When Giordano Bruno’s name is mentioned, the first thing that comes to mind – besides biographical facts as his itinerant life, his process and condemnation as a heretic and his death at the stake – is his being the first early modern philosopher to envision an infinite universe of millions of worlds akin to ours, peopled, as he firmly believed, by intelligent life forms. Therefore we might not expect him, at first sight, to oppose globalization, or to take a critical stance towards it. We might believe that the mere assumption of existence of other worlds is an implicit invitation to their discovery either in terms of conquest, or at least in terms of direct contact. Does not Bruno in his dialogue “The Ash Wednesday Supper” compare himself to Christopher Columbus who had discovered one New World, while the Nolan philosopher discloses an infinity of New Worlds? Does he not proudly claim to have extended the field of human action to infinity? For in spite of all controversial views on Bruno’s aims and intentions, there is a general agreement that he was not a propagator of mere pure contemplation. For him, thought always translates into action, philosophy translates into politics, science into the exercise of power. What else then is to be expected, and what would be more desirable than for one foremost power to take the lead in global politics and economy, to unify the earth ideologically, and thus to enable it to expand its influence beyond its own natural sphere into outer space? How else are we to profit from Giordano Bruno’s opening universal space to us, if not by conquering the moon instead of crying for it?

Yet here and likewise in another of his Italian dialogues, “The Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast”, we find a rather harsh verdict on the events surrounding the discovery of the West Indies: a close contact

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2 Ibid., pp. 87–90.
between far-off nations is presented as a most dangerous enterprise and a doubtful blessing. God’s providence and nature have divided these countries and their peoples by interposing vast oceans. If they were intentionally kept apart, there must be a good reason for it, and bridging that distance must be considered as an act of human arrogance and transgression.3

In the third dialogue of the “Expulsion of the Triumphant Beast” we find the spirit of human enterprise attacked, for:

All extol the Golden age, and then they go and value and propagate as a virtue this criminal [enterprise] who has annihilated it, who has invented the notion of mine and thine. She has divided and given in possession to this one and that one not only the earth (which belongs to all its living creatures) but also the sea and possibly even the air. She has put the delight of others under the rule of law and has seen to it that what had been sufficient for all is now superabundant for some and too little for others. Thus the ones are overstuffing themselves to their damage while the others starve to death. She has crossed the seas to violate the laws of nature and mixed up those peoples the good mother has held apart, in order to diffuse the vices of one native population among the other, since the virtues are not so easily diffused, unless we should call virtue and bounty what is called so and believed to be so by a certain deceit and custom, though the effects and fruits thereof are condemned by all sense and natural reason, being the open delinquencies and follies and evils of the usurping and appropriative laws of mine and thine which make most just him who has been the strongest possessor, and most deserving him who has been most alert and eager, and the first conqueror of these gifts and parts of the earth which nature, and consequently God, donate to all indifferently.4

This sounds familiar and almost uncannily up-to-date. And it certainly amounts to a straightforward rejection of globalization. Far too straightforward, actually, for any reader who is familiar with Bruno’s

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3 In the Spaccio de la bestia trionfante (Giordano Bruno, Werke V, Felix Meiner Verlag Hamburg, 2009, p. 92) wise Minerva is censured by Jupiter for her lack of judgment in inventing Argos, the prototype of all pirate’s ships, “so that the sea no less than the firm land should lack its eager robbers”; in the Ash Wednesday Supper (op. cit., p. 88 f.) the likes of Tiphys, helmsman of the Argonauts, are charged with having “discovered how to disturb everybody else’s peace, violate the native spirits of the regions, mingle together that which provident nature had kept separate”, thus “by intercourse to redouble defects and to add to old vices the new vices of other peoples, with violence to propagate new follies and to plant unheard-of insanities where they did not before exist. They showed new ways, instruments, and arts for tyrannizing and murdering each other”.

4 Giordano Bruno: Spaccio de la bestia trionfante, ed. cit., p. 266.