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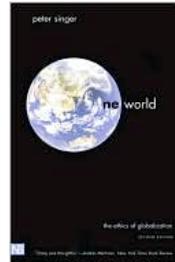
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## One World: The Ethics of Globalization

[Peter Singer](#), [Joanne J. Myers](#)

October 29, 2002



One World: The Ethics of Globalization

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**Introduction**

**JOANNE MYERS:** On behalf of the Carnegie Council I would like to thank you for joining us this morning as we welcome our guest, Peter Singer, author of [One World: The Ethics of Globalization](#).

The world has been utterly transformed in recent years by a phenomenon affecting us all, what we call globalization. Although there was a time when it was possible for citizens of one country to think of themselves as owing no obligation to the people of other nations, admittedly that was long ago. Today national borders have less meaning as issues of trade, environment, and health, along with incredible technological advances of the last century, have left us with a legacy of connectedness we cannot ignore.

Globalization has changed the way societies work and the way individuals think and interact with one another. In such a world, what do we ethically and morally owe our fellow human beings? This question lies at

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the heart of Professor Singer's book.

As globalization moves forward, he asks: What ethics should govern the ethics of nations and of individuals? This question poses an enormous challenge, but it is one that Professor Singer will help us to address as he lays out the ethical problems we face and the politically difficult but morally compelling path we must opt for. Professor Singer is best known in the area of applied ethics, starting with his best-selling *Animal Liberation*. His work is often marked by a strong commitment to utilitarianism and by a wish to displace the morality of what he has referred to as the Judeo-Christian inheritance.

He has been described as intellectually astute, morally serious, and a person who is able to examine important questions with integrity, rigor, and originality. His strength lies in his ability to follow difficult paths further than other scholars care to do, which has led some to challenge his positions.

As *The New Yorker* once wrote, "Peter Singer may be the most controversial philosopher alive, but he is also among the most influential."

Despite the debate over some of his views, there can be no dispute about his credentials and his preeminence in the field of bioethics. He was educated at the University of Melbourne and then at Oxford. In 1977 he returned to Monash University in Melbourne where he founded the Center for Human Bioethics. Professor Singer was the founding president of the International Association of Bioethics and founding co-editor of its official journal.

In 1994 he won the National Book Council of Australia's prize for the best nonfiction book published in Australia. This was for his work *Rethinking of Life and Death*. His books, which are several, also include *Democracy and Disobedience* and *Practical Ethics*. All are written with his trademark clarity and originality. They have been translated into over fifteen languages and are widely taught in ethics classes throughout Europe and the United States.

In 1998 he was appointed the Ira W. Decamp Professor of Bioethics at the

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Professor Singer, the Carnegie Council has always been a forum for the consideration of ethics and new ideas, even if at times some of these ideas make us uncomfortable. I invite you to challenge us in a healthy and invigorating debate to ensure that the threats of today will not destroy our hopes for tomorrow.

Thank you for joining us.

### Remarks

**PETER SINGER:** Looking through the list, I notice that many of you are very hands-on in matters relating to globalization and international affairs. So I will begin by explaining my approach in the book, and how I see my role in the debate, before going on to talk about the specific themes and issues.

My background is as a philosopher with a specialization in applied or practical ethics. So if I come to the questions raised by globalization, my approach is to ask: What sort of ethical stance should we take to these issues? What stance can be better defended or justified regarding these issues than others?

You may see what I am doing as skating over the surface and somehow not having a real connection with what actually goes on in the real world where political leaders are making tough decisions.

There are conflicting forces that are involved in an interplay of politics and ethics and a variety of other thoughts when people make these decisions. I am not claiming that one has only to lay out a logical and rational argument to say "this is what ought to happen" for it then to follow that it does happen.

But, at the same time, I am also disagreeing with what you might think of as a realist conception, that it is simply a matter of national interests that are at play and ethics has nothing to do with it. On the contrary, people generally do prefer to do what they see as right and they like to be able to justify what they are doing in ethical terms.

The particular interest at stake will bend their conceptions of what is right, but at some point there is a pull in both directions. So if you can show that the dissonance between what we ought to be doing and what we are doing is sharp, clear, and inescapable, then perhaps what we ought to be doing does have some effect in the long run on what we are doing.

As a contribution to sharpening our conceptions about what we ought to be doing, in the belief that this plays a role in what we end up doing, I have written this book to further the debate.

