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Abstract
Globalization seems more believed than known, somewhat tacit and no less powerful for that. It seems to have outgrown status as a metaphor, but not yet arrived at the twin graveyards of clear and distinct ideas and fixed, lexical meaning. Like other "-ized" terms, it can signify either (or both) transitivity or intransitivity; that is, it can produce understanding and interpretation of either actions or of states of affairs, agency or structure for example. One can "globalize" (perform globalization) or globalization can simply be a way of understanding the nature of things. Such indeterminacy is at the core of moral and political questions about human agency and responsibility for globalization. Globalization in the context of agency is grounded hermeneutically in what "-Izers" do, as one might, for example, "globalize" production. In the context of structures, globalization has primarily objective sense and reference as, for example, one might speak of electronically interconnected systems of capital exchange. It seems to me that globalization poses critical-theoretic difficulties in large part because of this ambiguity embedded within the term itself. "-Izers" (agents) may or may not be at work; and, even if they are, critical evaluation of their work must fight through the ontological fog of drawing agency out of the "state of things" (structures) – a poststructural classic.

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Three "*-Izations*"

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[This is a rather crude and early draft of a paper for submission to a conference. It is under-referenced and unfinished. For those reasons, please do not quote without my permission and please provide any comments to help it along].

"Too often, what everyone believes, nobody knows."

Stephen Toulmin, Cosmopolis, p. 12

Globalization seems more believed than known, somewhat tacit and no less powerful for that. It seems to have outgrown status as a metaphor, but not yet arrived at the twin graveyards of clear and distinct ideas and fixed, lexical meaning. Like other "-ized" terms, it can signify either (or both) transitivity or intransitivity; that is, it can produce understanding and interpretation of either actions or of states of affairs, agency or structure for example. One can "globalize" (perform globalization) or globalization can simply be a way of understanding the nature of things. Such indeterminacy is at the core of moral and political questions about human agency and responsibility for globalization. Globalization in the context of agency is grounded hermeneutically in what "-Izers" do, as one might, for example, "globalize" production. In the context of structures, globalization has primarily objective sense and reference as, for example, one might speak of electronically interconnected systems of capital exchange. It seems to me that globalization poses critical-theoretic difficulties in large part because of this ambiguity embedded within the term itself. "-Izers" (agents) may or may not be at work; and, even if they are, critical evaluation of their work must fight through the ontological fog of drawing agency out of the "state of things" (structures) – a poststructural classic.

Complex social phenomena, like globalization, blur distinctions between structures and human agency (see Giddens, 2001). If inquiry into such phenomena seeks to provide insights and guidance about human possibilities, like for example "managing,"

then grappling with the indeterminacy of social processes in which structure and agency are blurred seems preferable to pretending that things are rather clear. Granting structures too much credit leads easily to a rather fatalistic array of guidance – live with the structure, manage within the structure, etc. Granting agency too much credit avoids the fatalism but pays the price of romanticism -- persons cannot simply override social structures because they can imagine or remember how things once were. Globalization, whatever it might be, seems paradigmatic of this setting. Powerful and often brutal structures like hyper-mobile global financial capital carry with them imperatives for particular kinds of agency; and, with that, agency faces the problem of ensuring that moral-political horizons are preserved from within those structures.[1] That requires imagination -- political, moral, economic, cultural, and social imagination. This essay is a thought experiment in how to imagine the relation between globalization, accounting, and the imaginative potential of meaning as a possibility for "managing things."

Globalizations

I will follow Bartelson's (2000) conceptual reckoning of the term globalization. Bartelson suggests that the conceptual history of the concept of globalization finds itself in an "ontological interregnum," as it transgresses the "stratification and compartmentalization of the world" on which social scientific thought and practice has come to depend. Bartelson explains:

> Today few doubt the reality of globalization, yet no one seems to know with any certainty what makes globalization real. So while there is no agreement about *what* globalization *is*, the entire discourse on globalization is founded on a quite solid agreement *that* globalization *is* (2000, p. 180).

