

Steven Flusty, *De-Coca-Colonization: Making the Globe from the Inside Out* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004).

Steven Flusty's *De-Coca-Colonization: Making the Globe from the Inside Out* is a very hopeful book about the possibilities for popular resistance to globalization. Or, more correctly, it is a reinterpretation of the nature of globalization to show that it is produced, rather than needing to be resisted, by people at the local level. At the same time it also throws into dispute the accepted distinction between the global and the local. As is already becoming clear, this book puts into question so many of the taken-for-granted assumptions of the scholarly discourse surrounding globalization that it becomes difficult to characterize its argument using the accepted terminology.

It is no doubt partly for this reason, and also because of the author's self-confessed penchant for terminological inventiveness, that neologisms stud his prose. In the course of her perusal, the reader becomes familiar with "flexism", the "metapolis", "globalities" and "de-coca-colonization" itself, to name but a few; as well as such neo-phraseology as the "new world bipolar disorder", and "prickly space". Though a little disturbing at first, such neologisms quickly register as both novel and lively, apt as well as intellectually challenging.

This short book packs a powerful emotional impact. Its tone of buoyant optimism is infectious, so the effect is uplifting and energizing. This is not to say that the book is naïve or pollyannaish. The author writes about the darker side of the globalizing world, the prevalence of gated communities in the United States and elsewhere, of the increasing official surveillance of everyday life, about September 11 in New York and terrorism. But the emphasis remains on the creative potential for people to shape and reshape globalities for themselves.

Essentially Flusty's argument is that globalization is created by the activities of myriad individuals, acting either as individuals or within groups. Thus agency and the power of creation reside in the hands of individuals, and individuals can make and remake globalization according to their own desires. By focusing on the individual and the local, Flusty counters the dominant conceptualization of global processes as by nature, big, inevitable, irresistible, overwhelming and imposed from above. What Flusty is arguing for might be characterized simply as 'globalization from below' instead of 'globalization from above'. This aligns his work in some ways with that of Richard Falk, as in *Predatory Globalization: A Critique* (1999), with its stress on the need to build transnational civil society as a foundation for greater democratic governance.

Flusty's argument raises some interesting methodological issues. The theoretical basis of his approach to globalization could be described as methodological individualism. This refers to a method or approach within the social sciences which explains social phenomena in terms of the interaction of innumerable decisions and actions of individuals. It can be contrasted with methodological collec-

tivism, which instead explains developments in society in terms of the behaviour of collectivities such as classes, ethnic groups, or genders. The interesting thing about the dominant discourse on globalization is that it has been closely connected with the concepts of economic rationalism, neoclassical economics and the ideology of the free market—all of which are theoretically grounded in methodological individualism. What Flusty has managed to do is to turn methodological individualism against that dominant globalizing discourse. Flusty engenders a sense of individual empowerment by placing decision-making about the future course of globalization into the hands of individuals all over the globe. This “*détournement*” (a Flustyism), or reworking, of individualism against the dark forces of “plutocratic corporatism” (another Flustyism) is one of the reasons why this book is so intellectually stimulating as well as emotionally satisfying.

Flusty’s relationship with various systemic analyses of globalization, such as Marxist approaches or neo-Marxist dependency theories, is therefore difficult; and this is something he grapples with continually, but inconclusively, throughout the book. He characterizes his own approach as “discursive materialism”. He finally relies on Marx’s well-known dictum that individuals make their own history, but not in circumstances of their own choosing. Flusty also gestures toward Michel Foucault’s notion of micropolitics, seeing power not so much as external and sovereign but as immanent in and emerging through day-to-day thoughts and actions. Thus the dark forces of globalized plutocratic corporatism do exert undeniable power, but Flusty emphasizes repeatedly that even these forces themselves are the result of countless individual daily actions, and their dominance is neither inevitable nor permanent:

There are multiple versions of the world at play on the global field, and there are inarguably winners that claim the lion’s share of the spoils...All remain engaged in continuous, polyvalent, and dislocated struggles for control over symbolic and literal terrains, all work to be concretized as globalities with the power to influence (or refuse) the order of the world...It remains instead a persistently viscous planet, an arena where all manner of institutions and other hybrid social collectivities advance incommensurable globalities, plutocratic and otherwise, of their own devising (131).

Strictly speaking, Flusty does not put forward globalization from below as an alternative to globalization from above, but as a counterpart.

According to Flusty, the social work of constructing globalization “is done by the stuff of everyday life—its persons, spaces, artifacts, and, most important, the practices that constitute their relationships” (4). Such quotidian minutiae

become the stuff of his analysis. To highlight global interconnectedness, he tells stories about items of everyday life (or at least his everyday life): a *barong* shirt from the Philippines, ordering a suit from Damascus, and the intriguing Meiji Yogurt Scotch candies. “At its broadest my claim is that globalization *is* only because it is woven through the planet’s social fabric from the ground up (or, much more correctly, from particular grounds outward) by everyday life’s hyperextension —the increasing spatial reach of emplaced social relations” (4). To highlight the possibilities of resistance, he describes in depth, for example, international resistance against Nike as a corporation, and the Zapatistas uprising in Mexico from 1994 as a movement against neoliberalism and globalization.

No doubt Flusty’s method and line of argument, his eclectic and rather haphazard approach to theoretical underpinnings, will give little satisfaction to committed theory builders who wish to explain the phenomenon of globalization as a whole. Nevertheless, Flusty offers the reader hope for the future. His inspiring anecdotes of multicultural mixing, his cheerful upending of the methodological individualism of economic rationalism, provide a needed tonic against the psychological pains of life within the globalizing world.

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