I am looking at the idea that we have heard so often over the last few years, that globalization is moving us together in various ways. I sketch briefly some of the reasons, some as simple as technology and infrastructure. Our economies are more closely meshed. The Internet means that New York banks can hire clerks in India to balance their books overnight, and that links those economies in ways that would not be possible if relying on air mail.

When we are talking about issues like foreign aid, that CNN can get a camera crew into someplace where there is poverty or a famine and we can see in our living rooms the images of what is happening instantly, makes a difference in how we feel about being one world and one community. And then there is the move toward economic globalization—free trade, liberalization.

If we take this seriously, what should we be thinking ethically? In what way should our ethical thought change on a range of issues, such as global warming, climate change; economic issues, particularly trade liberalization, the debate over the WTO that was sparked by demonstrations in Seattle in December 1999, and questions about the WTO's role; issues of national sovereignty in relationship to the right to intervene in another country to prevent genocide or crimes against humanity; and, fourthly, the question of foreign aid? How should we think about this if we take seriously this idea of being a global community?

In general, our ethics has been nationally focused—that is, we have seen national borders as being highly significant ethically as well as politically. We need to question whether that should remain the case; and, if not, then where do we go from there?

For a brief example of ethics being focused nationally, look at the best-known,

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most-discussed work on justice to be published since the Second World War, John Rawls's *A Theory of Justice*, 500-odd pages presenting a theory of justice, but all of it focused on justice within our own community.

So although Rawls comes up with the idea that the principles of justice require us to focus on raising the minimum level in society and permitting inequalities only insofar as they contribute to raising the level of the worst off in society, what he means by that is exactly the worst off in society. He never explains the obligations of justice between societies; what does one wealthy society owe to another, much poorer society? It is extraordinary that such a large book on justice fails to address what is surely one of the most pressing questions of justice in the world today.

A couple of years back, Rawls published *The Law of Peoples*, a much thinner volume, in which he does address that question. And the concept of justice still is focused primarily on justice in societies, and the obligations of societies to each other are seen as much more limited than the obligations of justice within society.

So it is that perspective that I am questioning. Should we continue to think of justice on a national basis?

One of the clearest cases where that must be challenged is in the first of my themes, the question of climate change. Think about the difference that it makes to our conceptions of thinking ethically either within a community or globally once we understand that things that people do entirely within their own territory—like, for example, decisions about what kinds of vehicles we drive—could lead to making it impossible for, let's say, villages in Bangladesh to continue to farm low-lying delta lands where tens of millions of Bangladeshis make their living, because it may contribute to the rise in sea levels, which may mean that those lands become inundated and too salty to farm. Or it may contribute to changes in climate patterns in sub-Saharan Africa, which eliminates the reliable rainfall needed to grow crops.

I argue that we cannot continue to say, "Nations should do what is in their best interests." There is a tendency for leaders to say, "Governments should always do what is in the national interest." Now, you might think that is a very reasonable response. But if every national leader answers the question that way, then we may well have a "tragedy of the commons" in the way that Hardin made famous some years back, that we all hope that others will do the right thing but that we can continue to have the advantages of not controlling our emissions.

The atmosphere is a commons, and it has, as we have now discovered, limited capacities to soak up our waste gases, in particular our carbon dioxide.

If the atmosphere is a global resource, we must ask: how should it be divided up? There are a number of different possibilities. One that comes to mind as a possibly fair starting point is to say: there's no particular reason why any citizen of the world has a greater claim to a share of that common resource than any other. None of us have owned it in the past, none of us have created it, so why not just say that every citizen of the world has an equal share to it? What would happen if you were to take that view?

You could take a notional acceptable output of greenhouse gases, which is, let's say, what the Kyoto Protocol would produce if everyone signed on and then divide it by the population of the world. What do you find?

You find that China and India, for example, are not yet using their per capita share. China is around 75 percent and India only at about 35 percent of its per capita share. The United States, on the other hand, is using five times its per capita share.

So on that basis, the idea that it would not be evenhanded for the United States to make a modest reduction starts to look rather shaky. And the idea that China and India have to be banned before the United States should make any reduction is also dubious, because you could say, "At least they can rise to 100 percent of their share before they should be banned."

It is very hard to think of a principle of fairness that would allow the United States to continue to produce anything like its present output of greenhouse gases while other nations, which are also significantly poorer nations than the United States, are producing less than their per capita share, or so much smaller amounts.

My book explores a variety of different principles of fairness. The conclusion that I reach is that there is no acceptable ethical principle that allows the United States to continue to produce the amount of greenhouse gases that it does, let alone to continue to increase its output, which seems to be happening under the current arrangements, while this will cause significant disturbance and disruption to the lives of many people elsewhere in the world.

