

EDITORIAL

The Turning of the Tide

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Over two centuries ago, in the year 1776, the historian Edward Gibbon published the first volume of his *History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, which he entitled 'The Turn of the Tide'. In this epic work, Gibbon analysed the historical processes by which the prosperity, peace, and stability of the Roman world order gradually came to an end, ushering in a new epoch defined by first the disintegration and subsequently the rebuilding of Western civilization over the course of many centuries.

Today, in our own era, we have witnessed the end of the Cold War, the fall of the Soviet Union and communism in Eastern Europe, the rise and apparent demise of the Washington Consensus, the impact of the events of 9/11 and their aftermath, a host of conflicts and humanitarian crises around the globe, and the dramatic entry of new social forces of protest and civil activism onto the stage of global politics. All these have given us reason to question whether we also are now 'at the turn of the tide', at a juncture in world history where one order passes away and a new order comes into being.

It is at such moments in history that new concepts, new ideas, bearing new paradigms and new understandings and perspectives on human experience will make their entry into public consciousness. Now is such a moment. It is in this context that *Globalizations* appears. It is a reflection of the central role this new concept has already established in the pivotal debates of our time and a strategic recognition of the need to further develop this concept and the new paradigms surrounding it.

A concept such as 'globalization' needs a definition. But it is our founding premise, as expressed in the plural form of our title (*Globalizations*) that the problem is not one of finding a singular definition, but rather of finding plural definitions; i.e. defining not one globalization, but many globalizations. The move from the singular to the plural is deliberate and implies deep scepticism of the idea that there can ever be a single theory or interpretation of globalization. By beginning from the premise that there are many globalizations we open the door to exploration of multiple processes and multiple interpretations and perspectives that may constitute many possible alternative globalizations, many possible paradigms. There is already a tendency to polarize the discussion of globalization around the opposition

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between a 'corporate' globalization versus a 'people's' globalization, or 'globalization from above' (elite) versus 'globalization from below' (popular). But even the mis-labelled 'anti-globalization' movements are more often than not in fact advocates of an alternative globalization, or 'alter-globalization', inspired by the belief that 'another world is possible', the global slogan of the World Social Forum and its supporters. Thus, even so-called 'resistance' to globalization is not external to the processes of globalization, not merely reactive, but very much an integral and 'internal' part of the historical processes of change that we call 'globalizations'.

It is with this perspective that we hope to widen the debate on globalization beyond a narrow definition of the processes as simply economic, or even worse, as merely about 'free trade' and liberalization. It is the purpose of the journal, and a conscious reflection on our times, to open the widest possible space for serious debate, discussion, and analysis of a much broader range of issues and problems. It is also the intention of the journal to pursue a constant engagement with the changing nature of our times and a commitment to questioning and challenging the status quo and explore the possibilities of an open future. It is in this sense therefore that the central debate is not framed as an either-or question, to either accept or reject 'globalization'. The problem of the reversibility or irreversibility of globalization is not therefore so simple as some would have us believe. It is not a matter of somehow stopping altogether the historical processes of globalization, but rather of understanding and engaging with the very complex processes of shaping the historical direction of globalization.

Moving from singularity to multiplicity is not to speak of any single or inevitable globalization, or even of a set of processes of a single globalization, but rather, to accept 'multiple globalization processes' and indeed 'multiple globalizations'. This in itself signifies something of a paradigm shift from the type of thinking that dominated the first phase of the globalization debate. This move is intrinsically inclusive both intellectually and politically or socially. It is therefore evident that a journal addressing such a range of perspectives and issues must be potentially as open as possible, encompassing all fields of knowledge rather than founded in any single disciplinary or theoretical tradition. A concept as inclusive as globalizations requires and indeed encourages openness to enquiry in multiple fields of knowledge and it benefits by their mutual contact and interaction.