A shift from the "what is" to the "that is" of globalization moves us somewhat away from conventional rationales of the social sciences, rationales like "…the desire to purge scientific discourse of ambiguity by stipulating connotations through clear cut definitions" (ibid., p. 181). This desire is a well-rehearsed one, with origins in Cartesian valorization of the "clear and distinct," analytic valorization of exactitude in language,

[1] If financial capital is globally mobile, then so is physical capital. That mobility opens the critical space for preserving legitimate concerns with modern processes like control of the labor process. I thank my colleague Bill Brown for this insight.

and social scientific emulation of the methods of modern natural science.[2] Though of course the modern division of the social sciences and the ontological presuppositions on which it is based give rise to credible knowledge about economies, organizations, international relations, etc., something nonetheless seems amiss as we speak of and sense the desire for something other than our conventional ways of knowing as we confront our belief *that* globalization is. For Bartelson, the *idea* of globalization today

> … functions both as a 'space of experience' as well as a 'horizon of expectation': a space of experience insofar as it draws upon and incorporates elements from modern social ontology; a horizon of expectation insofar as it contains an implicit promise to transcend modernity proper and the strictures it imposes on political imagination (Bartelson, p. 183, as adapted from Koselleck's (1985) terminology).

Bartelson's argument is based on three different ways in which the term globalization can be conceptualized – as *transference*, as *transformation*, and as *transcendence*. The first two fit well with conventional understandings of social ontology and social science, as they are embedded in the familiar categories of states, organizations, nations, etc. Bartelson offers the third term, transcendence, in the spirit of something like a critical imaginary, an invitation to think with but beyond conventional understandings. Each offers its own critical potential, though moving through them takes us from the comfort of convention to more challenging confrontations with intelligibility and accessibility. Meeting that challenge does, for him, open more space for political imagination and critical potential. I will briefly present Bartelson's three concepts and suggest the critical potential embedded in each of them.

Globalization as transference

A language of transference positions globalization in the conventional form of identifiable entities (states, corporations) interacting in a way that does not alter the

[2] Interestingly, in his insightful text *Cosmopolis*, Stephen Toulmin explains how the forerunner of globalization, a cosmopolitianism at the originary core of Modernity, shared this same desire. Toulmin suggests that we would have been much better off if the fruitful texts of the sixteenth-century humanists had not been eclipsed. Perhaps it's not too late.

identities of the entities themselves in any ontologically significant manner. Bartelson explains:

> Perhaps the first and most common sense of globalization is that of globalization as an intensified *transference* or *exchange* of things between preconstituted units, be they political, economic or cultural. Thus conceived, globalization signifies a *process of change that originates at the level of the unit*, mainly in terms of the unintended consequences of the *interaction between units*. Globalization as transference thus implies *exchange across existing unit boundaries* and between units and system, but it still presupposes that this system as well as the units remain identical with themselves throughout the globalizing process." (p. 184).

The hermeneutical key here is no different from that which anchors understanding of terms like "internationalization," "multinational" corporations or trade, or "federalism" inasmuch as the unit (the state, the firm, the agent) remains the ontological anchor for understanding. Globalization as transference can of course explain how the *power* of units/agents moves from the "inside out" and thus becomes an object for moral assessment and reaction from outside its own boundaries. This view, for example, provides potential for continuing and important inquiry into imperialism, economic and environmental exploitation, and other ways in which social machinery acts upon others in *the name of* the unit itself. But the discourse remains such that "…globalization may well affect the attributes of states [or other units], yet without changing their basic identity or fundamentally disrupting their capacity to act" (Bartelson, p. 185; insert mine). Globalization at best becomes a derivative term sharing the semantic and pragmatic space with terms like international, multinational, and multicultural, losing its imaginative potential now encrusted in theories and worldviews that have been around for a long, long time and that make *"…locality* the condition of possible *globality"* (ibid., p. 185).

Globalization as transformation

A second construal – globalization as transformation – decenters units as it attends to the manner in which systems spread across and not just within units such that the functionality of systems is of less interest than is the generative capacity of such systems to change the nature of the units themselves. Bartelson explains:

> If globalization is understood in the first concept as a process of interaction and transference between pre-existing units, the second concept does much to reverse

> this picture: in this sense, globalization is a process of *transformation* that occurs at the systems level, and it affects this system as much as it affects the identity of the units.
>
> Globalization takes place over and above the units as a result of the interaction *between* systemic variables *across* different dimensions and sectors of that system. Thus, globalization is by definition a multidimensional process that takes place *outside in.* To the extent that this process involves the units, it does so by turning them into reproductive circuits for those systemic processes and forces which ultimately alter their identity and, eventually, the constitutive rules of the system in which they are situated." (pp. 186-187).