So here is one example where thinking ethically not on the national level but on the global level has very practical implications, and implications which should make a difference to the behavior of particular countries.

The second issue that I examine is the issue of trade and the role of the WTO in particular. I had the interesting experience of being invited to a meeting of the World Economic Forum in Davos in January just after the demonstrations in Seattle, and also attending an anti-globalization forum here in New York around the time of the Millennium Summit in 2000.

I came away with the impression that there were very polarized views here, where people are not even trying to look at what the other side is saying.

So I have tried to give a somewhat more detached, nonpartisan look at some of the issues that have been raised there and to ask, for example: Is it true that the WTO allows economic values to trump everything else—the environment, the rights of workers, social issues? I have also asked questions like: Is it true that trade liberalization has simply widened the gap between rich and poor, as has been claimed by those who object to it?

The answer here is that it depends on which slice of the poor you are talking about. If you are asking has the gap between the richest and poorest 10 percent of the world narrowed or increased in the era of trade liberalization, the answer is, unfortunately, that it has increased.

You could also ask a separate question: Have the poorest 10 percent become better or worse off in the era of liberalization, never mind how big the gap has grown between them and the richest 10 percent? It is very hard to say that they have become better off. Perhaps they have remained stable; perhaps they have become marginally worse off; it doesn't seem that they have become better off.

Suppose you want to look at the gap between the poorest third and the richest third. The answer seems to be that that gap has narrowed and that the poorest third have become significantly better off, largely because of economic improvement in China, which, because of its population, comprises a large portion of the poorest third but not of the poorest 10 percent.

And so you see that values come into whether you think this is a good or a bad thing now. If someone tells you that the gap between the poorest third and the richest third has narrowed and the poorest third are better off than they used to be, but the gap between the poorest tenth and the richest tenth has widened and the poorest tenth are no better off than they used to be, is that something that you welcome or deplore? That is where you have to look at your own values about what is important about issues in justice.

On the other question, it is true that the WTO under its existing arrangements has allowed economic values to trump many other important values, and that is particularly true of environmental issues, where it has been very hard for countries to maintain environmental laws without running afoul of WTO dispute resolution procedures which have struck down many of their laws.

While you could say that this is just neutral on environmental issues, the effect has not been, because it has been made very difficult for nations to convince the dispute resolution bodies that their environmental protection laws are bona fide concern for the environment and not a measure of disguised protection.

Changes do need to be made. And, indeed, at the Doha WTO Ministerial Meeting late last year, there was agreement to explore some of these issues and ways to change. But that is clearly a very difficult process, and negotiations have not progressed very far since the Doha meeting, so it is hard to say whether the WTO will be able to reform itself in that direction.

The third issue is the question of the inviolability of national sovereignty and the way we are starting to re-understand that because of issues like humanitarian intervention.

We have clearly moved away from the assumptions that dominated the world

for about three centuries, usually dated from the Treaty of Westphalia in 1648, which set up the nation state and gave the idea that what governments do to their own subjects is their own business and not the business of any other nation. That prevailed until the Second World War, and perhaps the first important breach was the Nuremberg proceedings which tried the Nazi leaders not only for making aggressive war but also for crimes against humanity committed on their own citizens.

That precedent then remained in abeyance for a long time during the Cold War era but now has been revived with, for example, the strong sense that the United Nations should have intervened in Rwanda to prevent the genocide there, and that leading on to intervention in the former Yugoslavia, in Bosnia, and then in Kosovo, and to our holding governments responsible for gross violations of human rights, genocide or crimes against humanity, within their own borders. The notion of national sovereignty is no longer what it once was.

Another interesting step in this development is the International Criminal Court, whereby nations pledge themselves to allow their subjects to be tried by an international body for crimes against humanity and genocide. I see this as an important move towards a global community and international standards protecting human rights rather than purely national ones.

Again, it is not an institution in which the United States has played a positive role. At a time when the U.S. is leading the war against terrorism, it is a pity that it feels unable to support an international, independent, impartial judicial body which could, for example, try terrorists accused by the United States. That would be a very positive step in this present era, and I regret that the United States Administration has not seen it that way.

Finally, I look at foreign aid and what this tells us about where we are now in terms of thinking of the world as a global community and where we should go. My argument is that if you look at what is actually happening in foreign aid as distinct from the rhetoric, it belies the idea that we believe in human equality, that we believe that all human life is in some way precious or important, that the sufferings of human beings everywhere matter irrespective of their nationality.