Globalizations' editorial policy will therefore be to encompass as many perspectives as possible, including not only the traditional social sciences and humanities, but including contributions from the natural, environmental, medical and public health sciences as well. Moreover, it is our hope to encourage new types of multidisciplinary research and transnational research involving participants from more than one field or country. In this respect, we see our role as contributing to the emergent field of critical Globalization Studies, or Global Studies, and to the pursuit of new modes of global education and the 'globalization of education'. There is a necessary link between this new model of global research and education and the realm of practical action, politics, and policy. The journal will not confine itself to publishing only critiques of existing economic or 'neoliberal globalization', although such critique will always be a feature of the discussions. *Globalizations* will seek to engage with social, cultural, political and ideological debate on the nature and practices of global change. In doing so, it is the hope of the journal to establish a real bridge between the academic world and the world of practice, the world of action. We want to publish work that is relevant and accessible to a wide public, including academics and students, non-governmental organizations and policy-making communities and bring them actively into direct dialogue wherever possible. It is that commitment which should encourage us to publish work by the new generation of

younger scholars, who have already embraced the new research agenda of *Globalizations*, as well as by practitioners and activists in as many fields as possible. By encouraging the development of this emerging global community of globalization scholars and activists, the journal will seek to become part of its own times, as aspect of 'the turning of the tide'. We hope to bring new meanings and fresh ideas to the concept, broadening its scope, and contributing to the debates that will shape our common future.

'The turning of the tide' implies a sense of history, an understanding of human development in the long term and the evolution of the global human community as the main subject of understanding. That is why you will see in these pages a deliberate concern for history, for 'global history' and the 'historicization of globalization' as well as the 'globalization of history'. All of this is intimately related to the remaking of global education, escaping the parochial confines of nineteenth century inspired nationalism and national historical narratives. It also contributes to the shaping of contemporary 'global consciousness' or 'world consciousness', which in fact is not unique to our present age, but itself has a long 'history'. The true meaning of 'globalization', in its deepest and most generic sense, has everything to do with 'global history' and with the perception as well as the ultimate reality of the 'unity of humanity' as a central fact of global history. This (re)-awakening of world-consciousness recaptures in our own time what is perhaps the oldest and most simple truth of history, as recorded in the oldest extant literary tradition from Sanskrit, that is, that 'In truth, the whole world is indeed one family.' We are witnessing, in our own time, a renewed impetus to the formation of world consciousness, as globalization processes bring all of humanity into greater physical and communicative proximity to one another. These same processes are rapidly altering the social relations and social networks that compose the basis of the human community. The global level of reality is now becoming increasingly proximate to every human being in one manner or another, and therefore 'globality' or 'globalization' is something everyone has to deal with. This implies recognizing human unity at some levels while simultaneously maintaining and adapting identity and social relationships at the individual, family, community (or 'local'), national and regional levels, thus ensuring the continuation of human and cultural diversity. However, in so far as the 'unity of humanity' is a truth, it is based on two fundaments, two 'facts' of nature. The first is our genealogy, the fact that we are in truth all members of one species, all related to one another, all sharing the common heritage of our remote ancestors, despite millennia of migration and the formation of myriad groups. The second fact is our mutual inhabitancy of a single, integrated common natural environment, our planet and its single biosphere, which knows in reality no political, territorial, ideological or other artificial human imposed boundaries.

Thus the imagery of our journal cover shows us our common global identity, the image of globality, but transcending any single perspective on this globality and implying an ever changing ordering, yet all within a continuum of planetary and human history. The evolution of world-consciousness, awareness of the world-as-a-single-place, and the evolution of world or 'global civilization' are all intimately related historical processes, the inheritors of all that has come before down the ages and combining all the streams that have fed the great river we call human history.

It is thus that today we have established new concepts such as 'global governance' and 'sustainability' in relation to the evolution of the human polity and to its relationship with the natural environment. It is to the first of these, the evolution of the polity, as it approaches truly global level, that the concepts and practices of globalization will perhaps play the most important part. The enduring idea of a universal humanity implies an evolution toward some

