

# Journal of Rhetoric, Professional Communication, and Globalization

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Volume 4 | Number 1

Article 7

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2013

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## Recommended Citation

Verzella, Massimo (2013) "Review of The Megarhetorics of Global Development. Eds. Rebecca Dingo and J. Blake Scott. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2012, 266 pp.," *Journal of Rhetoric, Professional Communication, and Globalization*: Vol. 4 : No. 1, Article 7.  
Available at: <https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/rpcg/vol4/iss1/7>

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ISSN: 2153-9480. Volume 4, Number 1. October - 2013

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Review of *The Megarhetorics of Global Development*. Eds. Rebecca Dingo and J. Blake Scott. Pittsburgh: Pittsburgh University Press, 2012, 266 pp.

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“Development” is an insidious word in that it often provides moral justification for aggressive neoliberal policies. When imposed from above and orchestrated by financial and corporate elites with no understanding of the real needs of ‘undeveloped’ communities, development sanctions a covert form of imperialism that relies on the world accepting the credo of free trade in primis, but also American forms of democracy, law, and governance. With the aim of questioning neoliberal orthodoxies and challenging colonial arguments (accepted as commonsense) about saving the “natives” from their backwardness, a group of scholars have joined forces in the anthology reviewed here to unravel the most typical discursive practices and the historical foundations of the rhetoric of development.

*The Megarhetorics of Global Development*, edited by Rebecca Dingo and J. Blake Scott, at once breathes new life to the call for a rhetorical turn in development studies and provides a distinctive contribution to the literature on the dynamics of globalization and the counter-dynamics of localization; a contribution that promotes a thorough understanding of the mutual conditioning of the global and local, or “transglocal” dynamics. Ideally, this book expands research in the rhetoric of international communication, shifting the main focus from the need to bridge distances between different cultures to enhance mutual comprehension and profitable cooperation (see Lovitt & Goswami, 1999, for example) to the need to understand *how* multinational companies and NGOs have bridged these distances, through what rhetorical means and at what cost.

The chapters are grouped into two parts entitled, respectively, “Extending Rhetorical Concepts and Methods” and “Building Counter-Rhetorics of Resistance.” It is notable that each author refers to points or arguments made in other chapters, a move that gives strong cohesion to the book and indirectly invites the reader to participate in the vibrant dialogue that inspired the collection. In their tightly connected contributions - written in accurate but accessible language for a global audience comprised of both academic and non-academic readers - the authors employ an interdisciplinary approach that integrates rhetorical theory, globalization scholarship, and a wealth of other theoretical instruments to analyze the rhetorical strategies that sustain

development policies, NGO appeals, the campaigns of multinationals and various forms of propagandistic distortion.

Today, as in the Nineteenth century, India attracts a lot of attention for its resources, its market size, and its low-cost labor-power. In the volume's first and sixth chapters, studies by J. Blake Scott and Eileen Schell shed light on the conflict between corporations - pharmaceutical giant Novartis and agribusiness giant Archer Daniels Midland - and Indian and global NGOs that object to American regulations concerning intellectual property protection and neoliberal patent laws. These regulations, argues the popular activist Vandana Shiva (Schell often makes reference to Shiva's ideas in her chapter), jeopardize public health and social welfare. Both litigants worked transglobally to garner local and global partners that could support their theses. On one side, NGOs relied on the rhetorical frames *patents versus patients* and *patents versus impoverished consumers*, by bringing up India's role as pharmacy to the developing world. NGOs also constructed the idea of India as a land rich in biological resources that can generate sustenance and survival for global masses on condition that parasitic plundering by Western nations and corporations is successfully contrasted. On the opposite front, the corporations adopted a set of rhetorical strategies that hinged on the importance of development. The old adage goes like this: Lack of stringent patent protection rules discourages investment and research, thus reducing development opportunities that could 'save' Third World countries. These defense tactics, however, are only the starting point of a more complex strategy whose key steps are the refashioning of the companies' ethos and the surreptitious promotion of neoliberal development policies by a clever use of humanitarian doxa, i.e. common belief (e.g., Novartis), and epideictic rhetoric, i.e. praise rhetoric (e.g., Archer Daniels Midland).

