

CHAPTER 3

WORLD-MAKING IDEAS: IMAGINING A WORLD TO GOVERN AND TO RESIST

It is easy to see that professionals bring knowledge they have learned to bear on problems people present for solution: doctors, priests, lawyers, financial advisors, and life coaches all approach a family in crisis with different tools, frames of reference and experience. The same thing happens at the global level: economists, lawyers, scientists, religious leaders, politicians, businesspeople, and bankers come to global problems with diverse values, experiences and knowledge about how things work and what to do. But the image of experts bringing prefabricated knowledge to bear on world problems captures only a part of the role expertise plays in world making. The knowing, the doing, and the world making are more entangled than that. Background ideas about the world—often experienced as “facts” rather than “ideas”—shape the world before people set to work on the problems they see with the knowledge they have.

World-making ideas cannot be downloaded wholesale from the cloud. They arise through interaction and struggle. In one sense this is quite obvious. People bring to one struggle attitudes, values, and professional habits that have been effective and persuasive before. Today’s tools reflect yesterday’s victories. John Dewey described “logic” in a similar way.

Now I define logical theory as an account of the procedures followed in reaching decisions . . . in those cases in which subsequent experience shows that they were the best which could have been used under the conditions. . . . It follows that logic is ultimately an empirical and concrete discipline. Men first employ certain ways of investigating, and of collecting, recording and using data in reaching conclusions, in making decisions; they draw inferences and make their checks and tests in various ways. . . . But it is gradually learned that some methods which are used work better than others.¹

Dewey uses the words "best" and "work better" in the context of problem solving or reaching a conclusion. In the context of struggle, what "works" is what persuades or successfully coerces an adversary to yield or relinquish gains. Pictures of the world that are effective in this sense arise not only from past battles that may be studied, but through ongoing struggles where opposing world pictures frame alternate paths forward. In this sense, the world-making power of expertise is relational: world pictures that comprehend and shape the world and its problems are calibrated to the position people in struggle wish to occupy. To see the world this way is to see me in this place, you over there, and the path ahead down that road. As struggle proceeds, these become the available worlds, debate between them a terrain for engagement.

In the next two chapters, I explore the specialized knowledge, professional work and argumentative practices of professions involved in world making and management. In this chapter, I offer an interpretation of commonsense ideas about the world, its problems and the potential for governance that recur among professionals I have encountered—lawyers, economists, businesspeople, scholars and policy makers—who worry about and wish for better collective management of global problems. To illuminate the way world pictures arise in relation to one another, setting the stage for debates about how to proceed, I develop an ideal-typical contrast between the background ideas and professional postures of people who imagine themselves as "insiders" and "outsiders" to global rulership.

Ideas that become common sense are rarely formulated directly. Spelling them out requires a kind of imaginative and empathetic reconstruction. Listening to people arguing or watching them engage the world, one must step back to ask what they could be thinking or assuming about the world. What must they be taking for granted to be engaged in this conversation? Nor is background consciousness a set of propositions in the form "the world is flat and we shouldn't try to sail around it." It is more a pastiche of themes and orienting frames that bring some things to light, place others in shadow, and suggest a way forward. The elements are hard to separate: ideas about the world, the global problems that call for solutions, the nature of governance and leadership at the global level, and ideas about their own role.

Generating a common vision of a world to be governed is both a communicative and performative work of the imagination and a technical institutional project. Seeing a world, people build institutions that seem suited to it, design tools to act within it, empower leaders to address the problems they think it has. In doing so, they bring that world into being and make it visible. With

those tools, from that institution, this world can be seen. This double-edged activity is a kind of reasoning, a way at once of comprehending and shaping the world. Technocrats, citizens, journalists, soldiers, bureaucrats, statesmen, poets, and priests all participate, scripting roles for themselves in its future. In world making, everyone is also tempted to fashion a stage on which they would be players, and to do the work on the self that is necessary to become players on the stage they see before them.

Forty years ago it was common to say that the most meaningful product of the space race was a distant photo of planet earth. Environmentalists, world federalists, pacifists, and cosmopolitan humanists of all kinds latched onto the image as evidence of a deep truth: ours is one world, we are one humanity, planet earth is our only home. This idea was not yet hegemonic among the world's political, commercial, and cultural elites: the photo pushed things along. Without a space program, perhaps without a Cold War, without *Life* magazine, we might not have had those photos at that moment in that way, and the idea may have arisen differently, at a different moment, or have seemed less suggestive or compelling. To be effective, the image had to be singled out, given meaning, and then settle into common sense. Resting there, it could be called upon as grounds for doing one thing rather than another. The photo's currency arose from its allegorical power to make visible what some had argued and others resisted. As the idea of worldliness it expressed sank into the consciousness of elites, its power faded into cliché. Of course this is one world . . . and so we must act.