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form of universal polity, in turn premised on some manifestation of universal or world consciousness. Perhaps, in this sense, 'globalization' is a way of expressing our present stage of evolution or historical development towards a world polity and world consciousness. This is not a new phenomenon, but in fact a feature of human history extending back many millennia until the present. There may in fact be a fundamental desire for an international or global order that brings unity, peace, prosperity and stability. In times of disintegration, confusion, or strife, the longings of many wise as well as ordinary souls may be for a type of unity that brings peace and the benefits of law to all. Despite many historical attempts to build such enduring orders, often accompanied by aspiring universal ideologies or religious visions, none have so far been truly world encompassing and none has been more than temporary. Perhaps all hegemonies, all empires, and all states and their universalisms are only temporary. Why should our present time be an exception? Yet, the deep desire for unity, peace and stability still remains a potent force in history. Even as the idea of the Roman empire persisted in the West for more than a thousand years after its actual historical unravelling, as Gibbon so adeptly analysed, in its absence the idea of unity persisted in that of the universal church, as Augustine outlined in his *De Civitate Dei*. There are counterparts to this history in many other traditions and civilizations, such as the institution of the Caliphate in Islam, which persisted for many centuries, and in the idea of a unified state that has influenced the history of China and India from antiquity to the present. In all these expressions, and many others not mentioned here, the idea of the experience of unity, of integration in a single community rather than separateness and fragmentation, is deeply implanted in the human mind. Today it finds at least partial expression in modern institutions such as the United Nations and the Olympic Games, where divisions are to be at least temporarily set aside, in the pursuit of the experience of unity.

However, it is unclear how far or how fast humanity will progress towards a true world polity or what form world consciousness will take in the future. None of these matters are to be taken as givens nor are they inevitable. It is clear however that a form of global governance is being sought by many that does not rely on exclusiveness, that does not merely perpetuate the power and privileges of a few. An order based on such exclusiveness can not deliver lasting peace and justice or meet the deep desire for unity. We are in danger of repeating the mistakes of the past and of lapsing or sleep walking into nightmare repetition scenarios whereby great power politics pursues domination rather than integration, and fosters violent fragmentation and mutual enmities rather than the experience of unity and concord.

Collective fear is again reverberating and with it the danger of rising hatred and suspicion between peoples and their rival political, ideological or religious belief systems. The so-called 'clash of civilizations' is not a new phenomenon, but rather an example of the re-emergence and persistence of historical divisions that threaten to destabilize our chances of a peaceful world order. It is also another name for 'business as usual', signifying the changes brought by the on set of a new age of chaos, barbarism, and human suffering as the old order slowly disintegrates and the centre cannot hold. We cannot meet these challenges by resort to conservatism, a return to tradition, a selective manipulation of historical memories that rekindle old enmities, or by an attempt to reinforce the reigning exclusiveness of the dominant powers and interests. Only by innovation, bold change and new responses can we hope to effectively meet the challenges of our contemporary global crisis. The status quo is not really an option. Only the willingness to make fundamental, perhaps sweeping changes, can offer us the possibility of avoiding the worst consequences of the present order and the opportunity to consolidate a new and better world order. This journal will make its appeal most directly therefore to all those who are dissatisfied with the status quo in the reigning

world order and who are dedicated to bringing innovation and indeed radical changes to bear in response to the multiple crises of our era. Whether globalization means utopia or dystopia in the future will largely depend on what this generation does today, on how this generation and its children responds to the present global crisis.

Perhaps the time has come to recognize that the only good use of power is the power to do good. Only by abandoning the pursuit of power and by embracing an alternative culture of mutual assistance, empathy, and non-violence can humanity hope to construct a world order realizing the ideals of peace, prosperity, stability and unity for the majority of the world's people. Competition is promoted by some, both political realists and economic liberals, as the right central organizing concept for human affairs, or even as a form of natural law. Yet biological, zoological, anthropological and sociological research tells us that real and lasting success is perhaps more a consequence of co-operation and mutual assistance among a species rather than a ruthless Social Darwinism or a quest for domination where inevitably some are 'winners' and others are 'losers'. While competition is held by some to offer benign consequences and even the achievement of efficiency and security, others question its efficacy and its status as natural law, and see it as an ideology masking a set of material interests. Similarly, while many favour some version of 'free trade' in principle, many more people are rationally suspicious of taking the principle (as with competition) to extremes. Most people would actually prefer a set of more pragmatic compromises that preserve a complex balance of social interests and which do not sacrifice all on the altar of a single-minded goal such as free trade for its own sake. This set of circumstances is very evident today in the (lack of) progress of the Doha Round of global trade talks. The reaction of the developing world at the Cancun ministerial, and the WTO's subsequent abandonment of all of the so-called Singapore Issues with the sole exception of 'trade facilitation' (which is simply easing of customs procedures) indicates that much greater compromise is needed in the direction of meeting the needs of the majority of people in the world if there is to be a real prospect of preserving multilateralism and the rule of law in global economic relations.

