This final chapter reviews the last three themes of the text—trade, social revolution, and technology—and assesses their significance in understanding today’s world. In conclusion, we touch briefly on one final theme. This theme of identity has become a central concern for historians in the past 20 years because it explores the ways in which people, groups, and institutions define themselves in eras of continual change and constant spin—eras like our own. It explores how they integrate in practice all the themes we have been discussing in the abstract. The theme of identity provides a conceptual viewpoint that helps us to integrate the past and present and even to anticipate the future. And with it, we close our study.

On Trade

Modern trade began its rise to global importance in the thirteenth century. The nations of Western Europe—first Spain and Portugal, later the Netherlands, England, and France—felt themselves isolated from the trade networks of the Middle East, the Arabian Sea, and the overland silk routes to eastern markets. To find a place in this global economy, Portugal dispatched Bartholomeu Dias and Vasco da Gama around the coast of Africa in search of the East Indies. Spain sent Columbus in the other direction, on his daring expedition across the Atlantic. As these voyages began to pay off, merchant communities in the Netherlands, England, and France began to participate in the trade and its profits, and later mounted ventures of their own. Even China, approaching from the east, asserted its interests in the Indian Ocean trade by dispatching Admiral Zheng He on his seven voyages, some of which reached as far as the coast of East Africa. From western Africa, Mansa Musa, king of the gold-rich kingdom of Mali, entered into this trade as a by-product of his hajj pilgrimages to Mecca.

International trade, of course, was not new. Sumerians had traded westward to Egypt and the Nile Valley and eastward to India and the Indus Valley. Later, silk routes had facilitated trade between Han China, the ancient Roman Empire, and the empires of India. But the trade of the twelfth century and beyond, especially the trade initiated from Europe, introduced several new dimensions. First, from this time onward trade became the driving force in international relations, not merely a component of other kinds of relationships. Second, with improved navigation, trade networks became global; the oceans, no longer a barrier, became a bridge. Third, private merchant communities acquired influence within their home countries and
international, separate from government, but intertwined with it. Merchants and trade came to rival political leaders and government in their powers to determine the fate of nations.

In recent years, world trade has reached unprecedented levels, which keep rising almost every year. "Between 1990 and 2007, the global economy grew from US $22.8 trillion to US $53.3 trillion, and global trade increased 133 percent" (Zakaria, p. 20). This increasing interaction in commercial trade—and also in other kinds of international exchange—is called globalization.

Globalization has become a buzzword. With globalization, increasing communication technology, free market capitalism, and decreasing government regulation have come together: in a way that is enabling individuals, corporations and nation-states to reach around the world farther, faster, deeper and cheaper than ever before, and in a way that is also producing a powerful backlash from those brutalized or left behind by this new system. (Friedman, 1999, pp. 7-8)

Economically, globalization thrives on the new, inexpensive transportation and communication facilities of the later twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Politically, it requires freedom of movement of goods, services, capital, knowledge, and people across borders, although the freedom of people to move is more restricted than the other categories. It makes possible the movement of billions of dollars of investment capital around the globe at the stroke of a computer key. It creates new institutions for negotiating across international borders, rules, and regulations. It increases the level of interaction of peoples, producing new and different social and cultural forms. Globalization means not only increased trade, but also increased travel and tourism, more world music and literature, and new dimensions of international economic investment. Because of these broad and deep influences, globalization evokes passionate responses, both for and against.

Although many advocates of globalization claim that its home is the entire world and its benefits are equally accessible to everyone, more critical observers see its contemporary origins in the United States, spread not only by America’s businesses but also by its effective control over global financial institutions. They see globalization as just one more measure of the superpower status of the United States. Since about 1980, however, as the American role in the global economy has shrunk somewhat, and as the roles of China, Japan, and Europe have increased, the process of globalization appears more fully global, and America’s leadership position significantly diluted and challenged.

The Institutions of Globalization

The principal financial institutions that facilitate the expansion of globalization—the IMF, the World Bank, and the GATT—were put in place toward the end of World War II (see Chapter Twenty-one). In 1995 the members transformed the GATT into the World Trade Organization (WTO). The new institution reflected the growth in world trade. From 1950 to 2000, global exports grew on average by six percent annually. At its inception, the GATT had 40 members; when it became the WTO, there were 128, and by 2008, the WTO included 153 members. The members negotiate, sign, and implement agreements that form the legal ground rules for international trade. These agreements are intergovernmental, but they are designed to enable producer, importers, and exporters—usually private businesses—to conduct business successfully. Should disputes arise over interpretations of the agreements, they are adjudicated by the WTO, which can enforce its decisions by invoking sanctions against violators.

The Internet, the World Wide Web, and Containerization

The WTO has provided the institutional organization to facilitate the expansion of global trade. The internet, the World Wide Web, and the improved transportation facility of containerization have provided the technology.

In 1994, some three million people worldwide were connected to the internet; by 2008, that figure had increased to 1.5 billion. The largest national group, 253 million, was in China (19 percent of its total population); the second largest was in the United States, with 220 million users (73 percent of the American population). About 30 percent of internet users claim English as their native tongue; about 20 percent claim Chinese (http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats.htm). Other electronic communications media expanded similarly, with almost unbelievable speed. In 1990 there were 11 million cellular phone subscriptions worldwide; at the end of 2006 there were 2.6 billion, with the largest number, 481 million, in China. With the internet and World Wide Web, shopping, research, and accessing and transmitting documents can all be done while sitting in front of a computer at home, in an office, or on the road. E-mail and texting have made instantaneous global communication available at nominal cost.

Transportation played as large a role as communication. In his remarkable book, The Box: How the Shipping Container Made the World Smaller and the World Economy Bigger, Marc Levinson tells the story of Malcolm McLean’s 1956 introduction of containers of standardized size that were sealed from shipper to receiver, even as they moved among different modes of transportation—trucks, railway cars, and ships. These standardized containers have dramatically reduced the need for human labor in loading and unloading freight at each of the transfer points along the way. Great cranes carry out the work. The sealed containers also cut the rate of pilferage and damage to goods. In 2005 about 18 million containers made over 200 million trips per year, carrying the overwhelming majority of shipping cargo, at a cost that

Shipping containers. Standard-size containers have been used on a limited basis for centuries. In the late 1950s, however, greater standardization in containers was achieved, first by the transportation industry and then through the regulations of the ISO (International Organization for Standardization). With standardization of size, height could be shipped from original expediter to final consumer at relatively rapid speed and low cost, moving interchangeably from train to truck to ship, protected against pilferage. Containerization has facilitated the globalization of trade.
has become negligible. The reduced cost of shipping was one of the principal innovations that helped bring China, so distant from European and American markets, into the center of the world trade network:

In 1956, China was not the world’s workshop. It was not routine for shoppers to find Brazilian shoes and Mexican vacuum cleaners in stores in the middle of Kansas. Japanese families did not eat beef from cattle raised in Wyoming, and French clothing designers did not have their exclusive apparel cut and sewn in Turkey or Vietnam. (McLean, p. 1)

**Evaluating Globalization**

Given the constant development of new technologies and the creation of new institutions, it might appear that globalization is inevitable, and globalization does have its ardent advocates. But it also has fierce critics. In 1999, protesters gathered at the meeting of the WTO in Seattle, Washington, to demonstrate their apprehensions at the increasing tempo of world trade and their demands for more regulation by national governments and by the UN. The protesters feared that the quest for profits would overrun humanist concerns. They sought regulations to protect the environment, human rights, labor, and children’s welfare.

Many of the protesters also feared that globalization would homogenize the world’s cultures into a single “McDonald’s” culture and even replace its many languages with a single, dominant global language, English. These protesters were not convinced that new communication networks would allow small, niche cultures, languages, and organizations to flourish, as advocates of globalization argued.

In 2001, an umbrella organization of protestors, the World Social Forum, held its first annual meeting in Porto Alegre, Brazil. By the time of the fourth meeting in 2004, in Mumbai, India, 100,000 people participated. At the seventh meeting in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2007, 66,000 people from 110 countries attended. In 2008, no centralized meeting was held, but regional forums around the world convened more localized sessions, although for 2009, the forum returns to a central location in Belem, Brazil.

Under its motto, “Another World is Possible,” the Forum seeks alternative political and economic models to those that dominate the world today. The issues raised by the forum are not new, but their massive representation at the global level, including participation by UNESCO, is.

Disputes over the future of globalization are not surprising. Globalization increases economic dislocations. Some consequences are immediately evident and can be evaluated easily; others may not be discernible for decades. The process confers great benefits on the winners and exacts costly consequences from the losers. Because of the competitive nature of the capitalist system, the fundamental order on which globalization rests, those who are able to take advantage of the new possibilities gain much faster than those who cannot, or do not.

Global economic competition increases the speed of technological change, bringing new employment possibilities to some, but eliminating older jobs. Newer technologies are often capital-intensive, that is, they use a lot of expensive, “labor-saving” equipment, which does away with many jobs and may reduce total employment, at least temporarily. This kind of economic innovation brings an overall increase in productivity, but at the cost of lost jobs and worker income. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, investors commonly regarded company layoffs of workers as moves toward efficiency. As companies laid off workers, the share prices of companies stock went up. The economist Joseph Schumpeter (1883–1950) famously remarked that capitalism was a system of “creative destruction.” But those who benefited from the creativity and those who suffered from the destruction were usually different people.

The new technologies have increased the gap between those who keep up with the change and those who do not. Lagging regions do their best, but they have a very long way to go. The nations of sub-Saharan Africa increased their usage of the internet ten times between 2000 and 2008. Even so, they still have only 3.5 percent of the world’s internet users (for 14 percent of the world’s population). Because the new technologies are dependent on research laboratories, these facilities, especially in the United States, continue to attract talented, skilled persons, draining them from less technologically sophisticated nations.