Against the background of common sense, there remains plenty of room for disagreement about just *how* to act: in the next chapters, I explore the development of alternatives and modes of argument within a common framework of expertise. In debates about what to do, people mobilize—and sometimes contest—background images of the world that have settled into common sense. Even where people differ only marginally about how to proceed, they often accuse those with whom they disagree of ignoring what should be obvious. Seeking a slightly higher carbon price than you, it is tempting to claim that your preference ignores the threat of global warming all together.

The consolidation of one picture rather than another distributes authority, access, and legitimacy. As a result, the image that emerges from such debates reflects a status of forces. The idea—associated with 1648—that relations among states are secular represents a historic defeat for all those who yearn for a more religious world. Likewise the idea that all one can hope for on the global stage is "interfaith dialog" and reciprocal respect. When the space photo

made "one world" a cliché, people pursuing more parochial projects were disadvantaged relative to cosmopolitans and environmentalists whose projects could be hooked to the coattails of the one world idea. Some came to share the new elite consciousness and continued their struggle by developing positions within it. For many, this did not seem possible. Rather than simply people with a different view about what to do, they now stood "outside" a world picture shared among the elite. They would need to come to terms with a world whose common sense they did not share. As people do this, they often develop a counterpoint set of propositions about the world, its problems, and the changes necessary for things to get better. This opens the way for argument between those who feel they are on the "inside" and those who experience themselves to be outside, beneath or peripheral to the world as it is now ordered.

A classic, if also tragic, historical example of the distributive impact of one-world ideas from my own field of international law is visible in the influential teachings of Francisco Vitoria, a Spanish theologian and jurist of the early sixteenth century. His writings were the space photo of his day, urging a conception of global humanity that included the newly discovered peoples of the new world. They were also human, he reasoned, cultivating land and organizing themselves in political communities, and were bound alongside Europeans by universal natural law. They had obligations as well as rights, including the duties of welcome and hospitality for friendly commerce and obligations to hear the gospel. Where they violated these obligations or heard the gospel clearly but failed to convert, the Spanish were empowered, as arms of the universal law, to discipline and conquer them by force.² Facing this kind of universal world, indigenous peoples needed a strategy, as they have throughout the ensuing centuries. Their strategies have varied—war and rebellion, assimilation, working to reform and adapt universal doctrines to their own ends. Their various strategies were also projects of communal identity, placing them within, without, or alongside global order and its common sense about the world as it is.³

The world-making activities of global elites are shrouded by self-evidence: their commonsense world is the world. As they work alongside the World Economic Forum in its commitment to "improve the state of the world," today's insiders take as given a world with common problems demanding that they rise to the challenge of global management. They focus on who might do what. People they can identify—whom they may even know—can pull these levers and act in the general interest, if only they have the right information, the requisite political will, the appropriate ethical orientation, or simply the right "incentives" and the necessary institutional structures. Those who can see themselves ruling can

focus on the machinery of rulership, the institutional practices and doctrines of judgment and action. Their world can safely be assumed—until it may suddenly not be. Better global governance is necessary to manage problems before they present a challenge to the sustainability of the system itself.

On the receiving end, political, economic, or military coercion does not feel like technical management. Nor does technical management always seem like a public good. If you stand outside the project or promise of global governance, your interests adverse to its success, you will see a different world. Problems are not global or general, action in the public interest not what can be expected of enlightened elites. There are winners and losers: powers to the former, problems to the latter. The insider picture of a new world to be wrought by technical management and managerial self-improvement will seem like apology for the status quo and legitimation for their position in it. "Improving the state of the world" may seem like empire in the making. From the outside, even the problem of "sustainability" looks quite different. Poverty, environmental damage, inequality, and so forth are, from this perspective, all too sustainable. The problem is the system's capacity to reproduce exclusion, immiseration, or resource depletion.

I have imagined insiders and outsiders as ideal-typical positions or postures toward the world-making projects of an age. The world pictures of insiders are rarely fully settled into common sense: they still need the space photo as the Spanish needed Vitoria. Nor are outsiders unable to assimilate or argue forcefully in the insider language of problem solving. The opposition nevertheless marks the boundaries and provides the terms within which debate and conflict over more specific world-making projects occurs as experts arrange and rearrange images drawn from this stock. Each picture of the world comes with an allegorical vocabulary for identifying global problems and an orientation to solutions. In struggle, these can be attached to particular projects in all kinds of ways as people debate who should do what.

