement of human beings, of things which bring them into con-
tact with persons dissimilar to themselves, and with modes of thought and action unlike those with which they are familiar. . . . It is indispensable to be perpetually comparing [one's] own notions and customs with the experience and example of persons in different circumstances. . . . There is no nation which does not need to borrow from others."

It is a myth that globalization involves the imposition of Americanized uniformity, rather than an explosion of cultural exchange. For a start, many archetypal "American" products are not as all-American as they seem. Levi Strauss, a German immigrant, invented jeans by combining denim cloth (or "serge de Nîmes," because it was traditionally woven in the French town) with Genes, a style of trousers worn by Genoese sailors. So Levi's jeans are in fact an American twist on a European hybrid. Even quintessentially American exports are often tailored to local tastes. MTV in Asia promotes Thai pop stars and plays rock music sung in Mandarin. CNN en Español offers a Latin American take on world news. McDonald's sells beer in France, lamb in India, and chili in Mexico.

In some ways, America is an outlier, not a global leader. Most of the world has adopted the metric system born from the French Revolution; America persists with antiquated measurements inherited from its British-colonial past. Most developed countries have become intensely secular, but many Americans burn with fundamentalist fervor—like Muslims in the Middle East. Where else in the developed world could there be a serious debate about teaching kids Bible-inspired "creationism" instead of Darwinist evolution?

America's tastes in sports are often idiosyncratic, too. Baseball and American football have not traveled well, although basketball has fared rather better. Many of the world's most popular sports, notably soccer, came by way of Britain. Asian martial arts—judo, karate, kickboxing—and pastimes like yoga have also swept the world.

People are not only guzzling hamburgers and Coke. Despite Coke's ambition of displacing water as the world's drink of choice, it accounts for less than 2 of the 64 fluid ounces that the typical person drinks a day. Britain's favorite takeaway is a curry, not a burger: Indian restaurants there outnumber McDonald's six to one. For all the concerns about American fast food trash ing France's culinary traditions, France imported a mere $620 million in food from the United States in 2000, while exporting to America three times that. Nor is plonk\(^1\) from America's Gallo displacing Europe's finest: Italy and France together account for three-fifths of global wine exports, the United States for only a twentieth. Worldwide, pizzas are more popular than burgers, Chinese

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\(^1\)British slang for cheap, low-quality alcohol. [Ed.]
restaurants seem to sprout up everywhere, and sushi is spreading fast. By far the biggest purveyor of alcoholic drinks is Britain's Diageo, which sells the world's best-selling whiskey (Johnnie Walker), gin (Gordon's), vodka (Smirnoff), and liqueur (Baileys).

In fashion, the ne plus ultra is Italian or French. Trendy Americans wear Gucci, Armani, Versace, Chanel, and Hermès. On the high street and in the mall, Sweden's Hennes & Mauritz (H&M) and Spain's Zara vie with America's Gap to dress the global masses. Nike shoes are given a run for their money by Germany's Adidas, Britain's Reebok, and Italy's Fila.

In pop music, American crooners do not have the stage to themselves. The three artists who were featured most widely in national Top Ten album charts in 2000 were America's Britney Spears, closely followed by Mexico's Carlos Santana and the British Beatles. Even tiny Iceland has produced a global star: Björk. Popular opera's biggest singers are Italy's Luciano Pavarotti, Spain's José Carreras, and the Spanish-Mexican Placido Domingo. Latin American salsa, Brazilian lambada, and African music have all carved out global niches for themselves. In most countries, local artists still top the charts. According to the IFPI, the record-industry bible, local acts accounted for 68 percent of music sales in 2000, up from 58 percent in 1991.

One of the most famous living writers is a Colombian, Gabriel García Márquez, author of One Hundred Years of Solitude. Paulo Coelho, another writer who has notched up tens of millions of global sales with The Alchemist and other books, is Brazilian. More than 200 million Harlequin romance novels, a Canadian export, were sold in 1990; they account for two-fifths of mass-market paperback sales in the United States. The biggest publisher in the English-speaking world is Germany's Bertelsmann, which gobbled up America's largest, Random House, in 1998.

Local fare glues more eyeballs to TV screens than American programs. Although nearly three-quarters of television drama exported worldwide comes from the United States, most countries' favorite shows are homegrown.

Nor are Americans the only players in the global media industry. Of the seven market leaders that have their fingers in nearly every pie, four are American (AOL Time Warner, Disney, Viacom, and News Corporation), one is German (Bertelsmann), one is French (Vivendi), and one Japanese (Sony). What they distribute comes from all quarters: Bertelsmann publishes books by American writers; News Corporation broadcasts Asian news; Sony sells Brazilian music.

The evidence is overwhelming. Fears about an Americanized uniformity are over-blown: American cultural products are not uniquely dominant; local ones are alive and well.
MIRIAM CHING YOON LOUIE

From Sweatshop Warriors: Immigrant Women Workers Take On the Global Factory

Sherif Hetata and Philippe Legrain highlight the impact of globalization on consumers, but it is also important to examine how it affects workers. Free-trade policies have removed barriers to international trade, with global consequences. An example of such change can be witnessed along the border between Mexico and the United States, especially in the export factories, or maquiladoras,* that are run by international corporations on both the U.S. and Mexican side of the border. In the following excerpt, Miriam Ching Yoon Louie, a writer and activist, interviews Mexican women who work in these factories and explores both the challenges they face and the strength they show in overcoming these challenges. What is the impact of liberalized trade laws on women who work in the maquiladoras? What is neoliberalism and how is it tied to globalization? Why are women particularly vulnerable to these policies?

Thinking Historically

According to Louie, how far back do neoliberalism and economic globalization date? How does Louie’s assessment of economic globalization differ from the views expressed by Legrain? How might they both be right?