The amount of foreign aid that is given is laughably small in terms of the capacity of the wealthy nations to give. The United Nations set a target many years ago of 0.7 percent of foreign aid—in other words, \$0.70 in every \$100.00 that a nation earns. And yet, even that extremely modest target has only been surpassed by a handful of nations—the Scandinavian countries and the Netherlands. The United States gives only 0.1 percent, one-seventh of what the United Nations target is, one-tenth of what, for example, Denmark gives as a proportion of Gross Domestic Product.

President Bush has pledged to increase this over the next three years by \$5 billion, roughly a 50 percent increase, which is very welcome, but still leaves the United States far below all comparable developed nations. And even if you add in private donations, where the United States does have a reasonably high level of private charity compared to other countries, it still doesn't push the United States to a level comparable with the other major industrialized nations.

The World Bank recently released a study on what it would cost in additional aid to achieve the targets set at the United Nations Millennium Meeting. They were things like halving global poverty by 2015, bringing safe drinking water to most of the people in the world by that date, providing primary education.

The \$60 billion in additional aid per year estimated may seem a large sum, but if you consider what the United States has now boosted its defense spending by, that would have accounted for the major part of that sum alone, and that is just from the United States, not from all of the other developed countries that presumably would have followed a strong U.S. lead in this area.

If we don't put in those relatively modest amounts so that we are talking not of 0.1 percent of GDP but at least 1 percent or perhaps 2 percent of GDP, still \$1.00 or \$2.00 in every \$100.00 that we earn, then we cannot hold our heads up and say, "We do believe that human beings are equally precious or equally important no matter what country they live in," and we can't think of ourselves as contributing to the development of a global community.

**JOANNE MYERS:** Thank you very much. I'd like to open the floor to questions.

## Questions and Answers

**QUESTION:** Something about the per capita shares argument sounds wacky and bothers me. The damage to the environment is caused by the total quantity of emissions, not per capita quantity of emissions. There is also the problem of thresholds which, if crossed, cause irreversible damage. It might turn out by your standard that the most evil country in the world is Vatican City because when they burn the ballots to elect the Pope, because there are so few people, it goes up to 800 percent. But it's just a little smoke, so it isn't doing very much damage.

If India moves up from 35 percent to 100 percent, this is a catastrophic amount of pollution put into the air.

**PETER SINGER:** I agree that what you need to do is to provide an incentive for India to remain well below its quota, and China as well. And indeed, you can do that, because if you did have a regime that had notional equal per capita shares, you could combine that with emissions trading, which Kyoto does envisage for those countries that are bound by it but not for the developing countries because they are outside it.

What I am suggesting is that you work from some idea of notional per capita shares, you bring all the developing countries in right now, and they would be very happy to be brought in because they are under their quotas, and they would then have emissions quotas to sell. So the developing nations would instantly have something that the industrialized nations very much need in order to avoid having to crank down drastically on their economies. And you would provide an incentive to those countries to keep their own emissions low because if they don't do so, they no longer have any quota to sell.

So you would achieve the desirable effect. You would also incidentally achieve some transfer of resources from the developed nations to the developing nations, which, for the reasons that I talked about in the last theme that I touched, would independently be a good thing.

**QUESTION:** I have an observation on your point about foreign aid. There have been polls conducted in this country that have asked the American public a series of questions: Do you think too much of the budget is being spent on foreign aid; and the overwhelming majority say yes. When the question is, "How much do you think is being spent?" the overwhelming majority choose a category between 15 and 25 percent of the budget. "How much do you think should be spent?" and they say 5 percent. And the correct answer, as you said, is 0.1 percent is actually being spent. So it's interesting that even in terms of perceptions of what is just, the American public has a totally different sense of what should be done and what needs to be done by comparison to what is actually being done.

You made a number of interesting points that it is easy for us working in the international domain to argue in favor of our common humanity, the whole notion of a global commons and all of that. But what is the ethical responsibility of a democratic politician in a political democracy to the people who put him there? In other words, when President Bush says he will act in the American interests, what he is saying to the voters is, "I will look out for you first." And the argument in any polity is that you want to put in office people who are principally accountable to you and your interests rather than to those of others.

Ethically, how do you reconcile the value of democracy with the value of responsibility for people beyond your borders who had no role in entrusting you with the responsibility you now have through your office to be able to make a difference to their lives?