Globalization as transformation finds its conceptual center in systems and structures which act upon units and agents in ways which change their shape and character. Perhaps the best example is the force of structural economic imperatives within global capitalism to turn the state (and indeed corporations) into "… executors and plenipotentiaries of forces which they have no hope of controlling politically" (Bauman, 1998, p. 65 as cited in Bartelson, p.188). In other words, capital doesn't go through customs; it bounces off of satellites. State legitimacy demands transformation of the state from a modern welfare state that contains the private sector and extracts resources to secure the natural rights of citizens into a functionary within the private sector obligated to facilitate economic efficiency as a structural imperative, for the most part irrespective of "rights" or any other moral term. Thus while the "units" of conventional social science remain in place, their identities and actions are altered because of processes and structures attributed to the "global," to something outside of themselves. While transference works from "the inside out" of the units, transformation works from "the outside in."

Globalization as transcendence

Bartelson's third term, transcendence, always makes me a bit nervous. Laudable as an appeal to social and political imaginaries, it is perhaps better understood as a way of saying something like "the old words and paradigms have seen better days; by transcendence we mean to look for new ones, to imagine radical difference." That sense of breaking through into a domain of newness is the central idea in Bartelson's notion of globalization as transcendence:

> Thus far we have stayed within the limits defined by the ontology of the social sciences, within a world that comes stratified into units and systems and compartmentalized into sectors of human thought and action. …
>
> So what takes place beyond this world can only be rendered transparent in new terms. The most recent set of connotations soaked up by the concept of globalization promises to escape the strictures of modern social thought by defying the standard ontologization of the world into units and system and by disputing its compartmentalization into sectors or dimensions. Thus understood, globalization implies the *transcendence* of those distinctions that together condition unit, system and dimension identity. Globalization is neither inside out nor outside in but rather a process that *dissolves* the distinction between inside and outside." (p. 189).

Though Bartelson and others perhaps overly romanticize this concept – treating it as something of an intellectual ticket into a brave new world where "states die" and "total emancipation" finds the door open, globalization as transcendence ". . . *despatializes* and *detemporalizes* human practices as well as the conditions of human knowledge, and it projects them onto the global as a condition of its existence. Thus conceived, globalization is driven forward by a dynamic of its own and is *irreducible* to singular causes within particular sectors or dimensions" (p. 189). At the ontological level, transcendence represents a linguistic turn such that discursive practices and flows of information replace social units and agents as the primary objects of inquiry into globalization.

To summarize, whatever the weaknesses, Bartelson responds elegantly to begin to remedy the specific elusiveness of the concept of globalization. By my lights, if globalization is to be understood as *transference* we would be better off without the term. In the context of semantic and pragmatic meaning, the term adds nothing to what we can already glean from a focus on the international, the multinational, or even the transnational. And, because the term globalization is socially, politically, and morally less transparent than these other terms, it carries less potential for critical assessment of agents and their actions. For example, a capitalist or a corporation who has the financial and political power to work from "the inside out" on others can attribute the consequences of agency to the ephemeral domain of "globalization," thus deflecting moral attention away from agency and onto the rather amoral domain of systemic

imperatives. "The world as my oyster"[3] flows smoothly from the mouth of this sense of globalization. Further, at the level of critical inquiry, rich and critically productive theoretical and empirical resources are available within the domains of the international, the multinational, and the transnational that become less specific to agency and thereby less effective as critical resources when embedded in a discourse of globalization (see, for example, Stiglitz 2002).

Globalization as transformation garners semantic and pragmatic import inasmuch as it brings political economy back into focus. Units like states and organizations are altered in their identities and their functions as they become embedded within systems, structures, and processes that overcome the modern fragmentation of the political and the economic into autonomous units of inquiry. The ability of states (and organizations) to treat concepts like the rights of citizenship as if they were sovereign over economic imperatives and could "contain" those imperatives is weakened, and there is much critical potential in reconfiguring the nature of states and governmentality to a concept that matches what that nature is in a globalized world – these units are of necessity primarily functionaries within the apparati of global capital.

