Rural Cosmopolitanism: Rethinking Economic Systems

Manuel-Julian R. Montoya, PhD
Associate Professor, International Management and Global Structures
University of New Mexico
Anderson School of Management
Cosmopolitanism and Worldmaking

- Ancient Greek – kosmos (world) polis (citizen)
- Cosmopolitanism is a human centric form of globalization
- Worldmaking – An aesthetic approach, sometimes non-human centric
The Economic Orthodoxy

This model was very human centric, but had a non-human centric objective!

Economies of Scale (1770s)

Measure of output produced asserted as cost per unit decreasing with increased scale

Economies of Density (1980s)

Cost savings resulting from spatial proximity, which causes interests to agglomerate
A parallel literary evolution

- Goethe – *Weltliteratur* (1820s)
- The Magic Realist boom
- Raymond Williams – the City and the Country (1970s)
- Contemporary Speculative fiction

Economics preserved a human centric model. Literature then started doing the work of separating objects from people.

That’s how cities were imagined as engines of progress...

Realism reinforced the local becoming global though nation

Fiction didn’t require that linear type of thinking... the local was already global
Urban conflates with cosmopolitanism

We think of worldmaking and globalization in the following ways:

- High volume
- Scaling up
- Accumulation
- Disposability

“Cities are monopolies of thought”
-- Italo Calvino
The segregation of the urban and rural

In economics, the discourse on economies of scale aestheticized as a problem of density and quantity, qualities associated with urban human interface.

Can a city be rural?
Can rural spaces be urban?
What changes the segregation

• Anthropocene
  • suggests that crowds (human) equals power and influence (Canetti)

• Cthulucene
  • Abundance viewed outside the limits of human-centrism
  • Pre-agricultural and ancient orientations
Case study: craft is quaint. Rural people are quaint... Why?

Both are valuable.

Why is the experience of rural peoples “less real” until it is legitimised by certain economic processes?

QUAINTNESS is an important term, because it disrupts the non-human centric logic reinforced by economic theory
The rural has worldmaking processes

- Resilience
- Quaintness
- Craft
- Crowds and Power
- Agricultural sustainability
- Value chain equity
- Supply chain transparency
- Space Commerce – literal and technological
- Post-dystopian aesthetics
- Aura is reintroduced into supply chains
  - Manifests as rural in literary tropes
Rethinking Economic Systems

• The rural is having a literary worldmaking revival
• They simply don’t conform to human-centric models of progress
• They aren’t empty, desolate spaces just because they have small human populations
• Acknowledging this gets us to rethink economic and scientific objectives
Thank you for your time.
References