On the other hand, to some degree, poorer countries are benefiting from the possibility of new employment opportunities. New, communications-related jobs are being outsourced to third-world countries where salaries are low. For example, Bangalore and Hyderabad, cities in India, have become miniature “Silicon Valleys” through the investments of multinational companies such as IBM, Texas Instruments, and Microsoft, and the entrepreneurship of local information technology experts who have started their own firms, such as Infosys, Wipro, and Tata Consultancy. Here, skilled personnel earn salaries far higher than most local jobs provide, although still substantially below those of the U.S., the EU, and Japan. These salary differentials produce a flow of investment capital, goods, and labor outsourcing around the globe, from wealthier countries to poorer ones.

As a result of the search for cheaper locations for production, inequalities among nations are actually decreasing, and the proportion of people living in absolute poverty is declining. Average living standards around the world have been improving. The proportion of people suffering from extreme poverty, living on less than the equivalent of $1 per day, fell from about 40 percent in 1981 to about 30 percent in 1990 and to 18 percent in 2004, in large part thanks to the improvements in employment and economic growth. In China alone, 400 million people emerged from such absolute poverty. But China was not alone. “Poverty is falling in countries housing 80 percent of the world’s population” (Zakaria, p. 3). In 2006 and 2007, 124 countries grew at a rate of four percent or more, including 30 countries in Africa. (This evaluation was

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Trees destroyed by acid rain, Sebestiana, Czech Republic, 1997.

A major example is the establishment of overseas call centers in countries where labor is cheap to service customers in places where labor is expensive.
Globalization—in the sense of global networks of economic, political, and cultural exchange—is not new. We have seen examples throughout this text going back thousands of years. The increasing sophistication of transportation and communication, especially the computer, the internet, and the World Wide Web, however, have given globalization far greater scope in the last two decades than ever before. As the power of globalization has increased over the past 15 years, its evaluations have become more careful and more nuanced.

Thomas Friedman, foreign policy correspondent for the New York Times, introduced his highly influential The Lexus and the Olive Tree with a sense of the inevitability of globalization:

I feel about globalization a lot like I feel about the dawn. Generally speaking, I think the sun is going to come up every morning. It does more good than harm. But even if I didn’t much care for the dawn there isn’t much I could do about it. I didn’t start globalization. I can’t stop it—except at a huge cost to human development—and I’m not going to waste time trying. All I want to think about is how I can get the best out of this new system, and cushion the worst, for the most people. (p. xiii)

Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel Prize winner in Economics, served for a number of years as vice president and chief economist of the World Bank. Stiglitz came away from the experience appalled by the failures of globalized trade and its often selected, especially on the poor. His powerful critique, Globalization and its Discontents, differs sharply from Friedman’s general acceptance of the system.

I have written this book because while I was at the World Bank, I saw firsthand the devastating effect that globalization can have on developing countries, and especially the poor within those countries. I believe that globalization—the removal of the barriers to free trade and the closer integration of national economies—can be a force for good and that it has the potential to enrich everyone in the world, particularly the poor. I also believe that if this is to be the case, the way globalization has been managed, included the international trade agreements that have played such a large role in removing those barriers and the policies that have been imposed on developing countries in the process of globalization, need to be radically rethought. (pp. ix-x)

Today, fear—fear from those with vested interests who benefit from keeping out the goods produced by the poor countries—defend the hypocrisy of pretending to help developing countries by forcing them to open up their markets to the goods of the advanced industrial countries while keeping their own markets protected, policies that make the rich richer and the poor more impoverished—and increasingly angry. (p. xvi)

By the beginning of 2009, a global recession of frightening proportions had reinvigorated criticisms of globalization. The International Labor Organization of the United Nations issued a report on income inequality and inequality. With Stiglitz, it criticized excessive increases in inequality, but with Friedman, it felt that in the long run globalization would prove valuable.

Partly through the lack of proper regulation or an adequate supervisory framework, the frequency of financial crises has increased in both developed and emerging economies as a consequence of financial globalization. Worldwide, systemic banking crises have been 10 times more likely throughout the 1990s than during the late 1970s, which was hardly a period of calm economic activity. Such increased instability has come at a steep cost to inequality, as low-income households have been particularly affected by repeated boom bust cycles. There is also evidence that financial globalization is associated with higher unemployment. From a longer term perspective, however, and at least as regards economic growth, the benefits of financial globalization outweigh the costs of crises. (p. 39)

Enigmatically, the ILO did not explain when or how it expected the long-run benefits to overcome the short-term losses. Much seemed to depend on policymakers around the world acting in the future with far greater wisdom and discretion than they had in the recent past.


What experience has each author had in defining, evaluating, and implementing globalization? To what degree is each author dyadic in his evaluation of globalization? What dogmatic does he seem to accept or to reject? To what extent can you begin, on the bases of these authors’ suggestions, to formulate your own values in evaluating globalization? On the bases of these introductions, which of the three evaluations do you think you would find most interesting? Most useful?

How do the ideas of George Soros, discussed in our test above, compare with those of these authors?

written just as the world economy was plunging into a global recession at the end of 2008. That recession is reversing some of these successes, but it is too early to know the full extent of the losses.)

As global mobility of jobs and capital increases, differences of income have become related to nationality, and much more to occupation and education. A well-educated person with a good job in China will be more similar in economic status to a colleague in Western Europe or the United States than to a fellow citizen of China with a poor education and a poor job. But income disparities among individual countries, as well as countries and worldwide, have been increasing. Income inequality has increased most dramatically in poorer countries: “Over the past two decades [1983–2003] income inequality worsened in 33 of 66 developing countries with data” (Human Development Report, 2003, p. 5). At the turn of the twenty-first century, the richest five percent of the world’s population received about a third of the total global income, about the same as that received by the poorest 80 percent.

Debates over globalization arise also because economists do not always agree on the mechanisms of economic change. While they are agreed on the huge decline in poverty in China, for example, they argue over the causes of that decline. The conventional view is that the increased trade brought by globalization increased the wealth of everyone in China, poor as well as rich. But World Bank data suggest a different interpretation. Not trade, expanding primarily in the 1990s, but earlier agricultural reform in the 1980s—decollectivization, egalitarian land reform, a readjustment of farm procurement prices—made the difference. In this huge agricultural country, the economic empowerment of hundreds of millions of farmers brought their living standards up above the poverty line. Amartya Sen, Nobel laureate in economics, takes this argument further. China’s great economic advances in the 1990s and 2000s may have been achieved through participation in the globalizing, capitalist market, but this participation was possible only because of China’s accomplishments in providing education and health care during the communist regime of Mao Zedong. In addition, Mao’s policies of economic autarky, keeping China out of international markets, may have slowed growth, but they protected fledgling industries. Mao’s protectionism, coupled with his social welfare policies, prepared the Chinese to participate successfully in the global economy once Deng Xiao Ping opened the gates, first by reforming agriculture, then by expanding trade.

China succeeded in becoming the manufacturing base not only for much of the developed world; it has also succeeded in capturing manufacturing jobs once held by countries like Mexico. China had not only cheap labor but also a base in education and infrastructure that enabled it to respond to opportunity. Countries that lacked this base did less well. For example, in 1994, ten years after Mexico entered into the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), liberalizing trade with the United States and Canada, that country’s real wages were lower, and the rate of inequality and poverty were higher, than they had been before. Nations had to be prepared for globalization; with proper institutional structures they could succeed brilliantly; without them they were in danger of moving backward.

Setting Goals for Globalization

By the early 2000s, the attention of the World Bank and many other institutions concerned with global economic development shifted from achieving equality or even equity, to reducing, and ultimately ending, poverty. Following a “Millennium Summit” convened by the UN in September 2000, 189 nations accepted eight “Millennium Development Goals” (MDGs) to be achieved by 2015. These include:

- Reduced poverty
- Primary education
- Health
- Environmental sustainability
- Gender equality and women’s empowerment
- Development partnership
eradicating extreme poverty and hunger;
achieving universal primary education;
combating HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other diseases;
ensuring environmental sustainability; and
developing a global partnership for development.

In 2008, halfway to the target date of 2015, it appeared that the world was on course to achieve the MDG. This accomplishment, however, owed much to the progress in China, and to a lesser extent, in India. These giant countries, each with about a sixth of the world’s population, pulled the data upward. Some other countries, mostly in Asia, also saw marked reductions in poverty. (The global recession, beginning in late 2008, threatened to undermine this progress as well.)

Hence the many smaller, poorer countries, especially in Africa, were not achieving the goals for their populations. A UN report issued in September, 2008, laid much of the blame squarely on the wealthier countries for failing to meet their commitments to provide aid to these poorest countries and to open their own markets more fully to the exports of these countries. In 2006, development assistance fell by 4.7 percent, and then dropped another 8.4 percent in 2007. Though industrialized countries made a commitment to raise their aid contributions to 0.7 percent of national income by 2015, the actual figure in 2007 was only 0.28 percent. Despite its pledges, the United States, one of the least generous of donor nations, contributed just 0.16 percent of its national income.

The issue of market access was equally contentious. Wealthier countries in Europe and the United States had numerous protectionist policies, restricting access to their markets for the raw materials and finished manufactures of impoverished third world countries. By imposing tariffs on imports and providing subsidies to their own producers, against the spirit and sometimes the letter of the WTO, wealthier nations captured business worth about $100 billion per year from their trade with the poorer nations of the world. Western political leaders often attended more to the protectionist voices of their internal lobbyists and producers than to the needs of the people of impoverished nations overseas.