**PETER SINGER:** Firstly, on the observation, you are right, and I do mention those surveys. It is puzzling that people seem to remain misinformed, and political leaders don't do the job of educating them on this question. In fact, just one very small correction. The percentage of the U.S. budget that is spent on foreign aid is about 1 percent rather than 0.1 percent. The 0.1 percent is of the Gross Domestic Product.

What can be done to make foreign aid an issue where people think that they want to support leaders who will increase foreign aid, as long as they are assured that it will be given in effective ways? I don't know.

There is a totally different climate in this country from the climate in the Netherlands or in Denmark, where people are more aware of these issues and

more prepared to support politicians who say, "We want to at least be among the leading nations in the world in terms of what we do. We want to be proud of our record on foreign aid."

You raise a very interesting question about democracy and the role of leaders given that. It is a difficult question to solve within present institutions.

One possible solution would be to say we need a more educated democratic public that supports ethical principles, rather than simply national selfishness and "my freedom to drive my SUV."

But if I'm right in saying we are moving to a global community and problems like climate change cannot be solved on a national level, the ultimate answer might be some stronger global institutions which are themselves in some way democratically responsible.

The possibility of moving towards a global structure that is in some way more like the structure of the European Union, for instance, with some procedures that can resolve issues between nations as part of a framework and make more binding resolutions, may seem totally Utopian, but in the long run it's the direction in which the world has to go. Whether we'll be around to see it happen is another question.

**QUESTION:** Greenhouse gases accumulate and have been accumulating since the industrial revolution, and it's not particularly fair to say to India and China, who haven't until now started to participate in this industrial revolution, "You have the same responsibility we have," because we, the north and the industrialized countries, have been sending stuff up there for about a 150 years and they haven't.

There is a brilliant study produced under the auspices of the Canadian Government, called "The Responsibility to Protect"—not the right to intervene, but the responsibility to protect. This takes the debate that you are discussing about what we should have done about Rwanda and carries it forward and tries to capture a widening consensus on the responsibility of the international community to protect people who are being abused by their own governments.

**PETER SINGER:** In my book, I consider various principles of fairness as well as equal per capita shares, and one of them is the "you broke it, you fix it" principle, and that is exactly what applies to the developing nations in the past. They are the ones who caused the problem.

I do have a number of references to the Canadian International Commission's "The Responsibility to Protect" document in here, which is an outstanding document. It has contributed to furthering the debate about the responsibility to intervene.

**QUESTION:** I was a little disappointed by your comments on the WTO and the disputes resolution system, particularly in light of your subsequent answer to the question about how do you match democracy with the ethical issues.

There is a very long philosophical tradition going back at least to John Stuart Mill, if not before that, which suggests that protectionism is an ill which damages the poor, restricts consumer choice, and in the modern globalized world is particularly iniquitous when it comes to trade by the poorest countries. I take protectionism to be an ethical problem in the global trading system.

And yet, your discussion of the WTO disputes resolution system left the impression that it was economic issues which outweigh environmental and social issues. I put it to you that the reverse is the case. The developed world is littered with examples of environmental and social issues being used as an excuse for protectionism. You've only to look at the way in which the GMO [Genetically Modified Organism] issue has been used as an excuse in Europe to ban imports of agricultural products from North America; the question of hormones as an excuse to ban beef; the way the Japanese have used health and safety issues to restrict imports of agriculture; the way the social issues in Canada mean that they restrict imports of alcohol through their Liquor Board; and in this country, even down to the absurd example that you can't sell liqueur chocolates in Pennsylvania because of constraints going back to Prohibition. The world is littered with the social agenda restricting consumer choice.

It is extraordinary that we should then turn around and attack the one

international organization that has begun the process of trying to resolve these disputes between nations. The WTO, all power to it, if it does manage to get rid of bogus arguments on social and environmental grounds which are unethical in my view.

**PETER SINGER:** I do not want to give the impression that it's a question of economics versus ethics when you discuss a protective barrier. It is a question of economics versus environmental values or workers' rights issues.

I agree with you entirely that the economic issue is also an ethical issue and that has to be weighed in the balance. There is positive ethical value in allowing access and trade

But the question with you list is, are they genuine ethical concerns?

Many Europeans have genuine ethical concerns about GMOs, not only, as it tends to be presented in the American media, about the health risks to themselves but about the environmental risks of cross-pollination of crops, the GMO crops, and changes in the environment. Many people in Britain feel strongly about that as a genuine issue and have no interest in making bogus claims for trade protection purposes.