Many of today’s nuevas revolucionarias started working on the global assembly line as young women in northern Mexico for foreign transnational corporations. Some women worked on the U.S. side as “commuters” before they moved across the border with their families. Their stories reveal the length, complexity, and interpenetration of the U.S. and Mexican economies, labor markets, histories, cultures, and race relations. The women talk about the devastating impact of globalization, including massive layoffs and the spread of sweatshops on both sides of

*mah kee lah DOH rahs

the border. *Las mujeres* recount what drove them to join and lead movements for economic, racial, and gender justice, as well as the challenges they faced within their families and communities to assert their basic human rights.

**Growing Up Female and Poor**

Mexican women and girls were traditionally expected to do all the cooking, cleaning, and serving for their husbands, brothers, and sons. For girls from poor families, shouldering these domestic responsibilities proved doubly difficult because they also performed farm, sweatshop, or domestic service work simultaneously.

Petra Mata, a former seamstress for Levi’s whose mother died shortly after childbirth, recalls the heavy housework she did as the only daughter:

Aiyee, let me tell you! It was very hard. In those times in Mexico, I was raised with the ideal that you have to learn to do everything—cook, make tortillas, wash your clothes, and clean the house—just the way they wanted you to. My grandparents were very strict. I always had to ask their permission and then let them tell me what to do. I was not a free woman. Life was hard for me. I didn’t have much of a childhood; I started working when I was 12 or 13 years old.

**Neoliberalism and Creeping Maquiladorization**

These women came of age during a period of major change in the relationship between the Mexican and U.S. economies. Like Puerto Rico, Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, northern Mexico served as one of the first stations of the global assembly line tapping young women’s labor. In 1965 the Mexican government initiated the Border Industrialization Program (BIP) that set up export plants, called *maquiladoras* or *maquilas*, which were either the direct subsidiaries or subcontractors of transnational corporations. Mexican government incentives to U.S. and other foreign investors included low wages and high productivity; infrastructure; proximity to U.S. markets, facilities, and lifestyles; tariff loopholes; and plant, pro-government unions.

Describing her quarter-century-long sewing career in Mexico, Celeste Jiménez ticks off the names of famous U.S. manufacturers who hopped over the border to take advantage of cheap wages:

I sewed for twenty-four years when I lived in Chihuahua in big name factories like Billy the Kid, Levi Strauss, and *Lee maquiladoras*. Every-
one was down there. Here a company might sell under the brand name of Lee; there in Mexico it would be called Blanca García.

Transnational exploitation of women’s labor was part of a broader set of policies that critical opposition movements in the Third World have dubbed “neoliberalism,” i.e., the new version of the British Liberal Party’s program of laissez faire capitalism espoused by the rising European and U.S. colonial powers during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Western powers, Japan, and international financial institutions like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have aggressively promoted neoliberal policies since the 1970s. Mexico served as an early testing ground for such standard neoliberal policies as erection of free trade zones; commercialization of agriculture; currency devaluation; deregulation; privatization; outsourcing; cuts in wages and social programs; suppression of workers’, women’s, and indigenous people’s rights; free trade; militarization; and promotion of neoconservative ideology.

Neoliberalism intersects with gender and national oppression. Third World women constitute the majority of migrants seeking jobs as maids, vendors, maquila operatives, and service industry workers. Women also pay the highest price for cuts in education, health and housing programs, and food and energy subsidies and increases in their unpaid labor.

The deepening of the economic crisis in Mexico, especially under the International Monetary Fund’s pressure to devalue the peso in 1976, 1982, and 1994, forced many women to work in both the formal and informal economy to survive and meet their childbearing and household responsibilities. María Antonia Flores was forced to work two jobs after her husband abandoned the family, leaving her with three children to support. She had no choice but to leave her children home alone, solitos, to look after themselves. Refugio Arrieta straddled the formal and informal economy because her job in an auto parts assembly maquiladora failed to bring in sufficient income. To compensate for the shortfall, she worked longer hours at her maquila job and “moonlighted” elsewhere:

We made chassis for cars and for the headlights. I worked lost! I worked 12 hours more or less because they paid us so little that if you worked more, you got more money. I did this because the schools in Mexico don’t provide everything. You have to buy the books, notebooks, todos, todos [everything]. And I had five kids. It’s very expensive. I also worked out of my house and sold ceramics. I did many things to get more money for my kids.

In the three decades following its humble beginnings in the mid-1960s, the maquila sector swelled to more than 2,000 plants employing
an estimated 776,000 people, over 10 percent of Mexico’s labor force. In 1985, *maquiladoras* overtook tourism as the largest source of foreign exchange. In 1996, this sector trailed only petroleum-related industries in economic importance and accounted for over U.S. $29 billion in export earnings annually. The *maquila* system has also penetrated the interior of the country, as in the case of Guadalajara’s electronics assembly industry and Tehuacán’s jeans production zones. Although the proportion of male *maquila* workers has increased since 1983, especially in auto-transport equipment assembly, almost 70 percent of the workers continue to be women.

As part of a delegation of labor and human rights activists, this author met some of Mexico’s newest proletarians — young indigenous women migrant workers from the Sierra Negra to Tehuacán, a town famous for its refreshing mineral water springs in the state of Puebla, just southeast of Mexico City. Standing packed like cattle in the back of the trucks each morning the women headed for jobs sewing for name brand manufacturers like Guess?, VF Corporation (producing Lee brand clothing), Gap, Sun Apparel (producing brands such as Polo, Arizona, and Express), Cherokee, Ditto Apparel of California, Levi’s, and others. The workers told U.S. delegation members that their wages averaged U.S. $30 to $50 a week for 12-hour work days, six days a week. Some workers reported having to do *veladas* [all-nighters] once or twice a week. Employees often stayed longer without pay if they did not finish high production goals.