Hazards in the Trade System

Since the late 1990s, the world trade system has faced two serious malfunctions that threatened the entire system. One involved East and Southeast Asia and then spread to much of the rest of the world before it was contained by combined action on the part of several nations. A second began in 2007 in the United States through malfunctions in the American system of issuing and insuring mortgages and then spread internationally to the multitude of institutional investors who held American, malfunctions in the Trade System

The IMF came to the rescue in some of these countries with massive loans, but its very arrival frightened off private investors, who saw this as a sign of economic insolvency. In addition, the IMF was more concerned with recovering its loans and investments than with the economic health of the defaulting countries. It stipulated adherence to a collection of measures known as the “Washington consensus”: opening the borders to international investment (although this was in place and had caused some $100 billion in placements of some of the problems); lowering or removing tariffs against imports; privatizing government businesses; reducing government welfare programs; laying off government employees; and devaluing local currency. All these measures are the instruments of classical, conservative economic theory, although many economists argued that these measures had never been rigidly implemented in the economies of wealthy countries. The IMF virtually took over control of the economies of the defaulting countries. It demanded a regimen of economic austerity so severe that it jeopardized the health and welfare of the citizens of the country. This was the experience, for example, in South Korea in 1997, which accepted a bail-out loan of $58 billion, the largest ever in the history of the IMF. Trillions of dollars in investment funds were swirling around the globe without guidance or tracking or common purpose. Capital had collapsed into global, but the national and international institutions for keeping them honest and transparent had not. Some regulation was needed at the international level. This was the great institutional deficiency now exposed by the experience of East and Southeast Asia.

After several years of suffering and of economic restructuring, these countries mostly recovered their former economic health, and some, like Korea and Singapore, have far surpassed the values they had invested in the least prudent—like South Korea, Indonesia, and Thailand—were most affected.

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international bankers were willing to help stabilize it, lest failure in America pull down the entire international system.

In the 1990s, the United States had profited from globalization. Its domestic economy grew as computerization introduced new economies in both production and distribution. New markets opened with China and the former Soviet Union and its allies. With cheap labor available overseas, American businesses sent many enterprises offshore. Although American workers felt the loss of manufacturing jobs, the prices of imports were lower than domestic production had been, so inflation was under control and the dollar went up. At home, even the unions that were being lost, most Americans regarded globalization very favorably.

A very few years later, they were much more sure. In the spring of 2008, a Los Angeles Times/Bloomberg poll reported “that 50 percent of respondents said free trade hurt the economy, while only 26 percent said it helped” (Newseum, Sept. 8, 2008, p. 66). The years since 2000 had been difficult. Real wages had gone down, and jobs were less secure, in large part because of overseas competition and the off-shoring of America’s businesses. After 11 September 2001, America continued to be secure, or, even worse, began to worry about terrorism. Even the trillions of dollars they had already invested, the American economy would collapse. The size of America’s financial problems was unprecedented in the history of the nation’s economy, and sobering. It was not sure what would come next. It was no surprise, then, that with many countries improving their economies through globalization, while America fell into increasing difficulties with its trade imbalances and endangered domestic economy, other countries were offering globalization while the Americans were beginning to have second thoughts. In 2008, at 24 countries included in the annual Pew Global Attitudes survey showed a majority agreeing that “increasing trade and interaction is a good thing for their countries.” At the highest end were Nigeria, with 91 percent replying “good” or “very good”; India with 90 percent; Spain, 89; South Korea, 88; and China, 87. Registering last was the United States at 53 percent, still a majority, but down sharply from 78 percent in 2002. (http://pewglobal.org/reports/pdf/260.pdf) A student of history might begin to think back to the seventeenth century when Spain and Portugal, which had made fortunes from their colonies, especially in the New World, lost ground to the rising, more astute, more prudent northern European nations of the Netherlands, England, and France. Economic supremacy in one era did not necessarily carry over into supremacy in the next.

On Social Revolution

Revolutions in trade, politics, and industry in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries laid the foundations for the social revolutions in nationalism, anti-imperialism, and gender relations. The losses were spread widely because financial institutions at home and abroad had bought up hundreds of billions of dollars worth of mortgages as securities, not realizing that the properties were worth less than what they had paid. Some weaker banks and financial companies also failed. At home, even the largest mortgage security companies of all, “Fannie Mae” (Federal National Mortgage Association) and “Freddy Mac” (Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation), which between them held $5.5 trillion dollars worth of mortgages, were in danger of collapse. The losses were spread wide, and the American economy ‘too big to be allowed to fail,” and the United States government backed them up, first with loan guarantees, later with billions of dollars worth of actual loans, and finally by directly taking over the management of the failing companies. A few weeks later, AIG, the American International Group, an enormous insurance company, suddenly appeared to be on the verge of bankruptcy, which would affect not only policy holders in the United States, but also vast numbers of investors overseas. Again, the United States government rode to the rescue with a loan of $85 billion, in exchange for which it received 80 percent of the company’s stock.

A few days later the government agreed to allocate up to $700 billion to buy up bad debts that were crippling major financial companies. Otherwise, it appeared that lending for commercial and private purposes was drying up. If that happened, the economy of the United States, and of the world, would come to a halt. In essence, the government of the country that had been the world’s leading apostle of capitalism was bailing out some immense corporations, and picking up the debts of others, to save them from failure. In the globalized financial world of 2008, these government interventions were necessary not only to protect and reassure American homeowners and investors, but, perhaps more importantly, to insure that investors overseas did not stop investing in America. For if the Chinese, and the oil-rich states of the Middle East, especially with China. In the year 2006, the United States ran a trade deficit of $817 billion with the rest of the world. Of that deficit, $233 billion was with China, and 886 billion with Japan. America could afford this only because China and Japan took their savings rates in the world, and American businesses became increasingly reliant on foreigners for investment. Other nations, especially China and Japan, had the money to make these investments because they sold to America far more than they bought. In 2008, failures in the United States’ banking and mortgage systems caused massive losses to banks and institutions in smaller financial institutions in the New World, lost ground to the rising, more astute, more prudent northern European nations of the Netherlands, England, and France. Economic supremacy in one era did not necessarily carry over into supremacy in the next.

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The feminist movement has increasingly diversified as it has reached around the world. Homosexuality has won increasing public acceptability. National struggles against racism have advanced, in South Africa, for instance, aided by pressure from the international community. In a more conservative vein, widespread concern has arisen that local cultures might lose their integrity, overwhelmed by larger, more powerful waves of global culture. This fear has frequently inspired cultural backlash.

**Nationalism**

The buzz around 1990 was that nationalism was on its way out. Communication, transportation, business corporations, and NGOs all functioned transnationally. For more and more people and institutions, the nation seemed less and less relevant with each passing year. As the future unfolded, however, it appeared that the rumors of nationalism were grossly exaggerated. Already in 1990 Estonia and Lithuania declared their national independence, helping to precipitate the dissolution of the USSR. Latvia, Russia, Ukraine, and Belarus also soon declared their independence. The remaining 15 Soviet republics became independent states at the end of 1991 when the Soviet Union dissolved. Within Russia itself, the predominantly Muslim state of Chechnya began guerrilla warfare in hopes of becoming an independent republic. Eastern European nations, including Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, and Romania, were equally jealous of their independence. Czechoslovakia divided into two in 1993, as political leaders of the Czech Republic and those of Slovakia thought that separation would produce two separate, more cohesive states rather than a single ethnically-mixed one. As East Germany became independent, East and West reunited in 1990 after 45 years of Cold War division. As these newly independent states took their places in the UN and other international bodies, UN membership jumped from 166 in 1991 to 184 in 1993. The new states built new museums, including the Terror House in Budapest, Hungary, and the memorial at Checkpoint Charlie in Berlin, to commemorate foreign occupation, and to put it behind them. Nationalists continued to wage war in the name of the state. When Yugoslavia broke apart into separate independent states in 1991, war broke out among some of the new states. At least 100,000 people were killed. Three states asserted their national prestige by testing nuclear weapons—India and Pakistan in 1998 and North Korea, on a more rudimentary level, in 2006. The willingness of the United States to go it almost alone in its war against Iraq in 2003, despite massive protests around the world, and without allowing time for UN inspectors to complete their investigations, and its unwillingness to sign up to various widely agreed-upon international accords, including the Kyoto Accords against global warming, and the establishment of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, demonstrated that unilateralist nationalism was alive and well in the U.S.

Nations protested and reinforced their borders against foreign commercial competition and against new waves of undocumented immigrants. The WTO was called on repeatedly to adjudicate disputes over trade tariffs as various countries, and its unwillingness to sign up to various widely agreed-upon international accords, including the Kyoto Accords against global warming, and the establishment of the International Criminal Court in The Hague, demonstrated that unilateralist nationalism was alive and well in the U.S.

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As some nations reveled in the sovereignty of their already independent existence, other groups asserted their right to revolt, to free themselves from their current “rulers,” and to establish new independent states of their own. Chechens, we have already mentioned. Other independence movements included Basques in the north of Spain; Kurds in the north of Iraq, sometimes joined by other Kurds just across the borders in neighboring Turkey, Iran, and Syria; Tamils in Sri Lanka; Tibetans and Uighurs on the southern and western extremes of China. All of these groups, and many others, around the globe felt that their own nationalism was being suppressed by the nationalism of much larger states in which they were embedded, and from which they wished to escape.

Sometimes the desire for nationhood could lead to successful compromise. Northern Ireland provided an excellent example. Forty-five percent of its population chose to identify themselves as Protestant, most of them in favor of union with Great Britain; 40 percent identified as Roman Catholic, most of them favoring union with the Irish Free State. For decades Northern Ireland was torn by violence between...
Despite continued attempts to resolve the conflict over land and sovereignty, often brokered by outside political groups, extremists on both sides, though a minority on each side, have so far won the day. On the Israeli side, “settlers” from Israel moved onto the lands of the West Bank and Gaza, with the support of the Israeli government, despite the rulings of the UN that occupation of conquered lands is illegal. By 2008, about 200,000 settlers had staked out homes in parts of Jerusalem that had been Arab, and another 200,000 in the Gaza Strip.}

The Palestinian–Israeli Conflict. The unsatisfied national claim that most disturbed the peace of the world at the turn of the twenty-first century was that of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation in the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip. Their grievances went back to 1948, when the UN partitioned Palestine into two areas, one for a Jewish state and one for Arab Palestinians. After the Holocaust, much of world opinion revisited the promise of Britain’s Balfour declaration of 1917 (see Chapter Nineteen) and favored creating a Jewish homeland refuge. Angered by the proposal for a Jewish state in the very heart of the Arab world, Palestinian Arabs argued that they had not been responsible for the Holocaust, and they rejected the partition plan. Palestinian Arabs favored the armies of the surrounding Arab states when they attacked Israel at the time of its birth, attempting to obliterate the state before it took root. But Israel survived the war as a new state. Palestinian Arabs had made no plans for establishing a state on the territories apportioned to them, so the West Bank came under the administration of the government of neighboring Jordan. The Gaza Strip was administered by Egypt.