THE WILL TO WORLDLINESS: IMAGING AND RESISTING A WORLD TO BE GOVERNED

There are certainly points of overlap. People for whom global governance is an aspiration or present danger are among the most likely to see the world as a whole. Many—perhaps most—people look out the window and see only their neighborhood, their profession, their industry, their family. The animus to see "the world" may lie in an ethical or social experience of cosmopolitan

humanism—all men are brothers—or social exclusion—the world is against us. The roots may also lie in fear. On the one side, urgent problems amenable only to global solutions demand that we see the world whole. On the other, our local difficulties have roots in a malevolent global order that must be resisted wholesale.

The one world of universal humanism imagines the world's people united in consensus, shared values, one civilization: the opponent is the outsider. Rule making, naming and shaming, or invading represent and enforce humanist civilization against stray states or dictators who "shock the conscience of mankind" or violate "fundamental norms." This is the vocabulary of humanitarian assistance and the international human rights movement, of the "responsibility to protect" and the international battle against terrorists, pirates, and traffickers. When insiders say that the "international community" is taking action, they are not thinking of the strange echo chamber of diplomats, journalists, and civil society advocates that keeps that phrase aloft, nor of the leading powers who act under that umbrella. They are expressing their vision: a world made whole through consensus taking institutional form to "protect civilians," denounce outsiders, or mount sanctions.

The outsider analog to this vision may be either a more horizontal picture of two (unequal) worlds colliding—their civilization and ours—or a world unified by a diabolical logic and run by malevolent forces. These ideas reframe a situation—in Syria, in Ukraine, in Iraq—not as the world enforcing norms on an outlier but as a clash of civilizations: Russia versus the West, Sunni versus Shiite, secular modernity versus Islamic truth. The Syrian regime of President Assad tried both strategies to counter efforts to define them as universal outsiders: presenting themselves as allied with the world against Islamic terror and as caught up in regional power dynamics between opposing alliances and interests. The Occupy movement slogan "we are the 99 percent" also merged these ideas: there are two worlds, theirs and ours—and the elites are the margin to our whole.

For many insiders, the "one world" idea arises as a defensive necessity rather than an ethical object of desire. The opponent is a "problem" whose urgency demands global action. Not every issue breaks through to this level. The distinction between truly global problems or crises and quotidian suffering is crucial. Problems must be severe, local crises must threaten the peace, and ethical violations must truly "shock the conscience." But if you can get up there, the way is clear for problem solving.

In this frame, it is ethically acceptable and only to be expected that people remain affiliated with their tribe or nation. There need be no ethical consensus:

ethical allegiances are matters of private commitment and local patriotic sentiment. But global problems demand that we rise above those affiliations and act together in the common good. The technical and managerial professions find this frame more congenial than war against the outsider. Problem solving is their trade, while the articulation of virtue and the defense of civilization are someone else's brief. This picture comes with an implicit global architecture. Down there, people live in households, cities, and nations, with various religious beliefs and political engagements. In their routine work, even managing elites may well feel they float in a sea of uncertainty and risk, buffeted by one thing after another. But when they raise their sights and look out at the world whole, the air suddenly feels thinner, beliefs are fewer, and political differences can be set aside as distractions from the work of collective problem solving. At Davos, it is easy to feel everyone should rise up onto the international plane to address the technical demands of global policy challenges.

This world picture also has—and is intended to have—distributive consequences. Some problems get globalized and others do not. Some become technical while others remain stubbornly political. If your issue didn't make the cut, you will need to work harder to frame it as a pressing global challenge and generate an elite consensus on its amenability to technical resolution. The alternative is to resist the frame: ours is not a world of technical reason atop a quagmire of political particulars but one of clashing political interests. This is where the outsider voice can be heard. When the European Central Bank demands austerity in the name of technical wisdom to promote growth in recession, it is routinely opposed not only as bad economics—countercyclical investment the better course—but also as the mouthpiece of Germany and investor interests. When climate change pits technical response to a global problem against the national political interests of those who would pay the economic price, we can hear the clash of inside and outside perspectives. The enormous attention given to island microstates reflects not only their real peril but an effort by environmentalists to play on the boards of opposing interests and one world at the same time.