Likewise, while the post-9/11 politics of American global power seem to indicate a retreat from genuine multilateralism, there are many people in the world who are convinced that multilateralism is an objective trend and indeed a requirement of effective global governance in an era of globalization. These people, who may indeed represent the global majority, may move ahead with this agenda regardless of the (temporary?) tendencies in Washington.

The great dangers to be avoided and opposed at the present conjuncture of global history are a reversion to power politics and the naked pursuit of power and interests, domination and thus the 'clash of civilizations' as a self-fulfilling prophecy. The rekindling of ancient enmities will only fuel a new phase of global conflicts, with a never-ending spiral of violence and revenge. We must therefore abandon the culture of militarism, of dogmatic self-assertion, of ego-centrism and arrogance, in favour of the creation of a new global culture based on mutual co-operation, political rather than military settlement of conflicts, and global dialogue and toleration rather than single-minded missionary or crusading zeal. To begin, an urgent global effort is needed to finally ban all weapons of mass destruction, including the nuclear weapons (in all categories) of all the powers, and all other biological and chemical weaponry. These standards must be universal and applied without exception, even to the most powerful. Beyond this, it is also necessary to resume the trajectory initiated immediately following the end of the Cold War to make new and hopefully rapid progress towards more general disarmament and arms control, and reverse the present dangerous trend to initiate yet further expensive and potentially dangerous arms races. In principle, the world may see the long term wisdom of reversing the

present priorities of spending on military versus development needs, which at present stands at something like \$900 billion for the former and a mere \$50 billion for the latter.

Finally, the idea of national sovereignty stands out to some as their last bastion in a time of great uncertainty and perceived threat. However, to many others it is perhaps more of a last great obstacle to human unity and integration and must therefore, rather than being reinforced, be gradually circumscribed with limitations, thus strengthening a supra-national world order, based on universal human rights and the rule of law. By effectively limiting the power of the states, especially the Great Powers, by a host of means, including the increased participation of 'global civil society' in global governance, the global community insures its own stability and future viability.

The ultimate question is whether the status quo will be allowed to re-assert itself and thus perpetuate the gross inequalities of the present world order, between North and South, East and West, male and female, rich and poor, and myriad other categories of division that beset our present world. Or whether this status quo will be directly and effectively challenged by new social forces and new ideas, that seek to radically restructure and reform both global capitalism as we know it and the inherited international political system. The challenge is to dissolve the entrenched hierarchies of wealth, power, knowledge, and well being that characterize the present world order. We must make these give way to a new set of structures and relationships that will serve the needs of the majority of humanity and by doing so guarantee our best chance for a real and lasting global consensus. Global governance and indeed globalization itself should be, must be, more than a mere condominium of vested interests and power, more than a perpetual oligarchy. If we are indeed to move towards a world of shared responsibilities and shared benefits, of a 'fair globalization', and to an ethics of 'global justice', then this can only be accomplished by actually serving the interests of all of the world's peoples, and those of its poorest and most disenfranchised as the highest priority. Only then, and by the active engagement of the world's peoples in the processes of protest and challenge to the status quo, can our future globalizations be made truly positive.

Policies and practices at the global level must be made to correspond to the needs of the global majority, whether this relates to the need for peace, material prosperity, human security and dignity, gender equality, health and welfare, or the protection and preservation of the common environment. It is our challenge to overcome the obstacles inherited from centuries of conflicts, divisions and enmities and replace these with a new global ethos based upon profound empathy for our fellow humanity, compassion for their suffering, and the will for unity.

Globalization is not about a set of pre-determined historical outcomes, already set in stone by the laws of nature or history. Our common history remains open, and it is up to all of us to shape its ultimate outcomes. In the rich tapestry that is our common global history, it is by finally embracing the positive potential of globalizations, and the humanocentric rather than egocentric perspective that this move entails, that we will come to see all history as our own, and the future as one common destiny. To me, this is the real meaning of Globalizations. It is the acceptance of a collective human identity, the forging of a collective human will, and the fulfilling of collective responsibilities for the welfare, peace, prosperity and security of all human beings. This then is the 'turning of the tide' in human history. Where we go from here is entirely up to us.