Defeated in warfare, the neighboring Arab states nursed their grievances. In a second war, in 1967, they were defeated yet again, and this time Israel captured the West Bank and Gaza. Some Israelis wished to turn over these lands to the rule of the Palestinians themselves in exchange for a peace agreement. The majority of Israelis, however, wished to keep them, and did. On the Arab side, also, some wished to reach an accord with the Israelis, offering a peace treaty in exchange for the land. Others would be satisfied with nothing less than destroying the Israeli state.
The Palestinians then held elections, which were won by the extremist faction, Hamas. Ariel Sharon unilaterally removed Israeli settlers and troops from Gaza in 2005. The decision to complete and later present this model draft agreement was not easy for any of us, however, we have decided to pursue this path since we believe that action of this type can serve as a means of reducing the suffering, killing, and mutual accusations, that it can help build trust and facilitate the removal of the walls between our nations. In the context of the Road Map process, this draft agreement signifies a mutually acceptable and realizable endgame—be it reached by 2005, and as an answer to the skeptics and supporters of endless interim agreements. This agreement will bring about the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State alongside Israel, and an end to the occupation, terminate conflict and bloodshed, and end all mutual claims.

The Geneva Accords: A Nongovernmental Plan for Peace

Peace treaties exist only with Egypt, which regained the Sinai peninsula, in 1956, 1967, 1973, and 1982. Peace treaties exist only with Egypt, which regained the Sinai peninsula, and Jordan (1994). Beginning in 1987, an intifada (uprising) by Palestinians forced more attention on Israeli-Palestinian resistance—an extremely vexed issue. In 1993, the Palestinian Liberation Organization and Israel began negotiations that would return land to Palestinian control and perhaps lead to a Palestinian state, while recognizing Israel’s right to exist. So far these negotiations have proved fruitless and a second intifada began in 2000. Meanwhile some 400,000 Jewish settlers have established homes in East Jerusalem and other sectors of the occupied West Bank, complicating any efforts to trade land for peace. Intense peace negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians at Camp David in the United States in 2000 and in Tabat, Egypt, in 2001 failed to produce peace agreements. Nevertheless, some of the representatives decided to continue to pursue a detailed framework for a peace agreement as a model of what might be achieved and to prove that responsible leaders on both sides could be partners in the search for peace. The first round of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks ended in 1998 without agreement, and the second round of negotiations, in 2000, ended without agreement. In April 2001, Israel’s Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank settlement of Wadi Gaza. The Palestinian Authority, led by President Yasir Arafat, refused to accept this unilateral withdrawal and called for armed resistance against Israeli occupation. This second intifada led to a tremendous increase in Palestinian violence, including suicide bombings, against Israeli civilians. The violence was met with Israeli military operations and a tightening of occupation policies. The result was a deterioration of the peace process and a deepening of the conflict. In 2002, the Israeli government announced a unilateral disengagement plan from Gaza and the West Bank settlement of Gush Katif. This plan was met with opposition from the Palestinian Authority and the international community. The decision to complete and later present this model draft agreement was not easy for any of us, however, we have decided to pursue this path since we believe that action of this type can serve as a means of reducing the suffering, killing, and mutual accusations, that it can help build trust and facilitate the removal of the walls between our nations. In the context of the Road Map process, this draft agreement signifies a mutually acceptable and realizable endgame—be it reached by 2005, and as an answer to the skeptics and supporters of endless interim agreements. This agreement will bring about the creation of a sovereign Palestinian State alongside Israel, and an end to the occupation, terminate conflict and bloodshed, and end all mutual claims.

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The Israeli–Palestinian separation wall. Construction of this wall began in 2002. Israelis claim they built it to stop terrorists from entering Israel, and call it a security fence. Palestinians say that Israelis built it as a land-grab and an effort to separate Palestinians from their own lands, and call it an apartheid wall. The approximately 20 feet high concrete barrier makes clear the line of separation between Israel and the Palestinian territories, but it often runs on the Palestinian side of the 1967 prewar border. Debates over the appropriateness of the wall therefore concern not only the reasons for its existence, but also its geographical placement.

The struggle between Israelis and Palestinians attracted intense international interest because of the massive external forces arrayed on each side. The Palestinians drew the support of much of the Arab world, and even of the broader Islamic world, while Israel drew the backing of the United States and, to a lesser extent, allies in Europe. Israel’s allies feared that pro-Palestinian terrorists would continue to attack targets around the globe. When Osama bin Laden struck the World Trade Center and other targets in the United States, for example, one of his stated objectives was to avenge the occupation of Palestine by Israelis. The persistent dangers of international terrorism led many nations to consider the Israeli–Palestinian conflict the most explosive of all the world’s trouble spots.

The EU, especially, urged diplomacy in this conflict and European diplomats became increasingly involved in Middle East peace negotiations. In late twentieth-century Europe, nations that had fought bitter wars against each other throughout the first half of the twentieth century had entered diplomatically into agreement after agreement to create and extend the EU, to replace their former enmity with productive cooperation (see Chapters Twenty-one and Twenty-three). The EU, after agreement to create and extend the EU, to replace their former enmity with productive cooperation (see Chapters Twenty-one and Twenty-three). The EU, especially, urged diplomacy in this conflict and European diplomats became increasingly involved in Middle East peace negotiations. In late twentieth-century Europe, nations that had fought bitter wars against each other throughout the first half of the twentieth century had entered diplomatically into agreement after agreement to create and extend the EU, to replace their former enmity with productive cooperation (see Chapters Twenty-one and Twenty-three). The EU, after agreement to create and extend the EU, to replace their former enmity with productive cooperation (see Chapters Twenty-one and Twenty-three).

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that had begun to extend micro-finance to women, providing them with small loans to start their own small businesses, began to share ideas for cooperation. The micro-credit movement, now worldwide, has usually been most attractive to and widespread among women, perhaps because they have had the most difficulty in accessing loans through normal commercial banks, and because they have proved especially creative and responsible in joining together to insure one another’s loans, and thus to secure lower interest rates. Muhammad Yunus, of Bangladesh, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his establishment in 1976 of the Grameen Bank, the world’s leading micro-lender; about 95 percent of the bank’s loans have been to women.

Reproductive rights for women, and health standards for women and children, became another focus. India and China mounted campaigns against the abortion or infanticide of unwanted females, a difficult struggle against the deeply rooted preference for boy children. In the Islamic world, interpretation of religious traditions took on central importance. Many feminist groups urged reinterpreting the Quran to discover and proclaim the pro-feminist viewpoints that can be found within the sacred scripture. Other Muslim women, however, proclaimed bluntly that in their view the classic Islamic texts were irreconcilably antifeminist and antidemocratic. For them, feminists would have to proceed in opposition to, rather than with the support of, the teachings of the Quran.

Sharp differences also emerged as to what were the most important goals for women. Often women in developed, richer countries stressed the need for opening new categories of jobs to women, equal pay for equal work, child care, and reproductive freedom of choice. In less wealthy nations the issues might be the right to own property, to be free from the control of male relatives, to have equal access to food, schooling, and medical care. Many third world women felt that first-world women chose to concentrate on the wrong issues. Too often first-world feminists had begun to extend micro-finance to women, providing them with small loans to start their own small businesses, began to share ideas for cooperation. The micro-credit movement, now worldwide, has usually been most attractive to and widespread among women, perhaps because they have had the most difficulty in accessing loans through normal commercial banks, and because they have proved especially creative and responsible in joining together to insure one another’s loans, and thus to secure lower interest rates. Muhammad Yunus, of Bangladesh, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2006 for his establishment in 1976 of the Grameen Bank, the world’s leading micro-lender; about 95 percent of the bank’s loans have been to women.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR: CONTEMPORARY HISTORY: TRADE, SOCIAL REVOLUTION, TECHNOLOGY, IDENTITY

KEY TERM
micro-finance or micro-credit The provision of very small loans, often equivalent to $100 or even less, to very small-scale businessmen and women, people who would not usually have access to conventional commercial bank loans, because the banks do not deal in such small amounts, and because they would not usually recognize the relatively poor borrowers as “bankable.” The loans are usually at below market rates, and are usually secured by the common bond among groups of borrowers that they will stand guaranty for one another.

Racial Equality
Racism, like gender discrimination, was generally in retreat. The achievement of South Africa in ridding itself of apartheid policies, through peaceful means, was an astonishing victory. The quiet revolution of low castes and ex-untouchables in India drew less attention, but affected far more people. And in the United States in 2008, Barack Obama’s election as the first African-American president appeared as a triumph of progress in American race relations.

Apartheid in South Africa. Apartheid (segregation of the races) had been established by law in South Africa in 1948. About 20 percent of the population was white, descended from Dutch and British settlers, and this minority controlled the government, most productive farmland, all industry, and the upper reaches of the economy. Black Africans had no political freedoms and were subject to severe restrictions on where they could live, work, and study. Most Indians and Africans were effectively forced into service as landless laborers in white-controlled farming and industry. Blacks working in the cities could not legally establish residence there but had to commute long distances each day from government-designated black residential areas or else stay in dormitory settings, leaving their families behind in the villages.

Black African frustration, resentment, and anger at first expressed itself principally through independent Ethiopian churches as early as the 1870s and 1880s. The African National Congress (ANC) formed in 1912 as a constitutional party of protest orientation, some nations deemed it shameful, if not sinful. In 2008, the president of Iran boasted that in his country there were no movements to protect the rights of homosexuals, primarily because Iranian society would not tolerate them.

