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Fairness, Globalization, and Public Institutions

Dator, Jim

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everyday lives “through the pure satisfaction of sensual pleasure.”²⁵ The current version, of course, is consumer-based global capitalism where new wealth and products are constantly being created, both through technological and economic innovations as well as through the colonization of nature, lands, peoples, and space.

Another myth is that of Arcadia, where nature is bountiful but humans do not indulge themselves beyond their needs.²⁶ It is the idea and the image about the harmony between humanity and nature, rather than the image of domination and control of nature by humanity, to produce society and civilization. Arcadia originated in ancient Greece and was revived by Renaissance humanists who were “seeking to restrain the selfish tendencies of the rich and powerful classes.”²⁷ Its modern versions are today’s ecological, New Age, and anti-globalization movements.

Perhaps, as we move toward a “truly global society,” we may witness the emergence of different futures visions and meta-narratives, those based on different epistemologies and different civilizational and cultural frameworks. And it will be then, perhaps, that real spaces for imagining alternative futures, including those based on feminist/feminine epistemologies, will also emerge.

FURTHER THOUGHTS

The Triple Bottom Line, Plus One

Economic Prosperity, Environmental Sustainability,
and Social Justice for Future and Present Generations

Sohail Inayatullah

WHILE MANY BELIEVE that globalization must be totally transformed (seeking a post-capitalist vision of the future), others work for achieving fairness within the system. Among those imagining within-system change is the Triple Bottom Line movement. The term comes from a book by John Elkington, *Cannibals with Forks*. The “three bottom lines” of socially committed enterprises are economic prosperity, environmental quality, and social justice.

This is a vision of an alternative value system that can be counted in a world where counting matters (and where things that are not counted do not count!). Nations, states, and local communities can measure the second and third bottom lines just as they do the first. Royal Dutch Shell buys advertising space to say that its strategies are based on the triple bottom line of people, planet, and profits, while the United Nations calls for policies and practices that focus on people, planet, and prosperity.

Profits/prosperity have always been the first bottom line, and capitalism will

insist that it be so. But can people and the planet be brought into the equation? “People” refers to notions of fairness and social justice. For companies at one level, this means that minorities should be hired. Is there gendered and multicultural representation at all levels of the workforce? But once the boardroom has more women and people of color, then the issue becomes not just representation by number (which can be counted), but fair representation of different ways of knowing. Are the ways diverse cultures see and live in the world represented in policy and practice? Are holidays and cultural fairs only those of the majority culture, or are those of other communities fairly celebrated? While this may appear only a social justice issue, corporations are beginning to see that this leads to prosperity as well. Multiculturalism is good for the first bottom line.

Taking care of the planet may be good for business, too, if more and more shoppers and investors begin to purchase with their values. Corporations that are seen not to be “Green” will be punished, slowly but surely. And over time if more business operations become transparent and individuals have fuller information on products, consumer decisions may favor those companies that help the planet.

Alan Weinberg, an Australian futurist, has begun writing about the “Quadruple Bottom Line.” This fourth bottom line is the future, or better, future generations. While environment and sustainability often are assumed to include concern for the future, Weinberg shows that the future needs to be a separate category. And this, too, can be measured to some extent. How will current financial, zoning, consumption, and production decisions impact future generations? The future cannot be left out of our most serious business and policy equations. It must be part of our ethics and practices, of how we live in communities and, indeed, on the planet.

The Quadruple Bottom Line provides a vehicle to test if organizations, businesses, and nations are moving toward a future that is sustainable, multicultural (including gender partnership), prosperous, and respectful of the needs and desires of future generations.

Notes

1. Jan Aart Scholte, *Globalization: A Critical Introduction* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 2000), 185.

2. S. Davies and N. Guppy, “Globalization and Educational Reforms in Anglo-American Democracies,” *Comparative Education Review* 41.4 (1997): 440.

3. E.g., D. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

4. R. Edwards and R. Usher, *Globalisation and Pedagogy: Space, Place and Identity* (London: Routledge, 2000), 15.

5. Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994), 166.