Globalization as transcendence may be overly romanticized, but it does sharply turn the social science of globalization toward language and away from some rather stale modern categories of place and time. This has both descriptive legitimacy and critical promise. A globalized world is better described through flows of information than in terms of modern interplays between institutions and agents. One ubiquitous and powerful medium embedded in the meaning of globalization is accounting – a discourse and a set of practices which contains both the structure and the agency of global capital and which is *legally recognized* as the "master" discourse of global political economy. It is itself an "-Ization" of particular note.

Accountingizations

[3] My own anecdotal conclusion from conversations with American business persons (and business professors) is that this is precisely what globalization means to them, coded as that message might be.

Some scholars refer to "accountingization" to describe ways in which organizations – public and private alike – now give more of the discursive floor to the conventional discourse of accounting – its financial lexicon; its functional grammar; its control capacities, its economic calculi, its particular logic, and its auditability (see Power and Laughlin, 1992; Broadbent and Laughlin, 1994, 1997; Hood, 1995). Because of its functionality within an axiology (a value-space) committed to economic efficiency and capitalist ideology, accounting neatly folds itself into the underdetermined ethical and political comportments of globalization. In this sense, accountingization can be understood to "delinguistify" a range of ethical, social, and political aspects of the experiences of globalization, reductively translating them into a language of economic efficiency and profitability. Indeed, if globalization as transformation is to commit to flows of information exchange as the heir to conventional units of analysis, then accounting stands as what might be termed the "master discourse" of globalization. It is a vivid reminder of the risk we face in underplaying the ease with which the structural imperatives toward efficiency and profitability "trump" (or colonize) our more humane linguistic practices in legal and quasi-legal discourse throughout the globe.

Accountingization emerges from four historical developments that have enhanced the significance of accounting to everyday contemporary life. The first is the collapse of planned economies in the past three decades, a collapse that made capitalism overtly global. As the legally-mandated language for the financial regulation of capital; and, irrespective of whether or not such regulation is directly under the control of governments, the expansion of capitalistic accounting forces the hegemony of a particular calculus, lexicon, and grammar into a global organizational and political context. That hegemony can work in an imperial way through the expansion of Western multinationals or it can work in an originary way as emerging organizations commit themselves to Western accounting, often with the prodding of transnational agencies like the World Bank, the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB), and the International Organization of Securities Commissions (IOSCO).

The second historical development to enhance the accountingization of things is the technology-induced efficiencies and growth in the production of and dissemination of information, best evidenced through the Internet. This makes accounting more salient in

at least three ways. First, from an organizational perspective, elaborate systems (e.g., SAP©) are built around the structural features of conventional accounting systems. The "account" is the nominative lynchpin of such systems. The difference now is that accounting entries can rather costlessly proliferate into a seemingly endless array of financial representations and documents, putatively facilitating managerial decisions, regulatory reporting, and control processes. Because time and attention are scarce resources, such proliferation colonizes or squeezes out other modes of organizational discourse. The second way in which accounting gains salience through information systems results from the interaction of information technology and the despatialization of work, a despatialization made possible by both transitions toward a "service" economy as well as a globally fluid market for the production of goods. The uncoupling of work from "place" and "time" gives accounting more room to do one of the things that it has always been good at – control "at a distance." The third and more nuanced way in which information systems enhance accounting has to do with the need at some point to reduce the polysemy of meaning that comes from growth in information to a "master" or "official" discourse of the organization. In this sense, accounting solves a "translation" problem as it forces the specialized discourses of various organizational functionaries into its own lexicon, calculus, grammar and structure – most noticeably "the bottom line." Accounting has always, in an often rather grossly reductionistic way, functioned as a translation apparatus. The difference now is simply that there is more to reduce, more to translate.

The third historical development to enhance the significance of accounting results from the interaction of information systems, global markets, and the maturation (or perhaps exhaustion) of monetarist economics and its enactment through financial (rather than physical) capitalism. Monetarist economics and financial capital are the post-Keynesian phenomena that shifted capital's attention toward the largely linguistic, perhaps simulacral, financial markets. Trading in "risks" rather than physical capital became quite efficient due to the fact that much of the labor within the production of information systems involved the construction of algorithms designed to rather instantaneously exploit financial "signs" (many of them accounting signs) in order to

produce “profits” autolegitimated and enforceable independently of any regard for goods and services. Wall Street is now for mathematicians and physicists.