IMAGINING A WORLD WITH PROBLEMS

The idea of a "global problem" is a complex work of imagination. It runs counter to the human experience that bad things rarely happen to everyone. Pandemics or severe weather happen here and there, sparing these and decimating those. Some profit while others are wiped out and the costs of every

solution will be unevenly distributed. To see diverse climatic changes as “climate change” or “global warming” even if your own weather is likely to be rather stable through your lifetime requires an act of imagination, of solidarity with future generations (at least of your own offspring), and of common vulnerability, humanity, or destiny with many people you will never meet. It is more common to hope that plagues, poor crops, and floods will happen to other people. And people are usually quite adept at explaining why that should be. Perhaps sickness falls harder on the unjust, the unprepared, or the unlucky. Perhaps wealth, technological superiority, and superior adaptability will be enough.

Although the list of problems people propose to see as “global” is rising—global warming, cybersecurity, pandemics, terrorism, corruption, human trafficking, drugs, migration—not everything makes the list, in part because this is a technical vocabulary of insiders. People see the “problems” their tools make tractable and people with technical and managerial tools frame things as technical and managerial problems, at least when they wish to take responsibility for their solution. The available public health tools enable us to see pandemics as a “problem” rather than simply as a “tragedy” or “act of God.” For diplomats, the challenges will look diplomatic; for outsiders, they may well simply seem political. The identification of the problem and the selection of tools arise together. Is terrorism a global problem because it can be combatted with global surveillance, international police collaboration, and the military, or do we use those tools because it is a global problem? Both. And as terrorism becomes a global problem, the tools to respond migrate from local policing to national defense and global cooperation in surveillance, security, and financial control.

Insiders find it hard to frame widely shared troubles as global problems if they are unlikely to respond to the specialized competences of public administrative functionaries, the bureaucratic competences and technical knowledge of private enterprise, and the special professional expertise of global charities and nongovernmental organizations. As a result, distinctions that mark the boundaries of global governance—between public and private or local and international—also limit the problems that get to be global. The prevalence of false prophets and the spread of heresy are not global problems because they are not what governance is for. Domestic violence kills many times more people than terrorism and is far more broadly—and evenly—spread throughout the world. But the tools that seem appropriate for response are *local*: criminal law, social welfare, and a range of interventions in particular families. Loneliness, love, dignity, sexual desire, and spiritual well-being remain *personal*, while

economic development, health care, education, and employment are seen as functions of *national* social, political, and economic arrangements. Even technical experts who address the suffering of human grief, anxiety, or cultural disenchantment rarely find a role in global governance: religious communities, purveyors of diets and self-help materials, comedians, fitness and yoga specialists, pharmaceutical companies, and psychotherapists. Their tools are for *private* use. We know that global policy choices and enforcement machinery affect all these things: war disinhibits sexual desire, economic development shatters families, transforms religions, and remakes gender dynamics. But it is hard to imagine using these tools deliberately for such purposes let alone developing a global program for their accomplishment.

Problems also seem global if they require a “global solution,” whatever the tools to be deployed. This is not as obvious as it may seem. The idea that a problem needs a “global solution” usually says more about the tools to be used and the jurisdiction to be held responsible than about the nature of the problem itself. Many problems that are said to be global, like climate change, may actually be addressed in a perfectly suitable fashion by quite local measures. China could do a great deal on its own. A powerful technological innovation might turn the tide. A local or national rule changing the economics of energy production, a compact among leading private entities, or a side deal among governments whose nations account for the lion’s share of the problem may all be far more effective than solutions hammered out globally. When people say that something demands a global solution, it is likely they are saying something about who should do what. The United Nations says this when it wants to convene a conference. National governments say this when they want the United Nations to convene a conference—and do not want to act themselves.

A problem may also seem global because “it” is understood to be happening to all mankind at once. To see multiple events as part of a larger common problem is a matter of interpretation and perspective, both often provided and managed by experts from the hard and social sciences. To argue that my poverty and your wealth are part of a common global problem requires a story. So does the claim that this storm, that flood, and this drought are effects of the same cause and might all be addressed by switching from coal to nuclear power. For more than forty years, “earth day” celebrations have promoted the idea that any damage to “the earth” affects us all, like an invasion from Mars. Science has been mobilized to show that diverse and dispersed activities generate “pollution” of “the environment.” Experts add to the stock of available global problems by linking diverse phenomena under a common rubric, providing a

kind of technical footnote for debates about what to do about "terrorism," "corruption," or "underdevelopment." For people with projects, transforming parochial interests into global problem solving requires translation. Hegemons and small Scandinavian nations, philanthropies and corporations, religious orders and professional guilds need to learn the languages of common interest and technical management. International law is one such language that has infiltrated the vocabulary of statesmen, soldiers, and civil society by promising to enable a conversation on the international plane of universal interests.

