

Modernist Discourse and the Crisis of Development Theory

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The field of Third World studies is thought once again to be in a state of crisis, thanks largely to disillusionment with the once-dominant dependency "paradigm." Amidst renewed interest in developmentalism and the clamor for an alternative to dependency, this article argues, first, that the major achievements of dependency theory remain largely unrecognized because the approach has been so frequently misrepresented or misunderstood. Whatever the ultimate status of dependency's theoretical claims, it contains elements of a countermodernist attitude which ought to be retained in any new approach to the study of Third World development.

Second, the article argues that, despite these accomplishments, dependency remains trapped, along with developmentalism, within a modernist discourse which relies on the principles of nineteenth century liberal philosophy; that it treats the individual nation-state in the Third World as the sovereign subject of development; and that it accepts the Western model of national autonomy with growth as the appropriate one to emulate. The final section of the article discusses the efforts of a number of scholars to ground knowledge in local histories and experiences rather than building theory through the use of general conceptual categories and Western assumptions. Although these ideas currently remain on the margins of Third World studies, it is to be hoped that dependency's loss of intellectual hegemony has at least opened up a space for them to be taken seriously, in the same way that dependency was itself taken seriously in the late 1960s.

In the early 1990s, the community of scholars devoted to the study of Third World development resembles in many respects its 1960s counterpart. The decade of the sixties began thirty years ago with a pervasive sense of optimism that "in the new and modernizing nations of Asia, Africa and Latin America, the processes of enlightenment and democratization will have their inevitable way" (Almond 1970, 232), but it gave way increasingly to disillusionment and loss of theoretical direction. Coups d'état, once thought of as a Latin American

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phenomenon, became regular occurrences in other parts of the world, particularly Africa and the Middle East. Rates of economic growth in many countries were unimpressive despite foreign aid, and, even in rapidly industrializing states such as Brazil, South Africa, and Iran, long-term prospects for social equality and political democracy appeared poor.

The experiences of Third World states forced an internal reevaluation of the concepts and theories contained within the existing "modernization" framework. By the late 1960s, the problem with Third World states was thought by scholars to be less their "traditional attitudes" and more the injudicious mixing of political participation with institutional weakness, in addition to their profligate waste of resources. Political participation remained a laudatory objective, but the emphasis of the liberal "modernization" scholars such as Almond, Lerner, Coleman, and Lipset on Western-style democracy as the end point of development gave way increasingly to an emphasis on the immediate need for order and efficiency (see, for example, Huntington 1968; Huntington and Nelson 1976; Bates 1988).

These countries' experiences also opened up a space for more fundamental challenges to the entire mainstream paradigm of developmentalism (for critiques by those associated with the dependency school, see Frank 1967a; Bodenheimer 1970; Cardoso and Faletto 1979. See also Tipps 1973; Wiarda 1981). For many disaffected scholars, the body of Marxist-influenced literature from Latin America which came to be referred to as the dependency school constituted an effective alternative, although it never came close to achieving the same degree of theoretical and political unity that bound together the first generation of developmentalists. In that sense it was more an approach, or an attitude, than a paradigm. Yet, such was the intellectual force of dependency that it appealed not only to Third World theorists of development in Africa and Asia (Leys 1975; Moulder 1977; Rodney 1982) but also to empiricist social scientists predisposed to "measure" the concept of dependence (for an overview of this literature and application of the approach, see Mahler 1980. For a critique, see Cardoso 1977). In addition, it spawned what, in North America at least, is currently one of the major frameworks for the analysis of global political economy—world-system analysis (Wallerstein 1974; Chase-Dunn and Rubinson 1977).