The fourth historical development to enhance the significance of accounting results from the fragility and complexity of relations between governments and market participants. That fragility and complexity are descriptive of what Jürgen Habermas terms “legitimation crises” that face developed countries. Such crises have several dimensions of relevance to accounting. The first is based in welfare economics and liberal political theory. States redistribute resources, and tax accounting, cost accounting, and financial accounting are the technologies through which resources for redistribution are acquired. As markets become more competitive (and efficient), the greater the need for market participants to retain resources. At the same time, enhanced competitiveness economically disenfranchises some citizens. That disenfranchisement increases the need for states to acquire resources to preserve both the natural rights of citizens of democracies as well as the political legitimacy of the state itself. Nowhere within the natural rights postures of Western liberal political theory and the constitutions derived from it are the rights of citizenship tied to the economic productivity or status of the citizens themselves. That’s irrelevant now; global commerce has seen to that. Other state-related responses include “privatizing” what were public assets and services, shifting the focus of their own agencies more toward economic efficiency, shifting the realities of citizenship either toward more strict or more lax notions. The strictness relates to decreasing welfare expenditures; the laxity relates to enhancing productivity. [The current immigration debates in the U.S. Congress are a striking example of cutting both ways]. Examples of state responses include the “New Public Management” in the United Kingdom and the “National Performance Review” in the United States. States continue to seek as well to reconstitute the notion of citizenship itself in ways oriented toward “the efficient state” and “the efficient citizen,” the latter strikingly illustrated by shifts in education away from Enlightenment and toward skills, even for four-year-olds. Such reconfigurations of institutions and notions of citizenship have been accompanied by and indeed made possible by the increasing “accountingization” and “auditability” of things, irrespective of whether or not the “metrics” have any meaning or indeed any mathematical properties. Lastly, governments find themselves in a quandary caused by

the economic imperative to assist the private sector just as that sector creates the very "crises" of citizenship that the state exists to prevent in the first place. They often behave in ways that sacrifice public economic welfare to putatively sustain political legitimacy for a somewhat duped public.[4]

If indeed "accountingization" is an accoutrement to globalization, then it is best understood as the discursive practice best positioned to continue to do what it has done for a couple of centuries – embed the structural imperatives of efficiency and profitability in a language capable of subsuming agency within the *telos* of those particular values. The only difference is that globalization ratchets up the stakes and speeds up the velocity with which the mandate to efficiency and profitability corrodes other values central to the emancipatory *pathos* of critical theory. There has to be hope; we are not yet slaves to either structures or to the values which gird those structures. That hope resides in a moral ontology of language oriented toward the production of *meaning*, not merely toward *information*. With faith that the term will self-destruct after this essay, I will use the term "worldizations" to orient the conclusion of this essay toward possibilities for meanings which offer potential for a more human sense of what it means to live globally.

Worldizations

It is interesting to consider what we might be talking about if we had never bought into a rhetoric of globalization but instead opted for a concept like worldization. Agnes Heller (1990) can guide us here. Structures and systems cannot make worlds; worlds cannot be "-ized" (and I do so here despite that fact). That "un-izability" is true because:

> 'World' is not the sum total of lifeless and living things but the <u>meaning</u> of all those things, and meanings are constituted by humans because humans are the only bodies tied to <u>all other bodies</u> – including non-human bodies – by meaning. (Heller, 1990, p. 31).

[4] A good example is the now normal way in which governments offer tax concessions and economic incentives to attract new business. This makes no decision-theoretic or statistical sense. A business seeking a subsidy need only solicit "bids" from a number of governments. The distribution of bids should reflect a range of prices, some perhaps profitable and some certainly unprofitable for the citizens. The business will take the largest concession. It is a statistical truism that the probability that this is a bad economic deal for the citizens is extremely high. The evidence bears that truism out..