Girls as young as 12 and 13 worked in the factories. Workers were searched when they left for lunch and again at the end of the day to check that they weren’t stealing materials. Women were routinely given urine tests when hired and those found to be pregnant were promptly fired, in violation of Mexican labor law. Although the workers had organized an independent union several years earlier, Tehuacán’s Human Rights Commission members told us that it had collapsed after one of its leaders was assassinated.

Carmen Valadez and Reyna Montero, long-time activists in the women’s and social justice movements, helped found Casa de La Mujer Factor X in 1977, a workers’ center in Tijuana that organizes around women’s workplace, reproductive, and health rights, and against domestic violence. Valadez and Montero say that the low wages and dangerous working conditions characteristic of the *maquiladoras* on the Mexico-U.S. border are being “extended to all areas of the country and to Central America and the Caribbean. NAFTA represents nothing but the *maquiladorization* of the region.”

Elizabeth “Betzi” Robles Ortega, who began working in the *maquilas* at the age of fourteen and was blacklisted after participating in independent union organizing drives on Mexico’s northern border, now works as an organizer for the Servicio, Desarrollo y Paz, AC
(SEDEPAC) [Service, Development and Peace organization]. Robles described the erosion of workers’ rights and women’s health under NAFTA:

NAFTA has led to an increase in the workforce, as foreign industry has grown. They are reforming labor laws and our constitution to favor even more foreign investment, which is unfair against our labor rights. For example, they are now trying to take away from us free organization which was guaranteed by Mexican law. Because foreign capital is investing in Mexico and is dominating, we must have guarantees. The government is just there with its hands held out; it’s always had them out but now even more shamelessly... Ecological problems are increasing. A majority of women are coming down with cancer—skin and breast cancer, leukemia, and lung and heart problems. There are daily deaths of worker women. You can see and feel the contamination of the water and the air. As soon as you arrive and start breathing the air in Acuña and Piedras Negras [border cities between the states of Coahuila and Texas], you sense the heavy air, making you feel like vomiting.

...  

Joining the Movement

Much of the education and leadership training the women received took place “on the job.” The women talked about how much their participation in the movement had changed them. They learned how to analyze working conditions and social problems, who was responsible for these conditions, and what workers could do to get justice. They learned to speak truth to power, whether this was to government representatives, corporate management, the media, unions, or co-ethnic gatekeepers. They built relations with different kinds of sectors and groups and organized a wide variety of educational activities and actions. Their activism expanded their world view beyond that of their immediate families to seeing themselves as part of peoples’ movements fighting for justice....

... Through her participation in the movement, [María del Carmen Domínguez] developed her skills, leadership, and awareness:

When I stayed at work in the factory, I was only thinking of myself and how am I going to support my family — nothing more, nothing less. And I served my husband and my son, my girl. But when I started working with La Mujer Obrera I thought, “I need more respect for myself. We need more respect for ourselves.” (laughs)...

... I learned about the law and I learned how to organize classes with people, whether they were men or women like me.
BENJAMIN BARBER

From Jihad vs. McWorld

Not everyone views the world as coming together, for better or worse, under the umbrella of globalization. Benjamin Barber, a political scientist, uses the terms Jihad and McWorld to refer to what he sees as the two poles of the modern global system. McWorld is the force of Hollywood, fast-food outlets, jeans, and Americanization. Jihad (the Arab word for “struggle”) is used to symbolize all the nationalist, fundamentalist, ethnocentric, and tribal rejections of McWorld. Barber’s argument is that these forces have largely shaped modern culture and that despite their opposition to each other, they both prevent the development of civic society and democracy: Jihad by terrorist opposition to discussion and debate, and McWorld by turning everyone into complacent, unthinking robots. What do you think of his argument? Is it persuasive? What sort of future does he predict?

Thinking Historically

Barber argues that Jihad originated in opposition to McWorld and that the two play off each other in a way that gives them both substance and support. Jihad thrives on the insensitivity, blandness, and oppression of McWorld; McWorld needs ethnic realities to give substance and soul to its theme parks and entertainments. Thus, according to Barber, they make each other stronger by struggling against each other. The gains of these two extreme positions come at the expense of a genuine, democratic civic culture. How useful is Barber’s model for understanding how the world has changed?

History is not over. Nor are we arrived in the wondrous land of technè promised by the futurologists. The collapse of state communism has not delivered people to a safe democratic haven, and the past, fratricide and civil discord perduring, still clouds the horizon just behind us. Those who look back see all of the horrors of the ancient slaughterbench reenacted in disintegrative nations like Bosnia, Sri Lanka,

Technology.

Ossetia, and Rwanda and they declare that nothing has changed. Those who look forward prophesize commercial and technological interdependence — a virtual paradise made possible by spreading markets and global technology — and they proclaim that everything is or soon will be different. The rival observers seem to consult different almanacs drawn from the libraries of contrarian planets.

Yet anyone who reads the daily papers carefully, taking in the front page accounts of civil carnage as well as the business page stories on the mechanics of the information superhighway and the economics of communication mergers, anyone who turns deliberately to take in the whole 360-degree horizon, knows that our world and our lives are caught between what [Irish poet] William Butler Yeats called the two eternities of race and soul: that of race reflecting the tribal past, that of soul anticipating the cosmopolitan future. Our secular eternities are corrupted, however, race reduced to an insignia of resentment, and soul sized down to fit the demanding body by which it now measures its needs. Neither race nor soul offers us a future that is other than bleak, neither promises a polity that is remotely democratic.