Also, in the animal welfare world, which is something that I have had a lot to do with, I know that, for example, the European Union has adopted a number of regulations concerning the treatment of farm animals which are far in advance of anything that the United States has even remotely dreamt of, and in advance of many other countries as well. But the animal welfare movement in Europe is deeply worried that when these regulations come into force in 2012, does that mean that there will be a flood of cheaper imports from countries that have lower standards? I hope not. I hope that Europe is able to speak to its perfectly genuine animal welfare values and that this is not something that the WTO claims to be bogus way of protecting European agriculture. I believe that it is a value that has to be weighed against the economic and social benefits of opening trade.

**QUESTION:** I appreciate your concern with human rights around the world, and also the question of the need for the wealthier countries to help the poorer. But I would like to do some linking, as you do here.

Since most of the world's poorest countries are led by regimes that are not democratic, and some very autocratic, dictatorial regimes that are very much guilty of human rights violations against their own citizens, when you ask that the more developed world be more generous with foreign aid, how do you apply that foreign aid to regimes that are very repressive against their own citizens, particularly in the world's poorest countries? And then, who will make the decision on the allocation of those greater resources that you are arguing for?

**PETER SINGER:** The answer is, clearly, you don't give it to those particular regimes. There are two things that you might do. You might find the most democratic regimes among the poor nations and you go to them and say, "You are doing the right thing, so we will help you very substantially, and we will work with you and cooperate, and make you and other countries that are equally democratic into models of what can be done if countries adopt democratic institutions." That may indeed, once it becomes known, serve as an incentive for other nations to change their regimes insofar as they can.

The other option is to work with NGOs that even in repressive regimes are allowed to have local agents on the ground working on specific projects so the funds are not passing through the corrupt government itself.

It is always difficult and there are points at which there are various kinds of interference with what you are doing, where you have to constantly be assessing your situation and asking, "Are we still able to effectively help people here and help development, or are we somehow propping up a repressive regime?" There is a point at which you might say, "We're getting too much interference and we have to pull out; we have to cut our losses here and go." That's sad, but it has to be done.

But within a reasonable framework, you can sometimes do quite a lot for particular people and communities, without running the moral hazard of giving to the regime that does not have the interests of the people at heart.

**QUESTION:** I would ask you to expand on other sides of foreign aid. You have been emphasizing what the developed countries should do. But there is

the other side of self-help. As many years of experience have shown in the whole development process, it is not enough for an external donor to give; it is absolutely essential for governments and peoples to use whatever aid comes in effectively within a larger program and a larger understanding of what development means.

Even China would be an example of not wanting to just bring in the foreign investors, but also to learn new techniques for factories or manufacturing. So how do you put this into your larger picture?

**PETER SINGER:** I agree with you entirely on the general principle. It's the idea of how do you encourage self-sufficiency rather than reliance on foreign aid.

There's a threshold that you have to get people through, that they can be so burdened with poverty that they can't make the breakthrough. They do not, for example, have the ability to educate their children, which is an important part of that step to move through. So they can't get into self-help as yet. But what we could do is create the conditions to put them over the threshold, where they have a little bit of economic security, where they can educate the next generation, where they can assure at least the basic minimal health care and safe water supply for the next generation, and then they can move to self-help and to becoming independent of foreign aid.

**QUESTION:** My question is on allocation of foreign aid. We might justify aid in two different ways. One, we might say that we should use aid where we can maximally benefit those who are badly off. Or we might say that we should compensate those who have been harmed by our actions or by our shared institutions. I would ask whether you took that to be a morally significant distinction, and whether it would actually make any difference in aid policies?

**PETER SINGER:** There could be some differences as to whether you look at these issues of foreign aid in utilitarian terms or in terms of restitution and compensation. When you are talking about distributing resources to those who are the worst off, simply because of the law of diminishing marginal utility, the idea that if you are earning \$100,000 and someone gives you \$1,000, it doesn't make a huge difference to your lifestyle; but if you are earning \$5,000 and someone gives you \$1,000, it makes a big difference. In terms of distribution, the utilitarian will focus on giving more to those who have less, and in terms of restitution or compensation you will also be focusing on those who have been the victims of colonialization, those whose situation has been damaged by relations in the past.

**JOANNE MYERS:** I thank you for engaging us, stimulating us, and provoking us this morning.

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- ["One World: The Ethics of Globalization", Peter Singer \(New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002\)](#) and ["World Poverty and Human Rights," Thomas Pogge \(Cambridge: Polity, 2002\)](#) (Book Reviews)
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