Globalization and accountingization are conditions of social regulation, and tensions emerge as these conditions do not flow smoothly into the conditions of social regulation to which we have grown accustomed (rights, political structures, proximal rather than distal understandings of work and economy) (see Heller, 1990, Chapter 1). Yet now as with the past humans have discursive and lifeworld resources with which to "manage" shifting modes of social regulation. Indeed, even at the level of structures (global capital, transnational institutions, the Internet, accounting systems for example), the constitution of meaning as a public, social phenomenon is the only ontological possibility. And, as social regulation becomes more complex in character and scope, as it does now, an embrace of Bartelson's "horizon of expectations," of "transcendence" seems more promising than nostalgia over some historically "fixed" meaning. Using the metaphor of "umbilical cords" as connecting us to each other in a way such that socialization through meaning gets fed through them, Heller explains how a surplus of meaning can emerge from the multiplicity of human relations now coextensive with the singularity of our global, structural embeddedness:

> The more heterogeneous the [social] regulations, the greater the range of options for rendering meaning; the greater the range of options for rendering meaning, the more numerous the differentiations of shared meanings, the greater the variety within the bundle of umbilical cords binding the Self to a particular world; and, the greater the variety in the bundle of umbilical cords, the more *individualized* Selves may become. Yet, as discussed, there can be cords in the bundle of single Selves which cannot be connected – or at least comfortably connected – to the meaning offered by standing [social] regulations. Selves can also seek for meaning which has not yet been 'provided', thus creating a cultural surplus (Heller, 1990, pp. 26-27).

When Bartelson appeals for notions of globalization as transcendence, as something that opens possibilities for the political imagination, the appeal is for a cultural surplus of meaning, a surplus perhaps not yet well "networked," well "embedded" in the bundle. The transference and transformation metaphors of globalization and its discursive offspring accountingization not only create networks of meaning, of social regulation; they give rise to other discourses of meaning that actualize the cultural surplus made possible by them. Some of those discourses carry critical, emancipatory force through finer differentiations that reveal the economic, political, social, and indeed

ethical pathologies of globalization and accountingization. Some ideas about this surplus are suggested below.

The very informational structures that fuel globalization and accountingization carry disruptive potential for them. While global information systems yield structures that conceal the imperialism within them, they also proliferate democratic and popular participation in the exchange of meanings which reveals much *about* that imperialism. 24/7 global news media, the Internet, and an almost costless connectivity through a range of digital communication media have yielded countless and quite powerful examples of forces that work corrosively against imperialism. Capital itself now must cope with what I will term "equity populism." The same enhancements to capital market efficiency that facilitate the flow of institutional capital have produced a new kind of polity – individuals directly controlling their own capital while armed with instantaneous access to messages and meanings <u>about</u> the management of that capital. Enron is a perfect example. I don't think that there has ever been as rapid a response on the part of elites to the demands of the public. Transnational organizations like the IMF and the World Bank are another example, as even their former directors come to spill the beans about their incompetence and global destructiveness (see Stiglitz, 1992). Publicity about the socially profane activities of multinational corporations with regard to labor and the Earth is ubiquitous, as is, to recall Bauman, the complicity of governments as "…executors and plenipotentiaries of forces which they have no hope of controlling politically." The way in which the political preferences of the American public have shifted so dramatically because of Iraq has much to do with deep and widespread beliefs about capital's "interests" at work in the Oval Office (or even better in the office of the Vice-President/Halliburton). Those interests once flew sufficiently below the radar of the public to remain protected by ideological differences. Such ideological differences like "the Left" and "the Right" now dissolve in the concreteness of disclosure about the facts. To get a bit playful, and to avoid iterating through numerous other examples, perhaps we can say that if Habermas can locate Modernity in *"the structural transformation of the public sphere,"* maybe we are beginning to witness a properly Postmodern *"public transformation of the structural sphere,"* one made possible by the limit condition of the structures themselves and the proliferation of information/meanings that seep from them globally.