We owe to the author of the third chapter, Robert DeChaine, a clear explanation of how humanitarian doxa and the mechanism of corporate social responsibility work. It's a simple trick after all: The corporations deflect attention away from commercial motivation and keep it focused on their commitment to social responsibility through the adoption of the language of citizenship. Their rhetorical challenge, argues DeChaine, "is to construct public narratives that demonstrate qualities of competence, altruism, accountability, moral conscience, responsiveness, community orientation, and self-reflexivity. In short, corporations must craft appeals through which they effectively present themselves, both in principle and practice, as beacons of civic virtue" (p. 83). Among the discursive formations that uphold the humanitarian doxa is the rhetoric of empowerment. In the book's seventh chapter, Rebecca Dingo examines how two important humanitarian organizations, CARE and Kiva, represent Third World women as passive victims in need of rescue in order to move the viewer to operate from fleeting emotion rather than enduring knowledge. Donors from the Global North are invited to save and empower individuals from the Global South without learning anything about the political dynamics that cause disenfranchisement. In his contribution, based on an understanding of affect as a central aspect of rhetoricity, Matt Newcomb makes a similar point when he examines the representation of South Korea in Compassion International's promotion materials. By contrast, argues Dingo, films such as *Mardi Gras: Made in China* and *Beyond Belief* shake viewers' complacency by having them experience shame, which in turn stimulates a desire to find out more about the contexts and types of need of disadvantaged individuals.

Among the rhetorical strategies adopted by economic and political giants to deceive global publics is depoliticization. In chapter 5, Tim Jensen and Wendy S. Hesford illustrate how, on the occasion of the Beijing Olympics, Chinese authorities deflected criticism about human rights violations by “framing the Olympic spirit as a purity that should not be sullied with the concern of specific human rights practices” (p. 129). The corporations sponsoring the Olympics speedily jumped on the same rhetorical bandwagon and shirked their social responsibilities by delegating the task of solving China’s political problems to the Olympics’ ‘benevolent spirit.’

Simplifying a bit, we can argue that the challenges of globalization can be met by mobilizing either top-down or bottom-up forces. In their contribution, Jason Edwards and Jaime Wright examine the way in which former U.S. president Bill Clinton tried to integrate the principles of economic liberalism with the principle of social protection in his “double movement” rhetoric. While this chapter does fit into the framework, its ties with the previous chapter - Scott’s study on the Novartis vs. NGOs battle on patent rights in India - are not very strong. As soon as I started reading chapter 6, Eileen Schell’s investigation of how western corporations take advantage of skewed patent regulations to plunder resources in India, I wondered why this continuation and expansion (in new directions) of Scott’s chapter came so late in the book.

The two chapters that conclude the book propose examples of popular (bottom-up) forms of resistance. Bret Benjamin focuses on the creativity of Abderrahmane Sissako, who directed a film, *Bamako* (2006) that stages a trial between African society (the plaintiff) and international financial institutions. In his analysis of the film’s denunciation of the crimes of capitalist imperialism, Benjamin lucidly highlights both potential and limitations of the collective anti-imperialist activism. In a more playful vein, Robert McRuer offers an analysis of the video *The Chain South*, featuring performance artist Nao Bustamante in the irreverent role of Ronaldo McDonald. McRuer points to an alternative way of resisting orthodoxies, which we may call the “enfreakment” strategy. This strategy is not based on assimilation or its opposite counteridentification; rather, it is based on disidentification, a strategy that transforms the megarhetorics of neoliberalism from within, through ‘toxic’ representations that destabilize ossified ideas and cultural forms.

Joining such books as Wendy Hesford’s *Spectacular Rhetorics: Human Rights Visions, Recognitions, Feminisms* (2011), Jennifer Wingard’s *Branded Bodies, Rhetoric, and the Neoliberal Nation-State* (2012) and, on the sociolinguistics front, Ingrid Piller’s *Intercultural Communication: A Critical Introduction* (2011) and Jan Blommaert’s *The Sociolinguistic of Globalization* (2010), *The Megarhetorics of Global Development* sheds light on the mechanisms of globalization and the discursive practices that produce its doctrines. It will be of interest to a wide range of students and scholars working in rhetorical, postcolonial, and cultural studies as well as to individuals working for multinational companies and activists of all stripes. Perhaps students and scholars of rhetoric will be able to more thoroughly understand intertextual references and the full import of the arguments set forth in the contributions, but this book can be an eye-opener for all individuals who are willing to look beyond received truths and ideological orthodoxies. At the very least, the authors push us to exercise critical thinking instead of swallowing the propagandistic messages crafted by corporate and political leaders to misdirect the human drive for solidarity and activism.

*Rhetoric, Professional Communication, and Globalization*  
October, 2013, Volume 4, Number 1, 136-139.

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