6. *Ibid.*, 13–14.

7. Strictly speaking, “utopia” means “no place” and should be used only to describe “perfect” societies, impossible to achieve, standing in challenging contrast to the reality of all existing societies. “Eutopia” (meaning “good place”) should thus be used to describe “the best possible real world”—not perfect, but the best imaginable and achievable. What is “utopian” and what is “eutopian” is obviously very debatable! “Dystopia” is a “bad place” (the frightening futures shown, e.g., in many movies and works of science fiction, warning us of the dark side of humanity’s schemes and dreams, and especially technology).

8. Peter Martin, “The Moral Case for Globalization,” In *The Globalization Reader*, ed. F. Lechner and J. Boli (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 2000), 12–14.

9. *Ibid.*

10. Carmen Luke, *Globalization and Women in Academia: North/West South/East* (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001).

11. M. Castells, *The Rise of the Network Society: The Information Age, Economy, Society, and Culture*, vol. 1. (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers, 1996).

12. A. Cvetkovich and D. Kellner, *Articulating the Global and the Local* (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1997), 2.

13. Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

14. N. Stromquist and K. Monkman. *Education: Integration and Contestation Across Cultures* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 19.

15. Luke, *Globalization and Women in Academia*, 48.

16. Hazel Henderson, *Beyond Globalization: Shaping a Sustainable Global Economy* (West Hartford, Conn.: Kumarian Press, 1999), 23.

17. S. Burchill and A. Linklater, *Theories of International Relations* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1996).

18. Patricia Mische, “Ecological Security and the Need to Reconceptualize Sovereignty,” *Alternatives* 14 (1989): 389–427.

19. E.g., H. Afshar and S. Barrientos, eds., *Women, Globalization and Fragmentation in the Developing World* (London: Macmillan, 1999); N. S. Heyzer, S. Kapoor, and J. Sandler, eds., *A Commitment to the World’s Women* (New York: UNIFEM, 1995); United Nations, *1999 World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Globalization, Gender and Work* (New York: United Nations, 1999); and UNIFEM, *Progress of the World’s Women 2000* (New York: United Nations Development Fund for Women, 2000).

20. E.g., M. J. Ryan, ed., *The Fabric of the Future: Women Visionaries of Today Illuminate the Path to Tomorrow* (Berkeley, Calif.: Conari Press, 1998); D. A. F. Jones, *Women of Spirit* (Sudbury, Mass.: Visions of a Better World Foundation, 1995); and G. Sen and C. Grown, *Development, Crises, and Alternative Visions: Third World Women’s Perspectives* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1997).

21. E.g., E. Boulding, “Women’s Visions of the Future,” in *Visions of Desirable Societies*, ed. E. Masini (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1983), 9–24; R. Eisler, *The Chalice and*

the Blade: Our History, Our Futures (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987); Barbara Marx Hubbard, *Conscious Evolution: Awakening the Power of Our Social Potential* (Novato, Calif.: New World Library, 1998); and E. Sahtouris, *EarthDance: Living Systems in Evolution* (San Jose, Calif.: iUniverse.com, Inc., 2000).

22. F. Bartkowski, *Feminist Utopias* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1989); D. Holbert, *Feminist Fabulation: Challenging the Boundaries of Fact and Fiction. The Manoa Journal of Fried and Half Fried Ideas* (Honolulu: Hawai'i Research Center for Futures Studies, 1994); and Lucy Sargis, *Contemporary Feminist Utopianism* (London: Routledge, 1996).

23. As argued by Eleonora Masini in *Visions of Desirable Societies; Women as Builders of Alternative Futures* (Trier, Germany: Centre for European Studies, Trier University, 1993); and "A Vision of Futures Studies," *Futures* 34 (2002): 249–261.

24. D. W. Hollis, *The ABC-CLIO World History Companion to Utopian Movements* (Santa Barbara, Calif.: ABC-CLIO, 1998).

25. *Ibid.*, 14.

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*