If history is any guide, common problems rarely give rise to common solutions. Even where people see the common threat, they may not be motivated to link arms in response. After an invasion from Mars, there would be all manner of strategies to be pursued. Some might become better off through collaboration, others by prolonging a futile resistance, still others by ignoring the whole thing. Those who think their professional expertise, position, and prerogatives are somehow linked to planetary defense will be more inclined to see a global problem ripe for solution. The "common problem" is less escape from conflict than tool of struggle and argument in debate about who should do what.

A WORLD OF GLOBAL PROBLEMS AS POLITICAL STRATEGY

Identifying a global problem is rulership: it distributes authority and legitimacy among actors and sets priorities for action, distinguishing what must be accepted from what must be addressed. Like any powerful framing device, naming "global problems" will be used strategically as hegemons justify interventions, advocacy groups raise funds, international institutions enlarge their mandates, and local rulers shrug off responsibility. Once a global problem has been identified, people will frame diverse concerns in these terms: suddenly everyone's political enemy or criminal gang is a "terrorist" to be engaged by the larger world. The outcome for particular interests, however, is hard to predict. Problems you care about may garner resources—or loose political focus—if they are reframed as global. The identification of a common problem may make the interests of those who will be affected first or most egregiously synonymous with the general interest. But there may also be a global strategic reason for them to be sacrificed. In the early months of the Ebola epidemic we saw a range of possibilities: did the global nature of the threat suggest the world redouble its engagement with the most affected African communities or that they be isolated to protect the larger world?

The language of "global problems" may also express a tacit agreement among people who wish someone else would do something about it. Poverty is a good example. It is very difficult for most people to experience the poverty of others as something that is also happening to them in the way they experience a faraway oil spill as degrading a shared environment. It would take a complex scientific, technical, religious, or political story to experience their poverty and our economic security as part of the same "problem." Yet poverty may arouse our empathy. To say that poverty is a global problem underlines the importance of doing something about it and the strength of our empathy. It also assigns it to others—perhaps even to institutions with no reasonable prospect of effectively responding.

Despite the distributive impact of global problem identification, insiders often feel that associating institutional mandates with global problems is a rough substitute for democratic government. If global elites stick to truly global problems, there is no need for a representative body to triage and aggregate interests. Their work is in everyone's interest. If solving these problems will improve the state of the world, it seems churlish to raise distributive issues. Even a plastic bottle manufacturer has an interest in reducing the plastic waste in the world's oceans. It is not surprising that global elites and those who pay the costs of their initiatives find themselves speaking different languages: of problem solving and global welfare, on the one hand, and of distribution and struggle on the other. Who will occupy which role in their shared language of engagement is often unclear. Just as the world's indigenous peoples have flirted both sincerely and strategically with assimilation to the inside spaces where the world is governed, so the world's elites—whether Vladimir Putin or George Bush—are able to understand and inhabit the posture of outsider to global common sense.

GLOBAL MANAGEMENT BY PREFIGURATION

Among the global policy class, it is understood that global problems are rarely "solved." At best they can be managed. Better global governance is at once a practical and an aspirational project: you can work toward it using the tools at hand, although you realize it may not easily or soon be achieved. The result is a tension in global governance projects between ideal—even utopian—images of governance to come and the practical need to root global public policy realistically in the world as it is.

One common way to manage this tension is to picture today's governance projects as prefigurative: to see in the interactions of independent states the

outlines of a collaborative community or in the uncoordinated action of corporate officials and bureaucrats a kind of global administration. International lawyers see the outlines of what may one day be a fully functioning international criminal law in sporadic contemporary efforts to prosecute individuals for war crimes in national courts. To prosecute someone is to align oneself with a *future* criminal order. Adoption of this UN Protocol, the establishment of this intergovernmental actor, or the empowerment of this NGO, however partial, set precedents for further reform. Meanwhile, if people can be coaxed into settings where problems can be discussed, at some unspoken time in the future, a solution will present itself. An interminable peace process may not bring a final resolution, may be understood by all sides as the continuation of war by other means, and yet an open-ended process of problem management can also be seen *as* governance.

Strengthened habits of problem management may contribute more to the world than solving any particular problem. In this way, prefiguring may be more important than performing. When partial efforts are seen as down payments on a better future, defects in current practice seem tolerable. Today's minor players can be valorized for the role foreseen for them in later acts. Actors or interests that do not prefigure can be overlooked or stigmatized. To see a better world prefigured makes it easy to talk about what everyone might favor in the long term without mentioning whom that will actually favor between now and then.