"Accountingization" need not be attributed just to the conventional discourse of accounting – its axiological commitment to efficiency and profitability, its grammar, its calculi, its systems and its institutions. Modes of economic accounting emerge at the margins of convention, as humans find new things to talk about with respect to their economic connectedness in a global context. Inasmuch as globalization reconnects the political and the economic, it helps us overcome the theoretical and practical opposition between them that has defined most of the history of the social sciences. As Smith explains, this is a horizon for new discourses which drive the political (and social) *through* rather than *around* the economic:

> Given what seems to be the inexorability of economic accounting in and throughout every aspect of human – and not only human – existence, from the base of the base to the tip of the superstructure, and given also that its operations implicate each of us in loss, cost, debt, death and other continuous or ultimate reckonings, it is understandable that the dream of an escape from economy should be so sweet and the longing for it so pervasive and recurrent. Since it does appear to be inescapable, however, the better, that is, more effective, more profitable, alternative would seem to be not to seek to go beyond economy but to do the best we can going *through* . . . (Smith, p. 17).

Such "new" discourses might include reconstruals of accounting and extensions of "accountingizations." They need not commit to a language of prices (costs) nor to the grammar of accounting. They may embrace the entanglements and complexities of globalization yet retain the local and proximal *telos* of rendering life in a globalized world meaningful as revealed through the activity of giving accounts. The ethnomethodological work of Jönsson (1998) comes to mind as he analyzes managerial conversations in which formal structures of accounting control are commingled with other claims and counterclaims grounded in functional demands of work, in norms and rules, and in economic crises not unrelated to globalization. In a similar vein, Roberts (1991) promotes a mode of organizational discourse that he terms "socializing accountability" that is worth a current look in the context of globalization as it is likely to reveal specific responses to distant influences. Arrington and Francis (1993) locate economic accounts in the context of the hermeneutics of distanciation in a way that provides insight into how the construction of meaning – "… a general need for making our own what is foreign to us" (Ricoeur, 1976, p. 73) – is conditioned by the spatial and

temporal horizons across which discourse is addressed. These and other similar examples of research share one thing in common – they are focused on how meaning (worlds) emerge through economic accounts.

Another approach to the economic account focuses upon the regulative ideals that might make the production of meaning "rational" and the veracity of meaning legitimate. Part of the crisis tendencies of globalization have to do with suspicions about the adequacy of the regulative ideals embedded within liberal political theory and modern philosophy to provide legitimacy, as customary senses of reason, justice, democracy and virtue reveal their dark side throughout the globe. Without doubt, some neo-liberals have seized the moment by filling this empty space – this darkness of moral/political givens -- with a new economism in which social and political life lives under a heteronomy of the rationality of self-interested pursuits. Economic self-interest thus becomes the lynchpin of "managing everything" – people, markets, organizations, states, and world affairs, often in an amoral and "game-theoretic" way. Meaning (and thereby worlds) thus becomes purely strategic, and economic accounts are instruments placed in the service of strategic interests. With less success than the neoliberals, others working from within Frankfurt-inspired critical social theory have sought to relocate rationality and the veracity of meaning in communicative norms that, if enacted, would ground decisions and actions in a generalized public interest. "Managing" thus becomes a process of securing the practical conditions for a discourse that would be norm-conformative. Primarily influenced by Jürgen Habermas' work, much research has focused on the economic account as located in this space of communicative rationality. It is an important antidote to the economism of neoliberals who seem to be, sadly, carrying the academic and practical day on "how to manage things," at least in the United States. Both the economistic neoliberals and the Habermasians are exploiting the transcendent potential that emerges from globalization (see Habermas, 1990, 1999 for examples of his own articulation of the relevance of his work to the problems of globalization).

Globalization carries potential for meaning, for worlds, that aren't easily anticipated through the conventional protocols of the theorists. John Dewey was correct in the claim that "humans have the dumb pluck of animals," and the dark side of globalization has no more of a chance against that pluck than did any of the numerous

threats to human dignity that have defined us historically. The horizon of discourse and the meanings-to-be-produced in a global world will be novel and varied; yet, whatever their shape and character, the economic account will be ubiquitous within them. Such accounts are an important part of the answer to the question of who we are:

> . . . the most basic distinction of all embedded in our discourse and our practice . . . is that between human beings and other beings. Human beings can be held to account for that of which they are the authors; other beings cannot. To identify an occurrence as an action is in the paradigmatic instances to identify it under a type of description which enables us to see that occurrence as flowing intelligibly from a human agent's intentions, motives, passions and purposes. It is therefore to understand an action as something for which someone is accountable, about which it is always appropriate to ask the agent for an intelligible account (MacIntyre, 1984, p. 209).

This will persist, and maybe the tables of power will be turned.

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