A new and democratic dawn for South Africa. South African president Nelson Mandela and second deputy president F.W. de Klerk address a huge crowd in front of the Union Building in Pretoria, after the inauguration ceremony on May 10, 1994. Only a few years earlier it would have been inconceivable that the imprisoned Nelson Mandela could ever attain high office in a country so firmly wedded to the policies of apartheid.
First-time voters, South Africa, 1994. Residents of the Western Transvaal queue to vote for the first time in South Africa’s multiracial elections in 1994. After years of apartheid and oppression, black South Africans showed a respect and devotion to their new democracy that inspired citizens of democracies around the world who often took for granted their own right to vote and to participate in governance.

and grew steadily over several decades. In the 1950s, as other African nations began to win independence, European observers urged South Africa to liberalize its racial policies, but the government of South Africa stubbornly resisted. In 1960, in the town of Sharpeville, the government confronted unarmed political protesters, massacring 69 black Africans and wounding many others. The ANC shifted to strikes and armed protests, renouncing attacks on people and limiting itself to sabotage of property. The South African government continued to crack down. ANC leader Nelson Mandela (b. 1918), a brilliant and charismatic lawyer, was arrested, charged with plotting to overthrow the government, and eventually sentenced to life in prison. At his trial in 1964, Mandela declared his commitment to his country and his vision for its future:

I have fought against white domination. I have cherished the ideal of a democratic and free society in which all persons live together in harmony and with equal opportunity. It is an ideal which I hope to live for and to achieve. But if needs be, it is an ideal which I am prepared to die. (Edelstein, p. 73)

The ANC and the general movement for racial justice were crippled but not killed off by the government’s repression. As Zambia and Zimbabwe, Angola and Mozambique won independence and majority rule in the 1960s and 1970s, world attention focused on South Africa as the last remaining bastion of white, minority rule. In addition, the newly independent nations bordering South Africa sheltered members of the ANC and other movements for majority rule, including some dedicated to guerrilla warfare. Following the massacre at Sharpeville, many nations gradually adopted sanctions against South Africa, restricting or stopping trade; “disinvesting” or withdrawing economic investments; and ending diplomatic, cultural, and sports exchanges. South Africa became a pariah nation, cut off from intercourse with the rest of the world until it moved toward racial equality.

Enforcing the sanctions proved difficult. South Africa was a regional economic powerhouse, with rich resources: 85 percent of the world’s platinum; two-thirds of its chromium; half its gold; half its manganese; and substantial proportions of its gem-quality diamonds. Geopolitically, 90 percent of Europe’s oil passed by its waters. Many large and powerful nations, including the United States and Great Britain, did not want to abandon their own economic interests in South Africa, and did not fully comply. They argued that “constructive engagement” through trade would be more effective in ending apartheid. Neighboring states also ignored the sanctions. They had tens of thousands of workers who subsisted only through jobs in the South African mines and industries; they continued surreptitious trade and diplomatic relationships.

Nevertheless, the sanctions did gradually exact their toll; isolation was painful, culturally and diplomatically as well as economically. The continuing expansion of independence among the African states brought black rule ever closer to South Africa’s borders, and unrest within the country continued. In 1976 protests against government educational policies began in Soweto, a black township outside Pretoria, and led to nationwide riots in which 600 people were killed. Some liberalization was granted: black labor unions were legalized, the prohibition on interracial sex was abolished, segregation in public transportation ended. Finally, in 1990, the new government of President F.W. de Klerk (b. 1936) lifted its ban against the ANC and freed Nelson Mandela. He had spent 27 years in prison. De Klerk’s National Party repealed apartheid laws and began wary and difficult negotiations with the ANC for transition to majority rule. In 1993, Mandela was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, and in the 1994 South African elections, open equally to all races on the principle of one person-one vote, the ANC won 62 percent of the vote. Mandela was elected president.

The Truth and Reconciliation Commission. South Africans confronted the problem of establishing a new political and cultural identity for themselves after the collapse of apartheid government. For the first time in their history, the blacks of South Africa counted as political equals to the whites. But unlike many other colonial situations in which most white colonizers left the newly independent colony, in South Africa, the whites had been residents of the country for centuries. This was their home. They viewed themselves as Africans, and most of them had no intention of leaving. Even if they did leave, they had no other home to which to go. Thus 32 million people—80 percent impoverished and until recently suppressed and persecuted blacks and eight million mostly wealthy and highly privileged whites had to find new ways of getting along together. One of their highly imaginative solutions was the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which functioned from 1996 to 1998 in an effort to clear the air for further interracial cooperation in the future.

The commission was initiated by President Mandela and headed by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (b. 1931), the head of the Anglican Church in South Africa. Its goal was to bring the peoples of South Africa together by exposing the bitter and violent realities of the past and, through that exposure, enabling all of its peoples to see themselves as part of a single nation. The commission heard cases of some 20,000 people who had suffered gross human rights violations since the Sharpeville massacre in 1960 until the first democratic election in 1994.

Thousands of people from all corners of the country stepped forward to testify. Thousands were granted some measure of reparations from the state treasury. Most whites, unable to state publicly that they had benefited from apartheid, did not initiate the act of admitting their crimes. Some, however, did step forward, helping in the process of reconciliation. Many others came because of accusations of criminal activity brought against them. The proceedings of the commission were not equivalent to criminal trials, and amnesty could be granted to those who could demonstrate that they were carrying out the political policies of the state, rather than their own agendas, and were acting without sadness. In his concluding remarks,
South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Many observers of the commission’s proceedings raised serious criticisms. Some felt that the granting of amnesty came too easily to defendants in these noncriminal proceedings. Defendants could plead that they were simply carrying out orders of the government and that they had not acted sadistically, and receive amnesty. Dirk Coetzee, first commander of a counterinsurgency unit, and his team were convicted in criminal court for the murder of Griffiths Mxenge, a civil rights lawyer, but subsequently the commission granted them amnesty because they were simply carrying out their duties as policemen engaged in the government’s struggle against the liberation movement. Griffiths’ brother was disgusted with this decision for amnesty.

My main objection is that amnesty promotes the interests of the perpetrators, as once they are granted amnesty they are not criminally liable and no civil action can be instituted against them, and that is totally against the interests of the victims. It is totally unjust. (Edelstein, p. 113)

On the other hand, Josephine Musiel was more forgiving of the men who killed her sons.

I want the people who killed my sons to come forward because this is a time for reconciliation. I want to forgive them and I also have a bit of my mind to tell them. I would be happy if they could come before me because I don’t have [my] sons today. I want to speak to them before I forgive them. I want them to tell me who sent them to come and kill my sons. Maybe they are my enemies, maybe they are not. So I want to establish whether they are and why they did what they did. (Edelstein, p. 154)

One member of the commission, Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, a clinical psychologist, reaffirmed the healing power of public disclosure by implementing the Mandal Commission’s recommendations. This and other of his recommendations certainly happen anywhere else. Such is the exquisite divine sense of humor. (http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2003/trc/foreword.pdf).

India’s Social Revolution: The Mandal Commission. A similar movement against caste discrimination created a social revolution in India that transformed the status of tens of millions of people of the lowest rank, and of many more just somewhat above them.

The Mandal Commission, named for its chairman, B.P. Mandal, was established in 1979 to deal with an economic and social problem that had bedeviled Indian politics for a long time. There were many disadvantages of this system. There were no protections against caste discrimination, and those protections were never made public. Many observers have criticized the TRC’s decision to race discrimination, noting that a person’s caste is an identity that comes by birth and situates him or her in hierarchical relation to members of other castes. Caste is not racial as it is usually seen in the United States and many other countries. There are hundreds, even thousands of castes throughout India, so caste identification is less clear-cut than racial identity has been in the United States.

Those at the very bottom of the caste hierarchy, formerly called “untouchables” because they were forbidden to come into physical contact with upper caste people, are today universally recognized as disadvantaged. These former untouchables were given special “reservations” or minimum quotas in public positions. This affirmative action program affected the fields of government jobs, elected offices, and education, and covered 15 percent of the population.

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The road to implementation was rocky and often blocked by mass protests and political obstruction. Certain happen anywhere else. Such is the exquisite divine sense of humor. (http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2003/trc/foreword.pdf).

Archbishop Tutu proclaimed the exemplary success of the commission in healing South Africa’s racial wounds and facilitating the emotional unification of the country and a new national identity:

We have been privileged to help to heal a wounded people. . . . When we look around us at some of the conflict areas of the world, it becomes increasingly clear that there is no future for a future for them without forgiveness, without reconciliation, and that blessed us richly so that we might be a blessing to others. Quite imprudently, we as South Africans have become a beacon of hope to others locked in deadly conflict that peace, that a just resolution, is possible. If it could happen in South Africa, then it can certainly happen anywhere else. Such is the exquisite divine sense of humor. (http://www.info.gov.za/otherdocs/2003/trc/foreword.pdf).

Michael Ignatieff, director of the Cart Center for Human Rights Policy at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, wrote:

Any society that allows its torturers to retire with medals and pensions inevitably pays the price. The price of lies is immobilized nostalgia for tyranny .. . you cannot create a culture of freedom unless you eliminate a specific range of permissible lies . . . The Truth Commission had rendered some lies about the past simply impossible to repeat. (Edelstein, pp. 20–21)

Ignatieff concluded that the Truth and Reconciliation Commission made it impossible for white South Africans to deny the violence of their society. They could no longer deflect blame by saying that the problems were not caused by only a few rotten apples, but those were the exceptions rather than the rule. What the TRC uncovered was something very different indeed:

not a few bad apples, not a few bad cops . . . but a system, a culture, a way of life that was organized around contempt and violence for other human beings. The truth, the cold core, of apartheid was the Sanlam building in Port Elizabeth where they threw you against radiators and beat you with wet towels. Every South African citizen was contaminated by the degradation, that deadness, that offense against the spirit. (Edelstein, p. 21)

Knowing the painful truth, however, would ultimately set the society free.

President Nelson Mandela inspired the creation of the commission and Archbishop Desmond Tutu was its chairman. Based on the concept and workings of the commission, how would you characterize the politics and ethics of these two men? How would you interpret the key goals of the commission? Were they realistic? Do you think they correspond to human nature as you understand it?