Getting to that future requires people who can see beyond parochial interests and speak the language of technical problem solving. Just as lawyers see themselves as agents of a legal order, others must come to understand their work in government, as corporate leaders or citizen advocates, as the technical and managerial work of building and exemplifying a future order. Today's politicians, with their parochial ties to polity, are distinctly unsuitable for this role unless they come from a very small country and can reimagine themselves as citizens of the world. Corporate managers, international civil servants, technocrats, and academic policy types are closer to the mark. Just talking about oneself this way is prefigurative: thinking it, saying it, acting like it, can also make it so. It also feels good to imagine yourself as a global technocrat. You are no longer down there where problems arise but up here, part of the solution, a participant in the commanding heights. Before you came to Davos, you were just a corporate CEO, but now you see that you are part of a network and process of global leadership. Actually, anyone with an opinion and access to media can become a participant in "the international

community," part of the "civil society," and an arbiter of "legitimacy" on the global stage: indigenous peoples, opponents of the death penalty, proponents of open-source software, and many more. It can be thrilling to find a voice and a lever to move a future world.

SOVEREIGNTY AS PREFIGURATION

Meanwhile, something will have to be done with the "state system" and "sovereignty." It is possible that perfecting and completing the nation-state system may itself be prefigurative. The state system began, so the story goes, as a global governance solution to empire, religious and ideological conflict. Perhaps we can see in sovereign and equal states the foundation for a normative and institutional order to secure the peace, manage the process of peaceful change, and address common issues of welfare requiring cooperation. All we need is wise leadership and vigilance against backsliding. At the same time, we might also look *through* the state, recognizing that real power today rests with smaller and more mobile players, within the state, among states or networked around states. Corporate leaders and global philanthropists, national courts and city managers are the harbingers of a future international community. To prefigure, professionals in both states and nonstates will need to align their agendas with the technical requirements of global problem solving.

Neither prefigurative tradition is particularly robust as either description or prediction. Each requires one to overlook a great deal. To see "states" as formally equivalent or analogically parallel territorial powers is to ignore a great many anomalies. Some states are complex bureaucracies while others are a few families. Nothing like parity or equality characterizes interstate bargaining and rarely do governments effectively aggregate interests or exercise anything like exclusive authority within their territory. The instruments of government have often been captured or displaced as power has leached upward to transnational and private technical bodies or downward to local and regional entities lacking the capacity to transform their priorities into effective policy. To conjure an international policy process of decentralized adjudication, administration, legislation, or ethical judgment from the dispersed interactions of nonstate actors is no less an act of imagination. The interesting point is that neither strategy needs to be compelling so long as they provide a suitable array of images and arguments to sustain a robust discussion about what to do that focuses on the benevolent work today's disappointing institutions will perform in the future. As images, they work.

Part of what makes both strategies plausible is their familiarity. If you can imagine states as a solution to the inequalities of empire and conflicts of religion or ideology, you are more than halfway to imagining the world governed. After a century of efforts to transcend sovereignty, people who dream about global governance imagine something very like sovereignty: a general being hovering over the society, oriented to problem solving in the general interest, responsible for the management of the whole. What people know as sovereignty shapes what they imagine as governance. For example, the governance they envision operates at one remove from economics. The world economy is somewhere out there to be managed or regulated. Private actors make only cameo appearances as participants in disaggregated public governance functions. Their routine decisions and the legal or commercial relationships they establish—from credit-default swaps to currency markets—are external to governance. Corporate “governance” connotes the arrangements through which shareholders and managers share authority for a corporation’s economic activities rather than a constitutional arrangement of politically responsible actors. When investors misjudge the risk of lending to this or that government and withdraw funding or raise interest rates, they are not governing. The governance challenge is to address the global problems that result, perhaps by disciplining the government that has lost investor favor or bailing out those investors until they are again willing to loan funds.

Nor does global problem solving know itself as culture. Nations have culture, along with localities, civilizations, ethnic groups, or religions. To work prefiguratively is to step outside your culture to become a citizen of the world, tethered only to a shared technical and professional knowledge. The civil service of the European Commission is proud of the technical competence of its specialized staff, their multilingual capacities, rate of transnational intermarriage, and double citizenship. Somehow these go naturally together: the EU Commission has skimmed the cream, detaching people from national political or cultural affinities to distill a kind of pure “European” technical competence.

The promise of a benevolent sovereign power permits people to look past their contemporary struggles with the exhilarating feeling that today’s tawdry compromises will all add up to wise rulership if we just keep at it in the right spirit. Within the world’s institutional, corporate, financial, diplomatic, and government elites people can imagine themselves, their networks, and their colleagues functioning as this kind of general sovereign being. When you are at places like Davos, it is hard not to share the dream. There are all these

global problems and everyone else is preoccupied with parochial things. *Someone* should somehow provide governance at the global level—why not us?

