CHILDREN AND GLOBALIZATION

By Paula S. Fass University of California, Berkeley

A Background Note

This essay was written for a conference on globalization held at the University of Lodz in Poland during the Fall 2001. I thought that it would be useful to introduce matters relating to children into the discussion, since at most such occasions, children hardly enter into the conversation. The essay does not attempt to engage directly such important questions as whether globalization is likely to reach all cultures, where it is most likely to be resisted, or if globalization is something fundamentally new or only an extension of processes long underway in the western world. Although my mode of analysis—using the history of the United States as a basis for understanding current trends in globalization—suggests that I belong in the latter camp, the essay makes clear that I use this strategy, not as an answer to this last question but, as a means to illuminate a variety of matters. I leave a headon discussion of these questions to others more familiar with and more eager to tackle issues of developmental economics.[1] Instead, I write from deep within a specific historical framework, as someone who believes that American historians have something to contribute to the dialogue taking place and who believes that social historians specifically are well positioned to provide insights into matters of great contemporary consequence.

It is odd that children and childhood should be nowhere on the agenda of those who currently discuss globalization. Children are most definitely part of the Western sensibility about globalization, and childhood is a particularly sensitive node for cultural contention in the politics of globalization. It is my hope that an understanding of children's history will help to make discussions of globalization both more realistic, since many children are and will be affected, and more attuned to the peculiar western sentiments that are evoked in the media's coverage of the conflicts over globalization. Children are everywhere present in this debate, but never heard from or addressed.

Bringing Children into Globalization

Boy and girl prostitutes in Thailand hired by French tourists; child pornography on the internet; five-year old indentured textile workers in India making silk for American clothing; Eastern European adolescent girls assaulted and raped as they seek glamorous careers on Milan's runways: These are the startling images that confront us regularly now as the economy becomes a global network and as our means to communicate information penetrates into and out of every village and hamlet. We shudder at these assaults on the most vulnerable and ask ourselves if this is a portent of the future. As our planet shrinks in size will we sacrifice children to the yawning and ever more visible gulf between the richest and poorest nations of the earth?

Childhood is at once a universal experience, and one of the most culturally specific. Every society must have and raise children to survive, and each seeks to protect them in some fashion. Each culture defines and divides childhood as a stage of development differently, while devising unique means to express its views of what children are like, and practices relating to children through which it fulfills a cultural vision of its own future. So too, each of us has experienced a childhood, and we are therefore strongly attached emotionally to an image of what childhood is and should be like. Thus childhood is a critical point of social contention, a profound test of cultural autonomy, and a basic emotional reference point for all of us as we reflect upon the many meanings and consequences of globalization.

It is therefore not surprising that many of the starkest images of globalization's costs take children as their subjects.[2] And we can, I believe, expect that the continuing pressure toward global integration will expose the special differences invested in childhood practices. We can also expect that this tendency for change to affect this most intimate place, where culture as well as individual memories are created, to explode in very public reactions. There are two reasons for this. The first results from the strategic role of childhood as the point of socialization and therefore as the means by which each society tries to protect its own identity. The second results from the fact that in modern western societies children have been invested with an especially heavy emotional load. Indeed, because it has become such an emotionally resonant site in the Euro-American West, childhood and its associations have most often provided the occasions in the recent past around which we have expressed larger cultural anxieties and our sense of anguish about a whole range of issues. In other words, in addition to being a sociological and anthropological site, childhood has been invested with enormous symbolic power. I will give you just one example, from many that I could choose. This one is very recent and very raw. First in the United States in the 1980s, and then in much of Europe in the 1990s, the issue of pedophilia and the sexual abuse and murder of children has often dominated headlines and resulted in widespread popular hysteria. Those reactions are almost always way out of proportion to the actual occurrence of outrages against children, but they express a much more general sense of vulnerability, and are often powerful ways to express a less clearly focused sense of grievance and fear about other matters—the police, the economy, changes in the family, new sexual practices and gender roles.[3]

In order to understand both how globalization is likely to affect children and why we have come to focus so much power in childhood imagery, I would like to turn now to aspects of American social experience that can provide some insight into these matters. Such an examination of the old New World, so to speak, is an unsually good point of departure for this discussion. Not only does the United States today provide the most powerful engine driving globalization toward the creation of the new New World, but America provides a kind of microcosm of the early forms of globalization. After all, globalization today—the rapidly expanding domination of all forms of culture by market forces and the penetrating power of communciations—continues patterns of development that began much earlier in the West, and most conspicuously in the United States. Here rapid economic expansion, the migration and mixing of popula-

tions, the breaking down of regionalism and localism, and the confrontation of disparate value systems took place first. The United States has experienced all of these within its own historical experience during the last 150 years. The United States was, after all, a nation whose dynamic capitalist economy and vast resources attracted tens of millions of immigrants to its shores, factories, workshops, and schools. I would like, therefore, to address three issues that are especially significant to this experience as it centered on children—the issue of children's work, the role of play in childhood development, and the problem of sexuality. Together these provide what I would like to call the contemporary "youth complex" with a powerful symbolic fuse.