The first scenario rooted in race holds out the grim prospect of a retribalization of large swaths of humankind by war and bloodshed: a threatened balkanization of nation-states in which culture is pitted against culture, people against people, tribe against tribe, a Jihad in the name of a hundred narrowly conceived faiths against every kind of interdependence, every kind of artificial social cooperation and mutuality: against technology, against pop culture, and against integrated markets; against modernity itself as well as the future in which modernity issues. The second paints that future in shimmering pastels, a busy portrait of onrushing economic, technological, and ecological forces that demand integration and uniformity and that mesmerize peoples everywhere with fast music, fast computers, and fast food — MTV, Macintosh, and McDonald's — pressing nations into one homogenous global theme park, one McWorld tied together by communications, information, entertainment, and commerce. Caught between Babel and Disneyland, the planet is falling precipitously apart and coming reluctantly together at the very same moment.

Some stunned observers notice only Babel, complaining about the thousand newly sundered "peoples" who prefer to address their neighbors with sniper rifles and mortars; others — zealots in Disneyland — seize on futurological platitudes and the promise of virtuality, exclaiming "It's a small world after all!" Both are right, but how can that be?

We are compelled to choose between what passes as "the twilight of sovereignty" and an entropic end of all history, or a return to the past's most fractious and demoralizing discord; to "the menace of global anarchy," to [John] Milton's capital of hell, Pandemonium; to a world totally "out of control."
The apparent truth, which speaks to the paradox at the core of this book, is that the tendencies of both Jihad and McWorld are at work, both visible sometimes in the same country at the very same instant. Iranian zealots keep one ear tuned to the mullahs urging holy war and the other cocked to [Australian media mogul] Rupert Murdoch’s Star television beaming in Dynasty, Donahue, and The Simpsons from hovering satellites. Chinese entrepreneurs vie for the attention of party cadres in Beijing and simultaneously pursue KFC franchises in cities like Nanjing, Hangzhou, and Xian where twenty-eight outlets serve over 100,000 customers a day. The Russian Orthodox church, even as it struggles to renew the ancient faith, has entered a joint venture with California businessmen to bottle and sell natural waters under the rubric Saint Springs Water Company. Serbian assassins wear Adidas sneakers and listen to Madonna on Walkman headphones as they take aim through their guns and scopes at scurrying Sarajevo civilians looking to fill family watercans. Orthodox Hasids and brooding neo-Nazis have both turned to rock music to get their traditional messages out to the new generation, while fundamentalists plot virtual conspiracies on the Internet.

Now neither Jihad nor McWorld is in itself novel. History ending in the triumph of science and reason or some monstrous perversion thereof (Mary Shelley’s Doctor Frankenstein) has been the leitmotiv of every philosopher and poet who has regretted the Age of Reason since the Enlightenment. [W. B.] Yeats lamented “the center will not hold, mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,” and observers of Jihad today have little but historical detail to add. The Christian parable of the Fall and of the possibilities of redemption that it makes possible captures the eighteenth-century ambivalence — and our own — about past and future. I want, however, to do more than dress up the central paradox of human history in modern clothes. It is not Jihad and McWorld but the relationship between them that most interests me. For, squeezed between their opposing forces, the world has been sent spinning out of control. Can it be that what Jihad and McWorld have in common is anarchy: the absence of common will and that conscious and collective human control under the guidance of law we call democracy?

Progress moves in steps that sometimes lurch backwards; in history’s twisting maze, Jihad not only revolts against but abets McWorld, while McWorld not only imperils but re-creates and reinforces Jihad. They produce their contraries and need one another. My object here then is not simply to offer sequential portraits of McWorld and Jihad, but while examining McWorld, to keep Jihad in my field of vision, and while dissecting Jihad, never to forget the context of McWorld. Call it a dialectic of McWorld: a study in the cunning of reason that does honor to the radical differences that distinguish Jihad and McWorld yet that acknowledges their powerful and paradoxical interdependence.
There is a crucial difference, however, between my modest attempt at dialectic and that of the masters of the nineteenth century. Still seduced by the Enlightenment's faith in progress, both [G. W. F.] Hegel and [Karl] Marx believed reason's cunning was on the side of progress. But it is harder to believe that the clash of Jihad and McWorld will issue in some overriding good. The outcome seems more likely to pervert than to nurture human liberty. The two may, in opposing each other, work to the same ends, work in apparent tension yet in covert harmony, but democracy is not their beneficiary. In East Berlin, tribal communism has yielded to capitalism. In Marx-Engelsplatz, the stolid, overbearing statues of Marx and [Friedrich] Engels face east, as if seeking distant solace from Moscow: but now, circling them along the streets that surround the park that is their prison are chain eateries like T.G.I. Friday's, international hotels like the Radisson, and a circle of neon billboards mocking them with brand names like Panasonic, Coke, and GoldStar. New gods, yes, but more liberty?