FROM THE OUTSIDE: GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AS THE MYSTERIOUS STATUS OF FORCES

People who do not imagine themselves as prefigurative global rulers speak about global political and economic life in a different idiom. Rather than “global governance,” they might speak of “the world system,” “the new world order,” “empire,” or “global capitalism.” The economic, political, and cultural arrangements they see have a structure, empowering some and disempowering others. Someone else sets economic forces in motion, transforms our culture, and makes political decisions affecting our lives. Global governance is not about elaborating or prefiguring an ideal: we are already governed. The motive for understanding governance is to change it. The intellectual project is diagnosis: how are we ruled, how is hierarchy reproduced, who benefits? The usefulness of ideas about power and government lies in their ability to help us know it when we see it. Political theory may be instructive to the extent the world is governed in its name or navigates by its light.

Where insiders talk to *one another* about where to begin, what is realistic or what goes too far, on the outside people tilt at global windmills from different directions and decry different things. They seek less to persuade one another than to mobilize those who share their interests to identify a common enemy. Their stories about how things go wrong draw on shared intellectual traditions and return to the same imponderables: Is the world order a *system* or something much more ad hoc? Is there one global order—or many? Who are the most important actors? States and corporations, or more aggregate forces: labor and capital, East and West, or center and periphery?

If the central drama for insiders is the relentless effort to transform interests that are parochial into governance that could be more universal, from the outside the central drama is a struggle among people and groups, a matter of power more than governance, of winners and losers more than common interests or shared problems. The imaginary architecture is one of top and bottom, center and periphery, rich and poor. As a result, the outsider leans toward rupture and a society remade rather than prefigurative reform. Where the global governance tradition aims to re-present the world as governable, outsider traditions aim to represent absent or subordinated interests against those who govern. People speaking in this style are not aggregating the general will: their

perspective is more partial, interested. Where insiders imagine themselves as agents of the general interest, outsiders find it easier to imagine themselves in a fantasy relationship with others whose interests and viewpoints are not now ascendant. Outsider analysis is less concerned with sovereignty and less drawn to the fantasy of a capability above society, aggregating the general will and attending to the general interest. There is no benign power above the struggle of interests and the injustices of current arrangements are more salient than its capacity for management. At the center of analysis is an identification of power and structure—the structure of hierarchy, the power to dominate, distribute, and decide. Rulership—or sovereignty—is the reproduction of hierarchy: war is continuous with technical management and governance is the routinization of success. Patterns of domination, inequalities, and hierarchies are all marks by which the structure of power can be known.

To insiders, outsiders can sound like everyone else with an ax to grind. Drawing attention to hardship and hierarchy seems obtusely inattentive to the practical demands of the situation, more conducive to the nursing of grudges than the solution of problems. For much of the last century, this outsider style has been stigmatized for its association with disruptive or sectarian political movements—from communism, ethno-nationalism, and third-worldism to religious fundamentalism. In the United States, the outsider analytic tradition is most visible in media portrayals of nativists, localists, xenophobes, and people who worry that the United Nations is about to send in the black helicopters.

But, of course, sometimes and in some places, the United Nations—or the United States or the “international community”—does send in helicopters, and it is not always clear they are there to help. In fact, it is difficult to travel outside the commanding heights of the global economy or intergovernmental system—or beyond the leading European and North American nations—without finding some version of this outsider sensibility. For all it has been stigmatized, the outsider framework is also familiar. One encounters it also among people who are part of the “elites” of their own societies—among people one would have thought it easy to assimilate to the project of “rebooting” our global architecture from the inside. You can hear it in the sensibility of young international lawyers from Eastern and Central Europe encountering their generational cohort in Germany, France, or the Netherlands. At home, they may be cosmopolitans dreaming of global governance, but when they get to Brussels or Paris or London, they often feel the pull of outsider modes of analysis. The same can often be said for international lawyers in Paris or London whose racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds place them off-center in their homeland.