Children's Work

When Alexander Hamilton, America's first Secretary of the Treasury, imagined and wrote about America's manufacturing future, he had no sentimental qualms about putting children into that picture.[4] Children, he assumed, together with their parents would work in the nations mills and factories. And why not? At the end of the 18th century when he issued his report, American children as young as five or six could be found working alongside their parents in farms, village shops, as well as throughout the homes of the nation. They also worked for others as apprentices, or as bound labor paying off a debt, or because they were put out to work by county officials as paupers or orphans. In the growing plantations of the American South as well as in places as far north as New York state, thousands of child slaves worked alone, and in groups, often in places that were quite distant from their parents or other relatives. Indeed, children worked everywhere. The lucky ones did so as part of a family economy where they could understand their contribution as part of a corporate effort. Those who were less lucky simply did so because of their master's orders. The sense of a childhood freed from labor and devoted to individual development and play (a protected period of innocence sheltered from the cares of adults) had not yet become a common point of cultural understanding, although Jean Jacques Rousseau had already proposed it half a century earlier as a theoretical possibility.

Today, we are shocked when young children are put to work for pennies a day in India, or China, in conditions of indenture that approximate slavery, or when they are kidnapped and enslaved in the Sudan. But it is important to remember that our contemporary response is the result not of our own historical superiority, but because in the 19th century the struggle over slavery, the development of humanistic sensibilities, and the sentimentalization of childhood in the United States and much of the Western world began to alter values as well as behaviors, among the middle classes especially, but increasingly among others as well. Those changes grew out of the rapidly developing market economy that was eclipsing slavery as a form of labor and swamping corporate identities of all kinds, while increasing the American commitment to the rights of the individual. It is that new sensibility which defines our reactions to issues of child exploitation today. But even in the nineteenth century, this perspective did not become universal at once in the United States, and it did not happen everywhere. It also took time for this view to envelop adolescent children, those 12 to 18 whom we regard as needing protection today but who were drawn into England's soot-filled "satanic

mills" and the slightly more respectable versions of New England to work twelve-hour days. Single girls of fourteen, whom we would today call adolescents, stood for hours in Lawrence, Lowell, and Holyoke, Massachusetts spinning yarn by the mile from sun up to sun down, while they lived away from parents and home under severe restriction. They were glad at first to get such good work, and even Charles Dickens and other visitors of conscience testified to their good health and high spirits. Not until the 1850s did they begin to see themselves not as exceptions to the degradation of industrial labor, but as hardly better off than slaves.[5]

One of the great turning points for the revisioning of childhood came when Americans began to weep over slavery, when Harriet Beecher Stowe made Americans visualize the family costs and inhumanity of an institution that affected white and black. In so doing, Stowe gave the western world a picture of the pure innocence of childhood that helped to underwrite a new sentimentality. Together with other images of the time, but familiar to far more people, Little Eva and Uncle Tom and Topsy made childhood something to be treasured and carefuly guarded. It was then, in the middle of the nineteenth century, that John Locke's *tabula rasa*, by then available for almost two centuries and well known to some, found a wide audience to instruct in the fundamentals of childhood. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the unquestioned assumptions that once did not shrink from employing children as young as six came to a stop. A combination of religion, of politics, and a new vision of what we owed, not just to our own children but to other people's children came to the forefront. That view, with some alterations, continues to organize our responses to news stories of children in India, Africa, and Thailand and adolescents in Slovenia today.