Ignatieff argued that violence and against citizens were not an aberration caused by “a few rotten apples,” but by “a system, a culture, a way of life that was organized around contempt and violence for other human beings.” To what extent do you think his rhetoric and his description of consequences mirror the debate about torture carried out by Americans in the Abu Ghraib prison, and at the Guantanamo Bay detention camp, during the Iraq war?
reformist programs alienated many upper-class and upper-caste people, and Singh was forced from office in 1991 when new elections brought the Congress Party back to power. Nevertheless, a transformation was taking place. In the major north Indian states, from 1984 to 1999 the percentage of upper castes elected to the national parliament dropped by a third, from 47 percent to 31 percent, while the percentage of OBCs doubled, from 11 percent to 22 percent. India’s two largest states, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, were ruled by OBC parties headed by OBC leaders. Singh explained the significance of the shift that was taking place:

Now that every party is wooing the deprived classes, with every round of elections more and more representatives of the deprived sections will be elected. This will ultimately be reflected in the social composition of the local bodies, state governments, and the central government. A silent transfer of power is taking place in social terms. (Jaffrelot, p. 139)

America Elects an African-American President. In 2008, the election of Barack Obama as the first African-American president of the United States was hailed in America and around the world as a triumph of American democracy. The son of a Kenyan father, who left the boy’s life when he was very young, and a white woman from Kansas, Obama spent his early years in Indonesia, after his mother remarried to an Indonesian, and then was raised in his teenage years largely by his maternal grandparents in Hawaii. His biography was international and transracial, and Obama introduced himself to the American electorate as a man whose “story” was quintessentially American, and impossible in any other country of the world. He was running not as a candidate primarily of black voters, as some previous African-American candidates, like Jesse Jackson, had done, but as a representative of the entire population of America. Democratic Party voters, the first to weigh the man and his credentials, did not as a candidate primarily of black voters, as some previous African-American candidates, like Jesse Jackson, had done, but as a representative of the entire population of America. Democratic Party voters, the first to weigh the man and his credentials, did not choose him in the primary elections over his rival, Hillary Clinton. The primary election itself was watched with intense interest throughout the world for its historic significance as well as in its attitudes.

Migration

Migration

From the time Homo sapiens emigrated out of Africa, migration has been a staple of human life. The establishment of sea routes between the Old World and the New, and between Southeast Asia and Australia reinvigorated that movement, but also triggered a fatal conflict between immigrants and indigenous peoples, not unusual in the history of migration, although extraordinary in the number of indigenous people killed. In addition to long-distance travel, migration from rural farms to the urban factories of the Industrial Revolution, beginning in the nineteenth century, became a hallmark of the modern age.

United States. In the most recent decades, migration continues to affect every region of the earth. The streams of migration bring confrontations between those who are already in place and recent arrivals. The relationships are complicated because both groups need each other, yet they are wary. The most common form of migration is of poorer people in search of work in richer lands. The richer need the poorer for their cheap labor, but they are often put off by the culture of the newcomers, and by their poverty. Americans in the United States, for example, need immigrants from Mexico and other parts of Latin America for their farm and domestic labor at pay scales so low that already settled Americans would not accept them. Nevertheless, they do not want the new migrants to stay after the work is over. They do not want them availing themselves of the benefits of American workers, costly medical care and schooling for their children. So they write laws that make it difficult for foreigners to gain access to the United States and almost impossible to stay. The migrants, desperate for better living conditions, sneak into the country by the millions and find jobs, but they live in fear of being caught and sent back to their home countries. In 2006, the United States government estimated 35 million foreign-born people legally resident in the United States,
12 percent of the total population, and 11.6 million illegally resident. Mexicans comprised slightly more than half of the ilegals. America permitted more legal immigrants to enter each year than any other country in the world. Government proposals for illegal immigrants included solutions ranging from according them citizenship to deporting them. In between were proposals to provide some intermediate route to citizenship.

**Europe.** Europe’s dilemmas over migration were newer and more challenging. European countries were not accustomed to large-scale immigration until the economic boom after World War II. Then the combination of war losses, low birth rates, and an expanding economy led them to welcome foreigners for their industrious hands, but not for their culture. European governments did not want to grant them citizenship. In large measure, the new immigrants came from the old colonies.

In the decade 1953–62, Great Britain received 136,000 immigrants from the Commonwealth, made up mostly of former colonies. Of these 66,000 came from the West Indies, 49,000 from India. Britain attacked its old colonies, and it had the greatest need for workers. The government therefore agreed to accept immigrants from a wide variety of countries, but only for a set period. Access to citizenship was impossible. By 1973, Germany had accepted almost four million immigrants, by 1996, 7.3 million. As in the other European countries, the immigrants took the lowest-paying jobs and lived in poor housing, usually clustered together in their own neighborhoods. About a third of the immigrants were from Turkey, and their difficulties were greater than most of the other immigrants since they were Asian, Muslim, and had no historic ties to Germany. The Kreuzberg neighborhood of Berlin became known as “Little Istanbul.” Only after 1999 did it become legal for someone without a German ancestor to stay—even if they came from within the EU. Vigilantes occasionally attacked immigrants and their camps. Meetings between the highest level officials of Italy and Romania helped calm the atmosphere, but migration policy had entered Italian politics. In the national election of 2008 political parties that opposed immigration increased their number of seats in the Parliament.

Immigrants came not only from poor countries to wealthy ones. They also came from extremely poor countries to countries that were somewhat less poor. India, for example, reported tens of millions of illegal immigrants from neighboring Bangladesh and an increasing but smaller number from Africa. The Bangladeshi, ethnically identical to the Bengalis of India, could slip across the border rather easily, without detection. Many in India accepted them willingly, but others wanted them evicted, especially as they were Muslims in a Hindu majority state.

**Refugees.** Refugees, even more than migrants, are a social result of political and economic chaos in their home countries. Refugees are immigrants who are fleeing for their safety, and often for their lives. Worldwide the number of refugees fluctuates between 15 and 20 million annually. The tolerance of the nation was tested in 1991 when so many Albanians (20,000 in ten days) attempted to enter Italy from across the Adriatic Sea that the Italian government blocked the ports and deported them as fast as they arrived.

With the tide of popular opinion now running against the immigrants, in 1990 many European nations implemented the Schengen agreement, named for the town in Luxembourg where it was promulgated. Schengen addressed the problem created by the freedom of movement inside the EU. Anyone who gained entrance to the EU had complete freedom to travel within any of the member nations. Similarly, imports once inside the Union could be bought and sold anywhere within EU borders. Schengen was designed to ensure that the immigration of people and importation of goods. Immigrants who were refused admission because they were not citizens of the countries, the immigrants took the lowest-paying jobs and lived in poor housing, continuing to stream in in ever larger numbers, and by 1990 Great Britain was home to about two million immigrants of color from south Asia and the Caribbean. The 2001 census showed a total of 4.3 million people born overseas, about one million of them from India, Pakistan, and the Caribbean.

France had similar experiences with immigration from its former colonies. At first they were welcome, then restricted. By 1990 there were 615,000 from Algeria, 573,000 from Morocco, 206,000 from Tunisia, and about 100,000 from Senegal and Mali. Most were Muslims. Tensions between the indigenous French and the new immigrants therefore agreed to accept immigrants from a wide variety of countries, but only for a set period. Access to citizenship was impossible. By 1973, Germany had accepted almost four million immigrants, by 1996, 7.3 million. As in the other European countries, the immigrants took the lowest-paying jobs and lived in poor housing, usually clustered together in their own neighborhoods. About a third of the immigrants were from Turkey, and their difficulties were greater than most of the other immigrants since they were Asian, Muslim, and had no historic ties to Germany. The Kreuzberg neighborhood of Berlin became known as “Little Istanbul.” Only after 1999 did it become legal for someone without a German ancestor to stay—even if they came from within the EU. Vigilantes occasionally attacked immigrants and their camps. Meetings between the highest level officials of Italy and Romania helped calm the atmosphere, but migration policy had entered Italian politics. In the national election of 2008 political parties that opposed immigration increased their number of seats in the Parliament.

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secured a job and a residence before moving, tasks that were virtually impossible. When the restrictions were lifted, rural–urban migration shot up. Homeless people seeking employment now became much more numerous and conspicuous in the cities of China, as was true in most third world cities.

Cultural Expression

An important part of the social transformations of globalization, a part that touches billions of people in their daily lives, is the globalization of the arts. Consider singer-songwriter Shakira. She has sold more than 50 million albums worldwide and won two Grammy awards and eight Latin Grammy Awards. She is Colombian. Her mother is of Spanish and Italian ancestry, her father of Lebanese descent. Her fame is global. Consider reggae music, which has come from the Caribbean, with African roots, to win popularity throughout the world, both as music and as protest, especially because of the political songs of the legendary Bob Marley of Jamaica.

PART EIGHT: THE USEFULNESS OF HISTORY

Millions of immigrants poured across borders, partly in search of better economic opportunities, often to escape the threats of oppressive governments. In the 2000s, for example, millions of citizens of Zimbabwe fled the country, seeking refuge from the brutal government of Robert Mugabe. The UN reported, “It is estimated more than two million Zimbabweans are living in South Africa, with another two million in the United Kingdom. As many as 45,000 Zimbabweans live in the United States of America, according to the US-based think-tank, the Association of Zimbabweans Based Abroad” (AZBA). [http://www.irinnews.org/Report.aspx?ReportId=77399]

In 2007 and 2008, so many refugees from Zimbabwe crossed into South Africa that fighting broke out between the immigrants and the local populations, and the government of South Africa blocked new immigration and evicted thousands who had already arrived. In the 1990s, during the wars between Hutus and Tutsis in Rwanda and Congo, two million refugees spilled over the border into Congo. Through the 2000s, millions of refugees from Darfur, in western Sudan, fled to Chad to escape the government-backed militias that attacked them. More than two million refugees fled Iraq during the American-led war beginning in 2003, while another two million were displaced, though they remained within the country. In 1948, some 700,000 refugees fled Palestine. By 2008, their numbers had grown, mostly through natural increase, to three million. In 2004, there were some 17 million refugees worldwide. In 2000 some 550,000 of them were seeking permanent political asylum—in fear for their lives because of political positions they had proclaimed.