Although the difference is easy to personify—the CEO at Davos, the local politician in Iran, the militia leader, and the human rights advocate—it would be more accurate to say that many, even most, people who think about global power dynamics and governance shift gears from a relatively complacent “insider” aspiration for global governance to a more critical “external” assessment of the structure of global power and influence. Many experience professional work somewhere on a continuum between Davos or Geneva, on the one hand, and Idaho or North Waziristan, on the other. There is something to both sides: global governance can be a hopeful project of establishment reform, just as it can legitimate the privileges of the few in the language of general interest. As people pursue various projects, the relationship between these perspectives remains something of an open switch, the differences a matter of degree. Corporate managers learn both to focus on their duty to shareholders and to rise up to the challenges of global citizenship. Aspiring to participate in global governance as a practical aspiration is also a role one can learn and perform, like the experience of being on the outside, speaking truth to management. The language of engagement draws on both ideal-typical positions and visions of the world depicted in table 3.1.

Expressing yourself in the language of one or the other vision also positions you as an insider or outsider. It is easy to see those more troubled about a particular global governance initiative than oneself as outsiders and those more hopeful about global problem solving as part of the establishment. The insiders seem complacent, the outsiders impractical. These are positions on a continuum. Small disagreements about particular programs or the promise of particular reforms can mark the difference between those who are “part of the solution” and those who are “part of the problem.” In struggles about what to do, large pictures of the world and its future arise as alternatives, their invocation calibrated strategically. If you favor that, you must be one of those Davos elite who are running the world into the ground—if you cared about justice, you would join me in the fight. Or: when you ask me to do that, you reveal yourself to be one more parochial complainer who fails to understand what makes the world go around and where it is heading. Don’t you want to solve global problems and improve the state of the world? Why won’t you prefigure with me?

People everywhere struggle to reconcile these divergent sensibilities when they think about issues like climate change, poverty, or national development. The choice of perspective can cause anxiety: ought one to pitch in and try to make things better or listen to doubts that the system could ever be satisfactorily reformed to save the earth or share the wealth? People sometimes

Table 3.1. Two Postures of Engagement

Insider vocabulary	Outsider vocabulary
Global governance as aspiration/hope/solution	Global governance as reality/problem/threat
Prefiguration: current practices anticipate future solutions	Power struggle: current practices confirm past victory
Central drama: universal against the particular and law against politics	Central drama: a struggle of interests, the power of the few transformed into the law of the many opposed by resistance
Architecture: a plane of global problem solving above a world of parochial differences	Architecture: a horizontal opposition of interests, a hierarchy of winners and losers
Global problems and common values	Distribution and difference
Global governance: technical management in the general interest/the implementation of shared values	Global governance: a power practice of the powerful
Fantasy identification: commanding heights	Fantasy identification: peripheries/the dispossessed
Proposed mode of action: regulation/dispute resolution/problem solving	Proposed mode of action: conflict/power and resistance
Work on the self: rise up to think globally as an agent of the general interest	Work on the self: wake up to think globally as an agent of the periphery
Objective: reform	Objective: rupture
Sovereignty is central: global governance prefigured in the state system, completed as the emergence of an enlightened global management capability; meanwhile, parochial political sovereignty a continuing threat	Sovereignty just another form of power, another fantasy of an end to struggle; meanwhile, foreign or international authority as problem/local-national sovereignty as solution
Global governance outside, above, or after politics/economics/culture	Global governance as the dominant political, economic, and cultural order

associate these perspectives with different bureaucratic settings. Young professionals often wrestle with alternate career paths by framing them as a symbolic choice between working as an insider or an outsider: to work with an international institution as opposed to an NGO, with a global NGO as opposed to a local community organization, with one's home government rather than civil society. In the academic world, differences between disciplines or between

the "mainstream" and "heterogeneous" traditions within a discipline are often marked in these terms. Where international law seems the insider work of improving global governance, political science may carry the impulse to resist. Where economics can seem the handmaiden of global economic management, "international political economy" provides a home for those analyzing the dark sides, distributional consequences and inequalities of the world economic system. Where one field privileges the voice of modest pragmatism, belief in a diabolical "world system" takes hold in another. Disciplines with self-confident analytic models and technical tools often find it easier to speak as insiders to global problem solving while those focused on the messy world of facts gravitate more naturally to an outsider voice. It is common today to associate endogeneity with outsidership and insider status with more robust, if less capacious, analytic models.

Over time, these disciplinary and institutional contrasts are more fluid. What remains constant is the tendency to develop opposed sensibilities marked on the one side by prefigurative stories about the potential for global problem solving and on the other by stories about the power dynamics of a world in struggle. Global governance begins with the claim that this or that ongoing practice is, or could be, the operation of a global public hand. Resistance begins by the identification of interests in conflict and the interpretation of problem solving as power. The most effective players are strategic, flexible in their use of the available vernacular, finding ways to cross lines and embrace arguments from the other side to characterize projects with which they do not agree.