It is worth stopping for a moment to examine this vision and its consequences, since it not only alerts us to why the western observer today is grieved by news stories of children's oppression elsewhere, but suggests what kinds of issues economic expansion may bring foreward in the future. At the center of this vision stood what sociologist Viviana Zelizer has called "the priceless child," the child whose value stood apart from the economy, who literally had "no price" attached to his or her being. [6] This child's importance was measured in emotional terms which obligated parents and society as a whole to his wellbeing. In shifting the child from a ledger where he or she could participate in economic calculations and to which even his or her small contribution had weight, to a ledger in which the only legitimate calculation was how well he could be sheltered and provided for, the society experienced a paradigm shift. This shift was quite as significant, I believe, as the other, more commonly discussed, change from seeing the child as primitive and unredeemed (the early American Calvinist child), to the child as innocent and cherubic expression of God's kingdom (the Victorian child). That innocent child had emerged earlier, in the 18th century, but had fewer immediate social and legislative consequences.[7] It was the change in the values to which children contributed—from the economic realm to the emotional realm, that made the great difference in the late 19th century. In salvaging children from the insatiable engine of market transformation and investing them with an alternative value, the west reserved in childhood an arena of innocence. It was only then, that these two changes together transformed the way children

were conceptualized and how they were treated among the white middle classes in the United States especially, but in other parts of the world as well.

It is through that now sometimes foggy lens that we continue to see the children of the world today. Let me repeat, in this new system of values and beliefs, the child was important not for what he or she could contribute economically, but for the emotional satisfactions his cultivation could provide to the family. This child could expect much since his value lay in his emotional well being and effective preparation. Childhood was set apart as a period of innocence and vulnerability, which obligated adults to sheltering and protecting children. The child was also to be enjoyed now in and of himself for the special qualities he contributed to the family, and for the better future he promised to the society. In this context, the newly created discipline of psychology and other scientific explorations of emotional life began to develop, with their emphasis on the unfolding personality. The child was not only withdrawn from the calculations offered up by the market, but childhood was invested with the very origins of that individuality which western values had enshrined as worthy of respect. With this view of childhood's essential role in molding the future, also came the democratic extension of schooling.

To me this is an honorable view of childhood and one with a great deal to offer to civilized life. But it is a distinctly Western incarnation and it extends a whole network of Western values that carry other consequences in their wake. We might want to keep this in mind as we think about just what effects economic changes will have on the elaborate and complex cultures which are being challenged by globalization today. Americans withdrew children from the marketplace as a fulfillment and alongside of a range of beliefs and practices to which visions of childhood were attached.[8]

The United States population in the post Civil War period was hardly composed strictly of the kind of urban middle-class population devoted to science and nurture which most readily adopted these sentiments about childhood. In its own version of internal globalization, this largely northern middle-class sensibility confronted a series of immigrant groups who were drawn to other features of the American promise—above all by an exploding economy and open borders. And within its own borders, the United States still contained layers of preindiustrial rural populations whose visions of children's roles and obligations grew from an older set of values, as well as a large group of former slaves and their children. All these children often became the beneficiaries, and sometimes too the victims, of the new vision of childhood and the various institutions constructed to fulfill it in the late 19th century. In this earlier version of globalization, what I have here called the western view won out. But not without cost. Some of these costs are visible when we consider the institutions for children that spilled out from this vision and whose aim was to protect, instruct and shelter them. The list is long, but among its most prominent components are the Children's Aid Society and a whole host of Societies for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, orphanages, adoption and foster care, juvenile courts and detention centers, sports clubs and playgrounds, settlements and church social centers, and above all a refashioned and newly obligatory school, and its counterpart the reform school.

These institutions were developed to protect and to constrain, to assist and to evaluate people whose values and beliefs did not usually conform to its standards.

And they began the construction of a picture of a normative childhood which conformed to the values of some, but not necessarily the habits of many. By the turn of the twentieth century, these institutions had affected more and more children, and for longer and longer periods of their lives. Many historians over the last generation have demonstrated that these highminded institutions often had less than wholesome consequences. The protection of the children of the poor and foreign often served as a means to condemn their parents and their values and practices.[9] Over fifty years ago, Lionel Trilling explored how the liberal impulse to enlighten and uplift also resulted in the compulsion to control. This does not mean that this sensibility of protection was at fault, only that the extension outward from one's own children to the children of people unlike ourselves can harbor other emotions as well. In the process, those who are criticized and dispossessed in this way can experience confusion, insult, and outrage.[10]

This is only to say that many of the things we now take for granted in the United States did not take place without a struggle. As immigrants from Poland and Italy, Greece and Ireland brought their own visions of childhood, of upbringing, of religious training, of the proper road to full adulthood, and above all of generational relations and obligations, they confronted these new institutions, instructions, and definitions ready to take their children away from their past, their priests and the church's order, and the work they were expected to do to relieve their parents' burden. They also took them from the respect that they owed to parents whose visions of the future increasingly differed from those taught to their children. This was a new world it seemed, in which economic possibilities beckoned in exchange for control over their children's future.