What then does it mean in concrete terms to view Jihad and McWorld dialectically when the tendencies of the two sets of forces initially appear so intractably antithetical? After all, Jihad and McWorld operate with equal strength in opposite directions, the one driven by parochial hatreds, the other by universalizing markets, the one recreating ancient subnational and ethnic borders from within, the other making national borders porous from without. Yet Jihad and McWorld have this in common: They both make war on the sovereign nation-state and thus undermine the nation-state's democratic institutions. Each eschews civil society and belittles democratic citizenship, neither seeks alternative democratic institutions. Their common thread is indifference to civil liberty. Jihad forges communities of blood rooted in exclusion and hatred, communities that slight democracy in favor of tyrannical paternalism or consensual tribalism. McWorld forges global markets rooted in consumption and profit, leaving to an untrustworthy, if not altogether fictitious, invisible hand issues of public interest and common good that once might have been nurtured by democratic citizenries and their watchful governments. Such governments, intimidated by market ideology, are actually pulling back at the very moment they ought to be aggressively intervening. What was once understood as protecting the public interest is now excoriated as heavy-handed regulatory browbeating. Justice yields to markets, even though, as [New York banker] Felix Rohatyn has bluntly confessed, “there is a brutal Darwinian logic to these markets. They are nervous and greedy. They look for stability and transparency, but what they reward is not always our preferred form of democracy.” If the traditional conservators of freedom were democratic constitutions and Bills of Rights, “the new temples to liberty,” [literary critic and philosopher] George Steiner suggests, “will be McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken.”
In being reduced to a choice between the market's universal church and a retrivializing politics of particularist identities, peoples around the globe are threatened with an atavistic return to medieval politics where local tribes and ambitious emperors together ruled the world entire, women and men united by the universal abstraction of Christianity even as they lived out isolated lives in warring fiefdoms defined by involuntary (ascriptive) forms of identity. This was a world in which princes and kings had little real power until they conceived the ideology of nationalism. Nationalism established government on a scale greater than the tribe yet less cosmopolitan than the universal church and in time gave birth to those intermediate, gradually more democratic institutions that would come to constitute the nation-state. Today, at the far end of this history, we seem intent on re-creating a world in which our only choices are the secular universalism of the cosmopolitan market and the everyday particularism of the fractious tribe.

In the tumult of the confrontation between global commerce and parochial ethnicity, the virtues of the democratic nation are lost and the instrumentalities by which it permitted peoples to transform themselves into nations and seize sovereign power in the name of liberty and the commonweal are put at risk. Neither Jihad nor McWorld aspires to resecure the civic virtues undermined by its denationalizing practices; neither global markets nor blood communities service public goods or pursue equality and justice. Impartial judiciaries and deliberate assemblies play no role in the roving killer bands that speak on behalf of newly liberated "peoples," and such democratic institutions have at best only marginal influence on the roving multinational corporations that speak on behalf of newly liberated markets. Jihad pursues a bloody politics of identity, McWorld a bloodless economics of profit. Belonging by default to McWorld, everyone is a consumer; seeking a repository for identity, everyone belongs to some tribe. But no one is a citizen. Without citizens, how can there be democracy?
Global Snapshots

Cartogram of Global Warming

The Earth at Night

Population Density of the World, 2004

GDP per Capita Growth, 1990–2001

At the heart of many debates surrounding globalization is the natural environment. It is difficult to ignore the vast problems endangering the planet — global warming, acid rain, species extinction, rainforest depletion. These environmental issues require global cooperation to be solved, and they also require a certain global consciousness, or understanding, that all people are part of a global community and that what people do in one part of the world affects those in another part.

These four images provide a graphic measure of the integration and imbalances of the world today. Specifically, they show how the consumption of energy resources — heat and light — is distributed throughout the world, population density across the planet, and natural differences in economic growth, or GDP.

Figure 14.1 is a cartogram, which is a stylized map in which countries are not represented to scale, but are sized to reflect a specific measurement. This cartogram measures relative emissions of greenhouse gases by country, so the largest countries on the map emit the most gases, and the smallest emit the fewest. Which countries produce the most greenhouse gases? Which countries produce the least? What accounts for these differences?

Figure 14.2, a satellite photograph of the Earth at night, shows that energy use is no more uniform within countries than it is from one country to another. What areas of countries use the most light? Why? Does the photograph correspond to the cartogram in every respect? What does the photograph tell you about the relationship between energy use, transportation routes, urban centers, and general population density? What else can you deduce about global energy use from the photograph?
Figure 14.1 Cartogram of Global Warming. Emissions of carbon dioxide, one of the main greenhouse gases.

Source: Courtesy Mark Newman.
Thinking Historically

A snapshot is hardly the proper format to display change since it captures only a moment in time. Nevertheless, what long-term global trends can you extrapolate from these images? Can you see evidence of any of the historical processes discussed in this chapter? What historical processes do these snapshots capture most dramatically? Compare the maps of population density and of GDP with the cartogram and the satellite photo and with each other. Is there a correlation between energy use and population? Between density of population and wealth? What conclusions might you draw from comparing these maps with each other, and with previous images?

JOHN ROACH

By 2050 Warming to Doom Million Species, Study Says

Global warming looms as perhaps the most serious threat to planetary health ever. What according to this article are the likely consequences of global warming? What are its causes?

What does the cartogram in the previous selection (Figure 14.1) suggest about the causes of global warming? What is the relationship between the places most responsible for global warming and the places where the most species are disappearing?

Thinking Historically

According to the author, some scientists think that the loss of 15–35 percent of the earth's species by the year 2050 may be optimistic. They say that global warming sets in motion other processes — habitat destruction, invasive species, and the buildup of carbon dioxide in the landscape — that further increase global warming. How might these different processes be related?

By 2050, rising temperatures exacerbated by human-induced belches of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases could send more than a million of Earth’s land-dwelling plants and animals down the road to extinction, according to a recent study.

“Climate change now represents at least as great a threat to the number of species surviving on Earth as habitat-destruction and modification,” said Chris Thomas, a conservation biologist at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom.

Thomas is the lead author of the study published earlier this year in the science journal Nature. His co-authors included 18 scientists from around the world, making this the largest collaboration of its type.

Townsend Peterson, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Kansas in Lawrence and one of the study’s co-authors, said the paper allows scientists for the first time to “get a grip” on the impact of climate change as far as natural systems are concerned. “A lot of us are in this to start to get a handle on what we are talking about,” he said. “When we talk about the difference between half a percent and one percent of carbon dioxide emissions what does that mean?”

The researchers worked independently in six biodiversity-rich regions around the world, from Australia to South Africa, plugging field data on species distribution and regional climate into computer models that simulated the ways species’ ranges are expected to move in response to temperature and climate changes. “We later met and decided to pool results to produce a more globally relevant look at the issue,” said Lee Hannah, a climate change biologist with Conservation International’s Center for Applied Biodiversity Science in Washington, D.C.