Rural–Urban Migration. Vast streams of immigrants relocate from rural to urban areas every year. By 2006 the world had become 50 percent urban (3.3 billion people), up from 13 percent in 1900 (220 million) and 29 percent in 1950 (736 million). China’s urban population alone grew from 72 million (13 percent) in 1950 to 454 million (35 percent) in 2000. According to UN data, these numbers increased further in just five years, to 530 million (40 percent) in 2005. China’s transformation was especially rapid because of a change in government policy. At first, the communist state had forbidden migration from rural to urban areas unless the migrant had already

KEY TERM

political asylum. Asylum is normally applied for and granted, or refused, on the basis of individual cases brought by individuals who fear that if they return to their countries they will be persecuted, even murdered, because of their politics. Refugee status is usually a group-based phenomenon and does not imply any specific cause.
Consider just a few of the artists who have become musical presences around the world: Zakir Hussein of India, playing tabla, for example; or Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan (1948–97) of Pakistan, chanting the qawwali poetry of Sufi mysticism, sometimes fused with western forms, in packed audience halls around the world. Youssou N’Dour, singer and percussionist from Senegal, combines the songs of the great storytellers of West Africa with Afro-Cuban rhythms, while Toumani Diabaté of Mali, plays the kora—a 21-string harp/lute central to the classical traditions of West Africa. Diabaté has played “with Taj Mahal, Peter Gabriel, Spain’s flamenco-fusion band Ketama, the 52-piece, Japanese/Malian Symmetric Orchestra, and countless jazz musicians who have sought him out in Bamako where he lives.”

The Festival in the Desert (Festival au Désert), an annual event for world music in Mali, showcases especially the traditional music of North Africa’s Tuareg peoples. The Tuareg band, Tinariwen, first came to international attention at the 2001 Festival. Ouagadougou, the capital city of Burkina Faso, has become the showcase for African film. Every two years since 1969 it has hosted the Panafriacan Film and TV Festival, the largest on the continent. As many as one million people attend.

Cultural tourism has become as substantial a business as music. Many countries and cities arrange special programming, highlighting their culture—history, music, art, drama—as attractions for tourists. Cultural tourism has become an ever larger component of tourism in general, and travel has been one of the largest and most rapidly growing industries.

Many of the international artists have also participated in relief work for the poor, the hungry, the dispossessed, those suffering from natural disaster, and for the ecological health of the earth. The first of the major benefit concerts by international musicians, the Concert for Bangladesh, in New York City in 1971, raised money for the victims of a cyclone in that newly born country.

The most lucrative of all international benefit concerts was Live Aid, July 13, 1985, dedicated to helping Ethiopia’s poor and starving citizens. The concert, organized by Bob Geldof and Midge Ure, ran for 16 hours in two parts, the first half at Wembley Stadium in London, the second at JFK Stadium in Philadelphia. Performers in London included Sting, U2, Elton John, and Paul McCartney; in Philadelphia, Madonna, Eric Clapton, Phil Collins, and Led Zeppelin. Parallel concerts took place simultaneously around the world. A world audience of at least some segments of the multiple concerts on television. The concert ultimately raised $150 million (about US $175 million at current rates of exchange). Live 8, in 2005, was a series of ten concerts, coordinated to take place around the world, dedicated to using special events to increase aid to poor and hungry people. More than 1,000 musicians performed in the concerts, which were broadcast on 182 television networks and 2,000 radio networks. The first Live Earth concert, organized by Nobel Prize-winner and former U.S. vice president, Al Gore, was dedicated to raising awareness of global warming and took place in multiple locations in 2007: Sydney, Johannesburg, New Jersey, Rio de Janeiro, Antarctica, Tokyo, Kyoto, Shanghai, London, Hamburg, Washington, D.C., and Rome. (A follow-up concert was to have taken place in December, 2008, in Mumbai, India, but was canceled after the city was hit by a wave of terror attacks.)

Many artists individually became as famous for their work against poverty as for their musical talent. Shakira, for example, performed at the Live 8 benefit concert at the Palace of Versailles, near Paris, and at the German segment of Live Earth in Hamburg, in 2007. Shakira funds the Latin America in Solidarity Action (ALAS) charity and in 2008 she and other Latin artists performed on its behalf in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and in Mexico City. Perhaps most noteworthy of all, has been Bono of the band U2. Bono has participated in numerous benefit concerts, including the 1985 Live Aid concert. In 2002, he joined with others in organizing DATA (Debt, AIDS, Trade, Africa) dedicated to eradicating poverty and HIV/AIDS in Africa. He was also prominent in the worldwide Jubilee 2000 campaign to cancel the debts of some of Africa’s poorest countries. In 2005 he joined with others to launch EDUN, dedicated to promoting trade with Africa. Time magazine named Bono, along with Bill and Melinda Gates, as “persons of the year” in 2005. In 2008, the UN unveiled a $3 billion plan for eliminating malaria as a mass child killer in Africa. Bono and, again, Bill Gates, joined the many heads of state and UN officials making the announcement.

Sometimes the music itself has been the gift. In 1986, musician Paul Simon went to South Africa to begin recording for his album, Graceland. While many criticized Simon for breaking the cultural boycott imposed on apartheid South Africa at the time, he pointed out that he was introducing South African musicians, such as Ladysmith Black Mambazo, and other African artists, such as Ghanaian drummer Okyere Asante, to wider audiences. Five years after Graceland, Simon traveled to Brazil to produce the Rhythm of the Saints album, which brought many lesser known Brazilian musicians, and Brazilian music, into a global spotlight. In 1991, Simon’s concert in Central Park spotlighted both African and South American musicians.

New recording labels, such as Putumayo and Rough Guides-Music, sprang up, dedicated to producing music of the non-European world (as well as of Europe and the Americas). The TV channel MTV (Music Television) began broadcasting in 1981. Originally it broadcast only music videos, but subsequently its format broadened to include reality shows, movies, and some sitcoms. MTV in the United States generated spinoffs in other countries, in local languages, including MTV channels in the UK, Dubai (targeting markets from Cairo across Saudi Arabia to Bahrain), India, the Philippines, Turkey, Pakistan, Australia, and New Zealand.

Other TV channels, oriented toward news and features, were also reaching out to global audiences. Great Britain’s BBC was the first to go international, first as a radio chain, then as the BBC World Service.
network, later as TV. By 2008 it was reaching about 275 million households in almost every country on earth. The American-based Cable News Network, CNN, began broadcasting in 1980 followed by its related CNNI (International) in 1985. The sister networks now serve most of the nations of the world, reaching about half the people. The American (and European) cultural performance remains prominent, but by the 1980s and 1990s, scientists were beginning to create tools for exploration; some seem practicable even now, while others appear more far-fetched.

Fifteen years later, Azar Nafisi’s novel Reading Lolita in Tehran (2003) describes the continuing difficulties and dangers of obtaining and reading proscribed literature in Iran. There were limits to the globalization of culture. Many countries around the world feared that the first TV networks were becoming an invasion. Cultural exchange, welcomed by some, was resented and feared by others. Censorship did not disappear in the early twenty-first century.

**On Technology**

We have already written about the technologies of communication and transportation, of computers, the internet, and containerization, and we have discussed genetic engineering and cloning. Here let us look at two additional technologies. One, ecotechnology (ecological technology), which seems to be a way to keep the globe’s ecology intact for human life, is already perhaps the most critical for the world today.

**Nanotechnology**

Nanotechnologies work with substances at the molecular, or even at atomic and subatomic, sizes. Nano stands for a substance one billionth of a meter in size. A nanometer is to a meter as the size of a marble is to the size of the planet Earth. Nanosubstances exist in nature, for example, in the enzymes of biological processes that allow the contraction of muscles; in the works of DNA molecules; and in the process of converting minerals and water into living cells. Experiments using and measuring nanosubstances began in the early 1900s, and in 1959 the Nobel laureate physicist Richard Feynman brought the field to greater world attention even outside the scientific community. Feynman noted that if substances are analyzed at atomic size their properties are different from the same substances at the larger scales at which we normally encounter them. For example, opaque substances become transparent (copper); stable materials become combustible (aluminum); solids turn into liquids at room temperature (gold); insulators become conductors (silicon). This last transformation has brought about the use of silicon as a conductor in computers. The term “nanotechnology” was used for the first time in 1974. Substantial research began only in the 1980s. Many of the commercial claims of creating and working with such small substances remained unproven, but by the 1980s and 1990s, scientists were beginning to create tools for reducing substances to such small dimensions. Some nanotechnology is already in place. Nanomaterials are seeded into materials of larger size, giving them new properties. For example, carbon in the nanoscale appears in some computer hard drives to increase their speed and capacity. Exciting possibilities for further use are under exploration; some seem practicable even now, while others appear more far-fetched. Nanomaterials might be seeded into cancerous cells to track or even destroy them. Carbon in nanoscale could be used to create a fiber, or a wire, or a molecular coating. Nanosubstances might be used in desalinating and purifying water at minimal cost, in fuel cells, in controlling pollution, in the bioprocessing of food products. They also promise potential breakthroughs in the production of abundant, cheap, clean energy.
For all of their promise, nanotechnologies are only beginning to provide practical technologies. Producing effective tools to handle materials at such small size is problematic. In addition, substances in such small size may prove dangerous to human and animal life. If they enter the lungs and breathing systems, they may destroy tissues. Because of their tiny size, they may also enter through the skin and, in effect, cut into internal organs. Experience with nanotechnologies is new and limited, as is assessment of their potential harmful effects. They require, and command, further attention.

Ecological Technology

The selection of Al Gore, tireless campaigner for controlling climate change, for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2007 indicated the degree to which the struggle against “global warming” had become one of the world’s most important priorities. Two equally remarkable indicators were his Oscar, also in 2007, awarded for his documentary film, An Inconvenient Truth, and Wangari Maathai’s Nobel Peace Prize in 2004 for her Green Belt movement, in which she has motivated poor women in her country of Kenya to plant some 30 million trees in 30 years.