One example can be used to suggest how these changes could be experienced by those who came for their own purposes only to find that they were losing control over their children in the process. Italians throughout the northeastern United States resisted the institutions of schooling that were being imposed, and they resisted as well the extension of childhood into adolescence, into years, when from their point of view, children should be usefully employed, but remained instead idled by the regulations imposed by the state. In places like the state of Connecticut, officials complained that "Every year it has become apparent ... that parents [of unschooled children] to a considerable extent are insensible to the wrong they are permitting to be inflicted upon their offspring." In these very same places, parents complained that American life was enforcing idleness among their children who did nothing but play. "When you pass by a school," one Italian mother complained, "all you hear is singing or the steps of dancing, or the noise of playing, playing, playing." One Italian father put it another way. "What good is it if a boy is bright and intelligent, and then does not know enough to respect his family. Such a boy would be worth nothing. That's the trouble with American kids ... the schools don't teach them to respect their families."[11] As parents hoped to enforce an older discipline and an older understanding of the corporate welfare of the family as an economic unit, state officials increasingly insisted that the children needed to be protected; that they needed to be schooled away from their parents' habits and language; that they needed to play in order to express themselves as children.

This struggle over authority was often framed around issues of work, and as we confront globalization on a massive scale beyond American borders it is well to remember this earlier confrontation. After all, the work expected of children today, on shoes in China, or cloth in India, and which offends us deeply may just be the first stages of a process of change, which we who peer from the other side of that divide refuse adequately to understand, having forgotten our own experiences. It is by no means easy to predict whether children's work outside the home will lead to a pattern of development in which that work will finally be reproved from within the society. I have argued that in the United States the conjunction of many factors resulted in the special solicitude toward children that condemned child labor. But, it is hardly necessary to predict that this will stir opposition against international organizations who see through a western lens.

In many ways, what we have seen so far is only the first glimpse of the change that globalization is sure to introduce as economic expansion makes the labor of children available in new and profitable ways. During this stage the same forces that bring more work to children, also make their lives more open and known to those in the West who are observing this process. Thus, various international human rights organizations have already begun to expose the exploitation of children by the kind of grueling work that horrifies our own sensibilities. That exposure leads others, often students on college campuses, to call for the boycotting of goods produced by children. And these boycotts may well lead to various new controls by international trade organizations. Our vision makes us want these children to be schooled, not to work. We assume that it is a child's right to play and to learn, not to work for a pittance. Here we are at a crossroads, not so unlike that of the Italian parents in the United States in the beginning of the twentieth century. From their point of view why should their children not produce these goods and help support their parents and give deference and respect to their elders in so doing? From ours, this is pure exploitation and our impulse is to control their parents' right to use their children in this way.

Add to this, one other contention certain to peer out from the children's faces of the globalized economy—the conflict over gender. As we stare through the prisms fashioned in the late nineteenth century at those children's faces in the twenty-first, we wear not one but two lenses. After all, in the United States, the extensions of protections for children were offered to girls as well as to boys, and so were the opportunities for self expression and the schooling aimed at their future development. But in most of the societies from which children came to the United States in the great immigration of the late nineteenth century, and the societies today being swept up in the forces of globalization, girls occupy a lesser place, protected in its own way, but hardly participating in the freedom of expression and growing equality that the United States was beginning to offer to its women. Italian parents in the United States were bewildered by the insistence that their daughters go to school which merely reinforced their natural tendency to flirt with boys. As one parent put it: "When girls at 13 or 14 wasted good time in school, it simply made us regret our coming to America."[12] Today, globalization can be expected to create around issues of gender a serious point of conflict, both within the societies where the work of girls will likely raise

serious challenges to patriarchal institutions, and from among those women's rights groups and organizations committed to improving the lives of women and girls around the world.