Study Results

According to the researchers’ collective results, the predicted range of climate change by 2050 will place 15 to 35 percent of the 1,103 species studied at risk of extinction. The numbers are expected to hold up when extrapolated globally, potentially dooming more than a million species. “These are first-pass estimates, but they put the problem in the right ballpark . . . I expect more detailed studies to refine these numbers and to add data for additional regions, but not to change the general import of these findings,” said Hannah.

Writing in an accompanying commentary to the study in Nature, J. Alan Pounds of the Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve in Costa Rica, and Robert Puschendorf, a biologist at the University of Costa Rica, say these estimates “might be optimistic.” As global warming interacts with other factors such as habitat-destruction, invasive species, and the build up of carbon dioxide in the landscape, the risk of extinction increases even further, they say.
In agreement with the study authors, Pounds and Puschendorf say taking immediate steps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is imperative to constrain global warming to the minimum predicted levels and thus prevent many of the extinctions from occurring. “The threat to life on Earth is not just a problem for the future. It is part of the here and now,” they write.

**Climate Scenarios**

The researchers based their study on minimum, mid-range, and maximum future climate scenarios based on information released by the United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2001.

According to the IPCC, temperatures are expected to rise from somewhere between 1.5 and more than 4 degrees Fahrenheit (0.8 and more than 2 degrees Celsius) by the year 2050. “Few climate scientists around the world think that 2050 temperatures will fall outside those bounds,” said Thomas. “In some respects, we have been conservative because almost all future climate projections expect more warming and hence more extinction between 2050 and 2100.”

In addition, the researchers accounted for the ability of species to disperse or successfully move to a new area, thus preventing climate change-induced extinction. They used two alternatives: one where species couldn’t move at all, the other assuming unlimited abilities for movement. “We are trying to bracket the truth,” said Peterson. “If you bracket the truth and look at the two endpoints and they give the same general message, then you can start to believe it.”

Outside of the small group of researchers working directly on the impacts of climate change to species diversity, “the numbers will come as a huge shock,” said Thomas.

**Extinction Prevention**

The researchers point out that there is a significant gap between the low and high ends of the species predicted to be on the road to extinction by 2050. Taking action to ensure the climate ends up on the low end of the range is vital to prevent catastrophic extinctions. “We need to start thinking about the fullest of costs involved with our activities, the real costs of what we do in modern society,” said Peterson.

Thomas said that since there may be a large time lag between the climate changing and the last individual of a doomed species dying off, rapid reductions of greenhouse gas emissions may allow some of these species to hang on. “The only conservation action that really makes
sense, at a global scale, is for the international community to minimize warming through reduced emissions and the potential establishment of carbon-sequestration programs," he said.

ANDREW C. REVKIN

Climate Data Hint at Irreversible Rise in Seas

This is another news story on global warming, reporting another set of scientific studies. But the danger presented here is rising sea levels rather than the extinction of species. What according to the author are the threats to coastal areas from the kind of global warming projected over the next one hundred years? In what ways are these conclusions similar to that of the previous article?

Thinking Historically

We might add rising sea levels to the list of factors that would interact to cause the depletion of species. Studies of global warming show us the extent of interrelationship among natural processes. This selection also warns us that natural processes can suddenly speed up or reach a tipping point of no return. Yet both of these studies suggest a fairly obvious remedy: reducing the carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases produced by humans. What should be done? If humans can cause long-term changes in nature, can humans also prevent them?

Within the next 100 years, the growing human influence on Earth’s climate could lead to a long and irreversible rise in sea levels by eroding the planet’s vast polar ice sheets, according to new observations and analysis by several teams of scientists.

One team, using computer models of climate and ice, found that by about 2100, average temperatures could be four degrees higher than today and that over the coming centuries, the oceans could rise 13 to

20 feet—conditions last seen 129,000 years ago, between the last two ice ages. The findings, being reported today in the journal *Science*, are consistent with other recent studies of melting and erosion at the poles. Many experts say there are still uncertainties about timing, extent, and causes.

But Jonathan T. Overpeck of the University of Arizona, a lead author of one of the studies, said the new findings made a strong case for the danger of failing to curb emissions of carbon dioxide and other gases that trap heat in a greenhouse-like effect. “If we don’t like the idea of flooding out New Orleans, major portions of South Florida, and many other valued parts of the coastal U.S.,” Dr. Overpeck said, “we will have to commit soon to a major effort to stop most emissions of carbon to the atmosphere.”

According to the computer simulations, the global nature of the warming from greenhouse gases, which diffuse around the atmosphere, could amplify the melting around Antarctica beyond that of the last warm period, which was driven mainly by extra sunlight reaching the Northern Hemisphere.

The researchers also said that stains from dark soot drifting from power plants and vehicles could hasten melting in the Arctic by increasing the amount of solar energy absorbed by ice. The rise in sea levels, driven by loss of ice from Greenland and West Antarctica, would occur over many centuries and be largely irreversible, but could be delayed by curbing emissions of the greenhouse gases, said Dr. Overpeck and his fellow lead author, Bette L. Otto-Bliesner of the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colo.

In a second article in *Science*, researchers say they have detected a rising frequency of earthquakelike rumblings in the bedrock beneath Greenland’s two-mile-thick ice cap in late summer since 1993. They say there is no obvious explanation other than abrupt movements of the overlying ice caused by surface melting. The jostling of that giant ice-cloaked island is five times more frequent in summer than in winter, and has greatly intensified since 2002, the researchers found. The data mesh with recent satellite readings showing that the ice can lurch toward the sea during the melting season. The analysis was led by Goran Ekstrom of Harvard and Meredith Nettles of the Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory in Palisades, N.Y., part of Columbia University.