Gore’s Nobel Prize acceptance speech hewed in on the global problem of carbon emissions that were threatening to destroy life on earth:

In the last few months, it has been harder and harder to misinterpret the signs that our world is spinning out of kilter. Major cities in North and South America, Asia and Australia are nearly out of water due to massive droughts and melting glaciers. Desperate farmers are losing their livelihoods. Peoples in the frozen Arctic and on low-lying Pacific islands are planning evacuations of places they have long called home. Unprecedented wildfires have forced a half million people from their homes in one country and caused a national emergency that almost brought down the government in another. Climate refugees have migrated into areas already inhabited by people with different cultures, religions, and traditions, increasing the potential for conflict. Stronger storms in the Pacific and Atlantic have threatened whole cities. Millions have been displaced by massive flooding in South Asia, Mexico, and 18 countries in Africa. As temperature extremes have increased, tens of thousands have lost their lives. We are recklessly burning and clearing our forests and driving more and more species into extinction. The very web of life on which we depend is being ripped and frayed.

Gore called attention to the need for political leadership, which has been sorely lacking, to solve the problem. He identified the need to limit the global emissions of carbon dioxide, CO$_2$. And he called for market mechanisms to do the job. His positions represent the current state of thinking about the problems and the solutions:

We must begin by making the common rescue of the global environment the central organizing principle of the world community. Fifteen years ago, I made that case at the “Earth Summit” in Rio de Janeiro. Ten years ago, I presented it in Kyoto. This week, I will urge the delegates in Bali to adopt a bold mandate for a treaty that establishes a universal global cap on emissions and uses the market in emissions trading to efficiently allocate resources to the most effective opportunities for speedy reductions.

Most important of all, we need to put a price on carbon—with a CO$_2$ tax that is then rebated back to the people, progressively, according to the laws of each nation, in ways that shift the burden of taxation from employment to pollution. This is by far the most effective and simplest way to accelerate solutions to this crisis.

Gore also identified the two largest national culprits creating the CO$_2$ emissions: the United States, the current leader, and China, coming up fast. In 1980, the United States produced 4,754 million metric tons of CO$_2$ from fossil fuels; in 2004, the U.S. produced 5,912, an increase of 24 percent. Over the same period, China increased its emissions from 1,454 to 4,719, up 224 percent. Neither nation was willing to take the lead in solving the Earth’s climate problems: Quite the contrary.

Advocates of change met resistance, for example from companies that manufactured carbon fuels, and automakers whose products consumed them. Consumers did not want to pay more for carbon fuels. Political leaders were reluctant to take the lead in proposing solutions that had such strong opposition among manufacturers and consumers.

In many parts of the world—Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Russia, Venezuela—rulers who controlled petrofuels were dictators and could afford to be, since the “petrodollars” left them free to do as they wished. High levels of fossil fuel consumption helped keep them in power. In addition, one attempt to reduce the reliance on petrofuels, especially in the United States and Brazil, by devoting vast acreage of food crops to the production of ethanol, a corn-based fuel, removed that acreage from food production, resulting in increased food costs, a burden falling heaviest on the poor.

In attempting to fight climate change, Gore and his colleagues around the world believed that technological innovation, economic planning, and political action were capable of collectively solving the problems of climate change, and that the process would be commercially rewarding as well. Many companies reaped substantial profits by creating green solutions to energy problems through innovative design, equipment, and application. The production of wind power and solar power began to be economically competitive as pressure on the supply of petrofuels continued to

Greenhouse gas emissions, 2005. As evidence of global warming and climate change became unmistakable, scientists measured more carefully the amount of greenhouse gas emissions, primarily carbon dioxide, CO$_2$. Here they are computed on a per capita basis, so that countries such as Canada, with a very cold climate and considerable use of coal and gas for heating, register very high, while China registers relatively low. Similar charts giving total emissions by country show China much higher, because of its immense population, and Canada much lower. The United States registers high in both per capita and total emissions.
raise oil prices. Around the world, the public was beginning to accept the need for new initiatives as the evidence piled up of weather changing in peculiar and scary ways, and as arctic glaciers melted faster than ever previously recorded. In some countries, especially in Europe, green political parties began to spring up, dedicated to fighting for ecologically healthy programs. Most solutions for reducing climate change included these key proposals:

- reducing the carbon emissions of automobiles, either by reducing the numbers of cars, or increasing mileage, or changing from fossil fuels to new kinds of fuels;
- increasing the efficiency of electric plants, or converting them to natural gas power;
- reducing the use of energy;
- capturing carbon emissions before they entered the atmosphere;
- increasing reliance on alternative fuels, such as solar, wind, and nuclear;
- preserving the forests and reforesting those that have been cut down; and
- changing more for petroleum in order to force consumers to cut back on their use and, meanwhile, to recover more of their costs to the environment. This strategy often included plans for putting absolute caps on the national production of carbon emissions, and then buying and selling carbon emissions credits, so that the more efficient could profit from their efficiency in cutting back on emissions, and the less efficient would pay for their inefficiencies, ultimately becoming more efficient.

On Identity: What Difference Does It Make?

The world in 2008 was a very different place from the world of 1988. Just 20 years had made an enormous difference. Consider it in terms of the themes of our text.

In terms of evolution and what it means to be a human being, the entire human genome had been mapped. In relationship to the natural world, scientists became able to objectively measure how truly related we are to the entire animal world, especially to the great apes, with whom we share a 97 percent similar DNA. The urban population of the world increased by one billion persons between 1990 (2.2 billion) and 2007 (3.3 billion). Fully half of the world’s population had become city dwellers. Empires, such as the USSR, collapsed. With that collapse, the United States seemed to be the world’s lone superpower, but by 2008 it was in deep financial trouble, overstretched militarily, and held in disrepute in many countries around the world. From the time of the Iranian revolution of 1979 especially, religion resurfaced as a major factor not only in world culture, but also in world politics. Countries that had kept aloof from world trading systems, like China and India, emerged as major powers in international finance and trade. Discrimination in terms of religion, gender, race, caste, nationality, and class was being attacked as unworthy of civilized behavior, and was apparently receding as mass action forced diverse groups together and schools created educational curricula for a world of diversity. No doubt, some peoples chose to maintain their received traditions and to reject social change as firmly as possible. New technologies continued their promises and their threats to human life as they always had, but more pervasively.

So much was changing so swiftly that “identity” had become a key issue by the beginning of the twenty-first century. What did it mean to be a male, or a female; black or white; a villager or an urbanite or a suburbanite; a migrant or a local resident; an American, or a Kenyan, or a Brazilian, or a Chinese; a Christian, or a Muslim, or a Buddhist; an economic conservative or a liberal; a cultural traditionalist or a cosmopolitan; technologically savvy or primitive? What does a person stand for and against? What tasks are meaningful and important to undertake, and which seem less important?

Academic researchers ask these questions in formal and disciplined fashion. Historians, for example, trace the ways in which individuals and groups modify their sense of identity over time. But so do everyday people, in more colloquial ways, in conversation with friends and in internal conversation with themselves. It is our hope that this textbook has given its readers some guidelines for thinking about these issues of identity, by demonstrating that they have been with us forever, albeit with different levels of intensity at different times. We hope that readers will go away with the understanding that the study of history is the study of the context of our own lives and identities, individually and collectively. By knowing where we have come from, in the past, we will be better able to understand our choices in determining where we might go in the future.

Asking Questions

- Contemporary history is very difficult to write, because its subject matter keeps changing. The writing of this text was completed in the spring of 2009. What changes have occurred since that time that make elements of this text already seem dated?
- What groups of people seem most likely to be in favor of globalization? What groups against? Have you seen in the past year or two any examples of groups that have changed their position on globalization?
To what extent is the struggle between Israelis and Palestinians a conflict between religions? To what extent is it a conflict between national groups? To what degree can you separate the two kinds of issues?

To what degree do women share common issues for struggle regardless of their national identities? To what degree do women in different countries have different issues for struggle? Please give examples.

In what ways are the struggles of low caste and scheduled caste people in India similar to the struggles that blacks experience in apartheid South Africa or African-Americans experience in the U.S.? To what extent are they different?

To what extent are problems of assimilation of migrants similar in all countries?

To what extent are they different?

Considering the many problems of pollution, global warming, and climate change, to what extent can individual initiative help alleviate them? To what extent is national action required? To what extent is international action required?

Suggested Readings

**PRINCIPAL SOURCES**


Chomsky, Noam. *Middle East Illusions* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2006). Chomsky takes to task everyone for failures in Middle East policy. He is especially critical of the United States for its uncritical support of Israel.


Noussan, Martha, The Clash of Democracy, Religious Violence, and India’s Future (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007). Argues that peaceful coexistence must work together to defeat violent, radical extremists. The case study is India, but the argument is widely applicable.


**KEY TERMS**

globalization see p. 850

outsourcing see p. 852

autarky see p. 855

equity see p. 856

transparence see p. 857

privatization see p. 857

ministry see p. 860

micro-finance see p. 861

micro-credit see p. 868

Schengen agreement see p. 867

“Fortune Europe” see p. 870

critical assistance see p. 878

fusin see p. 881

hybridization see p. 882


Zakaria, Fareed. *The Post-American World* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006). Perceptive journalistanalyzes current transformations in world economic and political power. America is still very important but China and India are rising fast.

**ADDITIONAL SOURCES**

Breathnach, Glenn. *The New Geography of Global Inequality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). Sociologist argues that while income inequality is increasing among people within countries, it is decreasing between nations, largely because of China’s successful rise.


Garyvich, Phillip. *We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories from Rwanda* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998). Brilliant journalistic reporting from the killing fields of Rwanda. Attempts to understand and explain the differences between Tutsis and Hutus.


Kibwair, Madina. *Off the Beaten Track: Reithinking Gender Justice for Indian Women* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999). The editor of one of India’s leading feminist journals, Ms. Moushii, discusses the evolution of her thought in light of the possible and the ideal.