Consumption and Play

This questioning is only stage one. Stage two leads to other points of cultural and generational contention. The money that children are making, or are capable of making, however small and insignificant it appears to us, has its own powers of disruption. With the growing allurements of available cash and the growing exposure to western habits and pastimes along television channels and over the internet, the children caught in the new forces of globalization will begin themselves to ask why they should not participate in the pleasures that their earnings could provide—to visit McDonalds, buy tapes and CDs, and dress in the hippest Western clothing. Certainly, this happened to the sons and even to the daughters of the immigrants that came to America as early as the 1890s. At that point, the adolescent children of the old world began to go to the amusement parks and to the dancehalls and eventually to the movies of the new world. With some cash at their disposal, it is difficult to halt the erosion of corporate family identity that first impels the child to labor outside the home. This does not happen at once or quickly, but it is sure to happen more rapidly in a world of instant images of goods and enticements that are part of the entertainment society that has created the realm of pleasure that beckons and surrounds youth everywhere. Even the early stages of this process are likely to create serious potentials for disruptions in parent-child relations, cultural continuity, and gender roles. From the point of view of the allurements offered to youth, all societies whether they are ready or not to globalize are likely to be affected just as immigrant groups in the United States were, although some, like the Islamic societies, are likely to offer sturdy resistence.[13]

And here we begin to encroach on the second area I wish to bring to your attention—the problematics of play. Work and play for adults are, of course, opposite sides of the same coin since the energy invested in one can only be salvaged from time stolen from the other. But since the nineteenth century for young people in the West, play has been identified not as time stolen from work, but as the very structure of childhood. Historically this fundamental role of play for young people grew from two different sources. We have already caught glimpses of both in the discussion of work. In the nineteenth century, the emphasis on play grew from the new and different valuation of childhood that took root as scholars of childhood and of schooling, like Friedrich Froebel, Maria Montessori, G. Stanley Hall, and John Dewey began to view play as the terrain of development and learning, and of socialization itself. These designers of a science of childhood began increasingly to replace *homo faber* with *homo ludens* as the core of childhood preparation. Here the lessons of Rousseau began quickly to eclipse those of Locke, as play became not only a form of vitality, but central to education.

At first, play was restricted to certain times of day, or after school, or in playgrounds and gymnasia, as a form of respite from work. It is no doubt this

early form of school activity that the Italian mother witnessed when she passed the public school, and which already made her uncomfortable and unhappy with what her children were learning in America. By the twentieth century, however, play began to infuse conceptions of curriculum as American schools adopted progressive approaches to instruction. Just as children were given years away from work for the sake of learning, as preparation for adulthood, so their schools began to define learning itself as linked to play. More playtime and playspace were introduced into classrooms that were loosened from earlier rigid plans and disciplines, and instruction was refashioned. Just as Americans worked hard in the nineteenth century, they learned to play hard in the twentieth. This emphasis on play has given modern American culture its aura of unruliness, and nowhere more so than in the upbringing of its children. While American schools produce some of the most creative children in the world, those who make new kinds of communications in their fathers' garages, they also produce some of the most out-of-control classrooms and unteachable children. Certainly, part of the fear associated with globalization in various parts of the globe has to do with the changes in education that are likely to follow the adoption of computers and internet linkups, whose innovation were a product of America's unrestrained educational system.

But the specific forms of play for children in the United States also grew from the aggressive development of an untrammeled market economy, and that economy created spaces for play both as necessary outlets for the release of energy and in response to the new view of the specialness of childhood. Play and recreation became especially significant as outlets for adolescents, who worked at increasingly oppressive routines at sewing machines and lathes, in shops and factories, by clock time and not the more informal craft time of earlier apprenticeships. This kind of play as a complement to work, very unlike the play associated with community rituals and household routines, once integral to traditional modes of socialization, became segmented and commercialized. Jane Addams recognized its dangers vividly in her tract, the *Spirit of Youth in the City Streets*.[14] And just as commerce benefited from the work of children, commerce soon enough began to recognize the benefits that could be reaped from the play of children and adolescents. If children's work will, as I have suggested, increasingly become a subject of contention globally, we can expect that play will become probably an even greater flash point. Here the consequences of a cash-based economy that is defined by market mechanisms and new forms of work will produce ever more friction between traditional views of children's roles together with the parental limits imposed on their freedom of expression, and the appeal of new institutions to which the young turn after working hours and the profits that can be reaped from those same children in video shops and hamburger places.

As play and the objects associated with play become larger parts of our commercial world, its allurements become harder to resist. The toys and amusements that the West now offers to its children in abundance, and to which even Chinese city-dwellers, with their one-child restriction, are in the process of adopting, have become a new realm of desire. The toys of childhood become increasingly irresistible as people around the world think about prosperity, and these toys will also become a stimulus to demands for higher wages and for the desire to approx-

imate the possibilities of the West. Play and work together have the potential to disrupt profoundly traditional generational relations, cultural continuity, and the very defintions of childhood that go along with these.