H. Jay Zwally, a NASA scientist studying the polar ice sheets with satellites, said the seismic signals from ice movement were consistent with his discovery in 2002 that summer melting on the surface of Greenland’s ice sheets could almost immediately spur them to shift measurably. The meltwater apparently trickles through fissures and lubricates the interface between ice and underlying rock. “Models are important, but measurements tell the real story,” Dr. Zwally said. “During the last 10 years, we have seen only about 10 percent of the
greenhouse warming expected during the next 100 years, but already the polar ice sheets are responding in ways we didn’t even know about only a few years ago.”

In both Antarctica and Greenland, it appears that warming waters are also at work, melting the protruding tongues of ice where glaciers flow into the sea or intruding beneath ice sheets, like those in western Antarctica, that lie mostly below sea level. Both processes can cause the ice to flow more readily, scientists say. Many experts on climate and the poles, citing evidence from past natural warm periods, agreed with the general notion that a world much warmer than today’s, regardless of the cause of warming, will have higher sea levels.

But significant disagreements remain over whether recent changes in sea level and ice conditions cited in the new studies could be attributed to rising concentrations of the greenhouse gases and temperatures linked by most experts to human activities.

Sea levels have been rising for thousands of years as an aftereffect of the warming and polar melting that followed the last ice age, which ended about 10,000 years ago. Discriminating between that residual effect and any new influence from human actions remains impossible for the moment, many experts say.

Satellites and tide gauges show that seas rose about eight inches over the last century and the pace has picked up markedly since the 1990’s. Dr. Overpeck, the co-author of the paper on rising sea levels, acknowledged the uncertainties about the causes. But he said that in a world in which humans, rich and poor, increasingly clustered on coasts, the risks were great enough to justify prompt action.

“People driving big old S.U.V.’s to their favorite beach or coastal golf course,” he said, should “start to think twice about what they might be doing.”
LARRY ROHTER

With Big Boost from Sugar Cane,
Brazil Is Satisfying Its Fuel Needs

Because modern industrial technologies bear so much responsibility for global warming, pessimists often blame technology itself or even Man the Toolmaker. Optimists, on the other hand, see hope in green technologies, which they expect to be developed by the cutting-edge, science-based, rich, competitive economies. This article gives reason to question both those who envision no technological solutions and those who look for the contemporary masters of the industrial world to go green.

How has Brazil been able to do something as important as this? What can the United States learn from Brazil?

Thinking Historically

This is a story about human, not natural, processes. Human processes frequently involve various political and economic motivations and decisions. What are some of the political and economic decisions that Brazil and the United States made in their different responses to the need for renewable energy? Why did the two countries go different ways?

At the dawn of the automobile age, Henry Ford predicted that “ethyl alcohol is the fuel of the future.” With petroleum about $65 a barrel, President Bush has now embraced that view, too. But Brazil is already there.

This country expects to become energy self-sufficient this year, meeting its growing demand for fuel by increasing production from petroleum and ethanol. Already the use of ethanol, derived in Brazil from sugar cane, is so widespread that some gas stations have two sets of pumps, marked A for alcohol and G for gas.

In his State of the Union address in January, Mr. Bush backed financing for “cutting-edge methods of producing ethanol, not just from corn but wood chips and stalks or switch grass” with the goal of making ethanol competitive in six years.

But Brazil’s path has taken 30 years of effort, required several billion dollars in incentives and involved many missteps. While not always easy, it provides clues to the real challenges facing the United States’ ambitions.

Brazilian officials and scientists say that, in their country at least, the main barriers to the broader use of ethanol today come from outside. Brazil’s ethanol yields nearly eight times as much energy as corn-based options, according to scientific data. Yet heavy import duties on the Brazilian product have limited its entry into the United States and Europe.

Brazilian officials and scientists say sugar cane yields are likely to increase because of recent research.

“Renewable fuel has been a fantastic solution for us,” Brazil’s minister of agriculture, Roberto Rodrigues, said in a recent interview in São Paulo, the capital of São Paulo State, which accounts for 60 percent of sugar production in Brazil. “And it offers a way out of the fossil fuel trap for others as well.”

Here, where Brazil has cultivated sugar cane since the 16th century, green fields of cane, stalks rippling gently in the tropical breeze, stretch to the horizon, producing a crop that is destined to be consumed not just as candy and soft drinks but also in the tanks of millions of cars.

The use of ethanol in Brazil was greatly accelerated in the last three years with the introduction of “flex fuel” engines, designed to run on ethanol, gasoline, or any mixture of the two. (The gasoline sold in Brazil contains about 2.5 percent alcohol, a practice that has accelerated Brazil’s shift from imported oil.)

But Brazilian officials and business executives say the ethanol industry would develop even faster if the United States did not levy a tax of 54 cents a gallon on all imports of Brazilian cane-based ethanol.

With demand for ethanol soaring in Brazil, sugar producers recognize that it is unrealistic to think of exports to the United States now. But Brazilian leaders complain that Washington’s restrictions have inhibited foreign investment, particularly by Americans.

As a result, ethanol development has been led by Brazilian companies with limited capital. But with oil prices soaring, the four international giants that control much of the world’s agribusiness — Archer Daniels Midland, Bunge and Born, Cargill, and Louis Dreyfus — have recently begun showing interest.

Brazil says those and other outsiders are welcome. Aware that the United States and other industrialized countries are reluctant to trade their longstanding dependence on oil for a new dependence on renewable fuels, government and industry officials say they are willing to share technology with those interested in following Brazil’s example.