Sexuality and the Limits of Childhood

And here we come to another issue certain to affect children in the new globalization. What, after all, is a child? In the United States in the early 20th century, two especially significant and symbolic movements took place that would alter our understanding of childhood: The first was a continuous extension upward of schooling into what we today call the teen years; the other the creation of legislation in one state after another that raised the age of sexual consent for girls. Together these activities institutionally redefined the upper limits of childhood, so that 12–18 year olds became both the objects of protection and the subjects of state regulation. There were other institutional changes, among them the rapid development of the juvenile court system which created a variety of means to express these expectations of a longer childhood. The court, designed to protect the young from full criminal responsibility for their actions, became a means to enforce strictures against behaviors that were considered inappropriate for children in their teen years. In all, by the second decade of the twentieth century, childhood had been vastly enlarged to include a period of life which pioneer psychologist and educator G. Stanley Hall had permanently enshrined with the name adolescence in his massive two-volume study of 1904. As a result, in the United States, adolescence became an extension of childhood rather than a preparation for adulthood, although its in-between status was meant to suggest how one could unfold into the other.

The creation of free, publicly supported high schools and requirements that enforced attendance by older youth, and the new laws making it a crime to have sexual relations with a female adolescent, variously capped by different states at from 14 to 18 years of age, were both symbolic and effective ways to create a much expanded childhood. It should not surprise us that immigrants, above all, became vulnerable to these new definitions, and that it was their children who were hauled into courts for sexual offenses and truancy.[15] The new sensibilities and the shift in paradigms around childhood in the second half of the nineteenth century had also created a new stage of life which those who came from the old world had a difficult time understanding. The western view of childhood today often takes this view of adolescence, which Erik Erikson called a moratoruim on adult responsibility, for granted. Not so, most of the rest of the world, for whom the transformational quality of adolescence may be recognized briefly or not at all, but which can hardly afford an extended moratorium.

By attaching adolescence to childhood we absorbed into childhood a period of life which is sexually potent and in which sexual energies are especially available. This sexual ripeness of adolescence is often recognized and carefully directed in traditional societies. In the United States in the twentieth century, in the context of an eager market econony and an emphasis on play and gender equality, it has been permited to float freely in the culture as adolescents often serve as exemplars of beauty, of vitality, and of fashion. As a result, the image of adolescence has

been absorbed into the special appeals of western advertisements and popular culture in which, as we all know, sex sells.

In the long run, this meant that the ambiguous status of child sexuality was sure to become an unusually contentious and emotionally loaded issue since the boundaries within childhood between eight year olds and fourteen-year olds had become more difficult to discern. Freud, after all, was just discovering the fundamental power of sexuality even among infants at a moment when Americans began to connect adolescence to an enlarged paradigm of protected childhood innocence. The volatile mix of age and sexuality sheltered under the umbrella of innocence was certain to create a powerful site for cultural politics and also for cultural anxiety. And so it has. Today, there is no more effective means to inflame our sense of a world gone awry than to point to the exploitation of children for sexual purposes. And we can expect a continuing parade of sexually exploited children to become one of the signs of the problematics of globalization.

The trend toward the consolidation of adolescence with childhood has also had other consequences, and their importance is best understood when we consider how disturbed we become when younger children imitate older children in their forms of expression. Young children in the developed world today are far more likely to imitate their peers than their parents (in speech, dress, language and leisure habits), and this pattern is trickling down further and further among younger children. This tendency only fulfills the wider tendency of such children to be guided by signals that come not from parents and not from teachers, but from the popular media and popular culture. Here, I think we have finally come to the powerful mix that play and sexuality has deposited on our global horizons. Nothing is quite as fearsome today in our anxious representations of globalization and children—not child prostitution, not children in sweatshops, not even rape—as the problem of the vast, rapid and unstoppable spread of youth-based American popular culture. At its core that concern is about the wildness, the sexuality, and the spontaneity of American forms of music, music videos, body styles, dress and ornamentation most profoundly adopted into youth culture, whose potential reach seems to be all the children of the world. Thus do our children seem to rise up and threaten our very sense of a world under control, and nowhere more so than in those countries just on the cusp of the forces of globalization.

Before we succumb to this haunting vision, it might be well to remember what I said at the beginning of this paper. Children have taken on immense symbolic weight in our culture and often they are the most potent means we use to frighten ourselves. It is this picture that is most often drawn by those opposed to the extension of western values and invoked in the so-called clash of civilizations toward which our drive toward globalization is, these opponents claim, leading. It is surely the picture that will be used most vigorously to encourage all-out resistance to the West and its forces of self-indulgence and decay. It is in many ways a picture we have ourselves created, an inversion of innocent youth of the nineteenth century, a fearsome specter of the results of the West's special solicitude toward the young. At last, we have reached that point in our discussion. Before we trap ourselves in our own nightmares and pro-

jections, we need to pause to disentangle what we can expect to happen to children as a result of globalization from this looming image emotionally fed by the symbolic uses to which we have learned to put our children in the twentieth century.

This specter of youth, the rocking, highly sexualized teenager, created in late twentieth century America, is hardly a threat in most of the rest of the world. What happens to children there will be affected and moderated by the specific culture of each place, the speed of market developments, and each society's alacrity in adopting quite specifically western values and beliefs. I have argued in this essay that American and western beliefs and values emerged in a specific time and place and while they were clearly fed by market developments that can help us to understand some of the changes likely to take place as a result of a new globalized market, they were not exclusively the results of market developments.We should not let ourselves become victim to the symbolic use to which we have put our children; nor should other parts of the world become victim to those visions. Nevertheless, some aspects of the development I have discussed with reference to American experience, are, if not inexorable, at least quite probable. And it is worth reexamining which of the changes in child life are most likely to occur as globalization proceeds.

First, work: Wherever global market forces penetrate, and development experts disagree about how widespread the process is likely to be, children, almost certainly, will become more conspicuously caught in the cash economy. While this may initially develop as an extension of their roles within the family and on behalf of their families (indeed, as we have seen in news stories, they may be sold for the good of the family), this work will itself lead in two directions: the western sensibility is sure to be outraged by this work and this will be expressed in attempts to create various kinds of controls; the cash economy will erode some of the corporate links to family that first extends wage work to children.

It is difficult to tell how far these will proceed. This will depend on many factors internal to individual societies as well as the strength of growing international trade organizations that will likely regulate, to some degree, work places around the globe. It will depend, too, on the pace and timing of worldwide prosperity as well as a host of political decisions and conditions. But, no matter the speed or the degree, there is almost certain to be some questioning of traditional gender divisions as this proceeds and this will create resistence and fear.

In the arena of play: It is impossible to believe that play will not change its character in most of the societies exposed to the new globalism, both as a result of the encroachments of western definitions of childhood and because the commercial possibilities of play are built into the very nature of globalization. The developing world not only creates most of the west's toys, but it will increasingly want to consume them, and in so doing, it may want its children too to benefit from the positive views of play that underlie their creation. But play is so fundamental to the recreation of childhood in the 19th century and so much a product of western culture that it is not certain how thoroughly it will be adopted elsewhere as an essential of child life. To embrace it fully would be to engage western culture at its core. Moreover, even in the United States today, play is being challenged, by those who are concerned about overindulgent

childrearing, as well as by those convinced that global competition requires that we impose stricter standards of schooling and disciplined accountability on our play-inclined children.

In terms of defining who and what a child is: Here I think most predictions are off. The extension of childhood into older periods of life is socially expensive and it is schooling above all that extends the upper limit of child life. Moreover, even in the United States we are witness to the beginning of a retreat from the full commitment to protection of innocence that adolescence once entailed. This is most clear in our increasing willingness to commit young people to adult jails. In other parts of the world, there will probably be a new sensitivity to how childhood can be protected and part of that will raise questions about traditional periods of transition from childhood to adulthood. Whether this will mean a full blown extension of childhood into older ages in the American manner will depend on the prosperity of different societies, the degree to which they extend schooling, and other quite culturally specific factors.

Finally, in the area of child sexuality, I think we can expect that the problematic tension involved in the combination of innocence and sexuality in our current view of childhood will repeatedly confront the specific and multitudinous differences in sexual views and practices in different societies around the world. In many of these places the investment of sexuality in children did not require a Freudian revolution and in many of them innocence may not be congruent with the absence of sexual experience. Here we will face many arenas for potential misunderstanding, because the west has become so invested in viewing children in certain ways even despite its own great differences and hypocrisies in the treatment of children (especially in the commercialization of adolescent sexuality). We will almost certainly continue to be outraged by the sexual exploitation of children in the world today, since this is one of the most sensitive fault lines through which we have learned to express indignation. But I doubt whether that will change the sexual abuse of children around the world with or without globalization.