“We are not interested in becoming the Saudi Arabia of ethanol,” said Eduardo Carvalho, director of the National Sugarcane Agro-Industry
Union, a producer's group. "It's not our strategy because it doesn't produce results. As a large producer and user, I need to have other big buyers and sellers in the international market if ethanol is to become a commodity, which is our real goal."

The ethanol boom in Brazil, which took off at the start of the decade after a long slump, is not the first. The government introduced its original "Pro-Alcohol" program in 1975, after the first global energy crisis, and by the mid-1980's, more than three quarters of the 800,000 cars made in Brazil each year could run on cane-based ethanol.

But when sugar prices rose sharply in 1989, mill owners stopped making cane available for processing into alcohol, preferring to profit from the hard currency that premium international markets were paying.

Brazilian motorists were left in the lurch, as were the automakers who had retooled their production lines to make alcohol-powered cars. Ethanol fell into discredit, for economic rather than technical reasons.

Consumers' suspicions remained high through the 1990's and were overcome only in 2003, when automakers, beginning with Volkswagen, introduced the "flex fuel" motor in Brazil. Those engines gave consumers the autonomy to buy the cheapest fuel, freeing them from any potential shortages in ethanol's supply. Also, ethanol-only engines can be slower to start when cold, a problem the flex fuel owners can bypass.

"Motorists liked the flex-fuel system from the start because it permits them free choice and puts them in control," said Vicente Lourenço, technical director at General Motors do Brasil.

Today, less than three years after the technology was introduced, more than 70 percent of the automobiles sold in Brazil, expected to reach 1.1 million this year, have flex fuel engines, which have entered the market generally without price increases.

"The rate at which this technology has been adopted is remarkable, the fastest I have ever seen in the motor sector, faster even than the airbag, automatic transmission or electric windows," said Barry Engle, president of Ford do Brasil. "From the consumer standpoint, it's wonderful, because you get flexibility and you don't have to pay for it."

Yet the ethanol boom has also brought the prospect of distortions that may not be as easy to resolve. The expansion of sugar production, for example, has come largely at the expense of pasture land, leading to worries that the grazing of cattle, another booming export product, could be shifted to the Amazon, encouraging greater deforestation.

Industry and government officials say such concerns are unwarranted. Sugar cane's expanding frontier is, they argue, an environmental plus, because it is putting largely abandoned or degraded pasture land back into production. And of course, ethanol burns far cleaner than fossil fuels.
Human rights and worker advocacy groups also complain that the boom has led to more hardships for the peasants who cut sugar cane. "You used to have to cut 4 tons a day, but now they want 8 or 10, and if you can't make the quota, you'll be fired," said Silvio Donizetti Palve-queres, president of the farmworkers union in Ribeirão Preto, an important cane area north of here. "We have to work a lot harder than we did 10 years ago, and the working conditions continue to be tough."

Producers say that problem will be eliminated in the next decade by greater mechanization. A much more serious long-term worry, they say, is Brazil's lack of infrastructure, particularly its limited and poorly maintained highways.

Ethanol can be made through the fermentation of many natural substances, but sugar cane offers advantages over others, like corn. For each unit of energy expended to turn cane into ethanol, 8.3 times as much energy is created, compared with a maximum of 1.3 times for corn, according to scientists at the Center for Sugarcane Technology here and other Brazilian research institutes.

"There's no reason why we shouldn't be able to improve that ratio to 10 to 1," said Suani Teixeira Coelho, director of the National Center for Biomass at the University of São Paulo. "It's no miracle. Our energy balance is so favorable not just because we have high yields, but also because we don't use any fossil fuels to process the cane, which is not the case with corn."

Brazilian producers estimate that they have an edge over gasoline as long as oil prices do not drop below $30 a barrel. But they have already embarked on technical improvements that promise to lift yields and cut costs even more.

In the past, the residue left when cane stalks are compressed to squeeze our juice was discarded. Today, Brazilian sugar mills use that residue to generate the electricity to process cane into ethanol, and use other byproducts to fertilize the fields where cane is planted.

Some mills are now producing so much electricity that they sell their excess to the national grid. In addition, Brazilian scientists, with money from São Paulo State, have mapped the sugar cane genome. That opens the prospect of planting genetically modified sugar, if the government allows, that could be made into ethanol even more efficiently.

"There is so much biological potential yet to be developed, including varieties of cane that are resistant to pesticides and pests and even drought," said Tadeu Andrade, director of the Center for Sugarcane Technology. "We've already had several qualitative leaps without that, and we are convinced there is no ceiling on productivity, at least theoretically."
REFLECTIONS

Understanding the process of change is the most useful “habit of mind” we gain from studying the past. Although the facts are many and the details overwhelming, process only appears through the study of the specific. And we must continually check our theories of change with the facts, and revise them to conform to new information.

More important, understanding change does not necessarily mean that we must submit to it. Of the processes of globalization discussed in this chapter — trade and technological transfers, cultural homogenization and competition, commercialization, and market expansion — some may seem inevitable, some merely strong, some even reversible. Intelligent action requires an appreciation of the possible as well as the identification of the improbable.

The process of global warming poses the threat of a far greater catastrophe than globalization. For the first time, humans threaten to permanently unbalance nature. We do not know when human action will push nature to a tipping point that is irreversible. The results for hundreds of millions of people living in coastal zones, the extinction of species, and the unleashing of violent weather patterns would constitute the greatest multiple disasters of human history. We would have only ourselves to blame.

History is not an exact science. Fortunately, human beings are creators, as well as subjects, of change. Even winds that cannot be stopped can be deflected and harnessed. Which way is the world moving? What are we becoming? What can we do? What kind of world can we create? These are questions that can only be answered by studying the past, both distant and recent, and trying to understand the overarching changes that are shaping our world. Worlds of history converge upon us, but only one world will emerge from our wishes, our wisdom, and our will.