Historians are notorious wimps when it comes to predicting the future, and I offer these thoughts with the usual historian's caveats. At the same time, I would like to suggest that historians should be fully included in current discussions of globalization. Their knowledge is essential to any complete analysis of the nature of the process taking place, whatever the accuracy of their predictions. Finally, it is simply foolhardy to discuss globalization, the cultural politics of globalization, and the social consequences of globalization without firmly situating children in that discussion. I say this not as an expression of mere sentimentality, but because so much of what will happen in the process of globalization and so many ways in which it will be resisted and criticized will have children at their center. If globalization is about the economics, the societies, and the cultures of the future, it is about the future of children and childhood and to that task we should be required to bring all the things we have learned over the course of the last fifty years about childhood in the past.

Department of History
Berkeley, CA 94720-2550

ENDNOTES

1. For a number of these discussions, see *Culture Matters: How Values Shape Human Progress*, edited by Lawrence E. Harrison and Samuel P. Huntington (New York, 2000).

2. An especially effective version is Sebastiao Salgado, *Migrations: Humanity in Transition* (Aperture, 2000). Salgado's photographs have been traveling across the country as an extremely successful exhibition.

3. See Paula S. Fass, *Kidnapped: Child Abduction in America* (New York, 1997); Philip Jenkins, *Moral Panic: Changing Concepts of the Child Molester in Modern America* (New Haven, 1998).

4. The relevant portions of of Alexander Hamilton's s *Report on Manufacture* (1795), can be found in Paula S. Fass and Mary Ann Mason, eds., *Childhood in America* (New York, 2000), p. 248.

5. For the early industrial workers in New England, see Thomas Dublin, *Women at Work* (New York, 1983).

6. Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York, 1985).

7. The innocent child has been extensively written about. See, among others, Anne Higonnet, *Pictures of Innocence: The History and Crisis of Ideal Childhood* (London, 1998), James R. Kincaid, *Child-Loving: The Erotic Child and Victorian Culture* (New York, 1992).

8. See the discussions in Harrison and Huntington on how culture affects globalization issues. What I am arguing is not that culture will determine who will be globalized, but about the consequences globalization may have for culture and for children specifically in those places that are drawn into the international market.

9. See, among others, Linda Gordon, *Heroes of their Own Lives: The Politics and History of Family Violence* (New York, 1988); Mary Odem, *Delinquent Daughters: Protecting and Policing Female Sexuality in the United States, 1885–1920* (Chapel Hill, 1995).

10. Lionel Trilling, *The Liberal Imagination: Essays on Literature and Society* (New York, 1950). For a related perspective pertaining to children today, see Tobias Hecht, *At Home in the Street: Street Children in Northeast Brazil* (Cambridge, England, 1998).

11. Quotes are from Stephen Lassonde, "Learning and Earning: Schooling, Juvenile Employment, and the Early Life Course in Late Nineteenth-Century New Haven," *Journal of Social History*, 29 (summer 1996), 846; Stephen Lassonde, "Should I Go, or Should I Stay?: Adolescence, School Attainment, and Parent-Child Relations in Italian Immigrant Families of New Haven, 1900–1940," *History of Education Quarterly*, 38 (Spring 1998), 49.

12. Lassonde, "Should I Go, or Should I Stay?" 52.

13. On the matter of Islamic resistance to western influences, see Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations* (New York, 1998). Huntington, of course, believes that globalization will not take place in those parts of the world where strong, competing civilizations offer alternative norms and ways of life. I find myself generally at odds with Huntington's view that globalization will lead to a clash of civilizations, rather than a process of gradual interpenetration, although Islamic societies are certainly among those who have been more rigorous in their clear opposition to all the elements of pleasure and play with which western societies beckon and repel.

14. Jane Addams, *The Spirit of Youth and the City Streets* (originally 1909; reprinted by the University of Illinois Press, 1972). On the amusements of young people, see also Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York* (Philadelphia, 1987); David Nasaw, *Children of the City: At Work and Play* (New York, 1985). For a very different view on this matter (much closer to Addams, in fact), see John Burnham, *Bad Habits: Drinking, Smoking, Taking Drugs, Gambling, Sexual Misbehavior, and Swearing in American History* (New York, 1993).

15. See Odem and Eric C. Schneider, *In the Web of Class: Delinquents and Reformers in Boston, 1810s–1930s* (New York, 1992).