Despite (or perhaps because of) the popularity of dependency, a feeling of disillusionment and theoretical disarray is once again apparent in Third World studies. It is a field felt to have "lost much of its attractiveness, especially for the social scientists in the Third World" (Sheth 1987, 156), to be in "a state of crisis" (Smith 1985, 532), at an "impasse" (Vandergeest and Buttel 1988; Mathur 1989), and in "ferment" (Wiarda 1989). The underlying premise of these critiques is that as socio-economic problems continue to mount in Third World countries despite three decades of intense development efforts—problems of debt, famine, environmental devastation, ethnocide, and civil war, to name but a few—the ability of "dependencia" theorists to offer either a convincing explanation for these conditions or a set of propositions for re-

solving them has dissipated. Dependency, in short, lives on, but it has fallen from grace in the same way that developmentalism once did.

This theoretical malaise has manifested itself in two quite different ways. On the one hand, there has been a revival of developmentalism among a new generation of social scientists in the industrialized West as well as in the Third World. One example of this is the recent work on the political economy of East and Southeast Asia (the so-called NICs), which links in Weberian fashion their rapid industrialization to the “entrepreneurial spirit” of traditional Confucian culture (on Taiwan, see Harrell 1985; for a comparative analysis, see Chai and Clark 1987).¹ Another example is the appeal to a “neo-Weberian” tradition as the solution to development theory’s problems (Vandergeest and Buttel 1988).²

On the other hand, there are increasing demands for a third alternative to the two major “paradigms” (Smith 1985; Clark 1987; Sheth 1987). While only five years ago Smith could say that the dependency school was “in its prime” (Smith 1985, 553), dissatisfaction with it is increasingly pervasive.³

What differentiates today’s challenges to the dominant dependency “paradigm” from the challenges of two decades ago to developmentalism is the lack of a shared understanding of the nature of the problem. There is no emergent consensus that, although the ultimate form of an eventual alternative to dependency remains indeterminate, we are at least agreed that we know what ails the patient. Diagnoses range from an insistence that dependency is too extreme and holistic, coming to rest as it supposedly does on a few simple premises (Smith 1985); through the view that it fails as a guide to action for imperialism’s victims (Sheth 1987); to the oft-heard charge that it cannot account for the success of “growth with equity” states such as Taiwan (Clark 1987). That dependency and developmentalism are mutually exclusive, discrete, and contradictory paradigms, however, is taken as given.⁴

The purpose of this article is threefold. First, amidst renewed interest in developmentalism and the clamor for an alternative to dependency, it argues that because the latter approach has been frequently misrepresented or misunderstood in the writings of its more influential critics, its major achievements remain largely unrecognized. No matter what the eventual status of dependency’s theoretical claims, its major contribution has been its challenge to developmentalism’s modernist discourse. The commitment to revealing how certain structures and the boundaries between political spaces and fields of practice have been constituted historically, the sensitivity to specificity and difference, particularly to the way “in which *the same* thing is transformed into *the other* by means of a process which takes place in time” (Cardoso 1977, 16), and the view of history as open-ended and dynamic, are elements of a countermodernist attitude in dependency writings that ought to be retained in any new approach. The first part of the article outlines briefly what is meant by a modernist attitude and how the dependency school echoes the concerns of other critical thinkers who have sought to refute it.

Second, I argue that despite these accomplishments the dependency school

does suffer from serious limitations, although they are not the ones identified by others mentioned previously. Despite important differences between developmentalism and dependency, they are not “islands of theory” in need of “connecting bridges” (Wiarda 1989, 75), but more like an archipelago because of a network of common assumptions binding them together. Both are trapped, albeit to varying degrees, within a modernist discourse which relies on the principles of nineteenth-century liberal philosophy, which treats the individual nation-state in the Third World as the sovereign subject of development, and which accepts the Western model of national autonomy with growth as the appropriate one to emulate. Because of this, the “developed state” might be understood in both developmentalism and dependency as analogous to “reasoning man” at the center of modernity, and the relationship between core/peripheral or modern/traditional states as implicitly akin to that between parent and child. The tendency to equate political development with “Westernization, economic growth, industrialization, modernization, and the like” is, as Stephen Chilton recently argued, pervasive (Chilton 1988, 101).⁵ For such is the strength of the modern way of thinking and knowing that it influences the thought of supposedly discrete theoretical traditions so that what it means to be “developed” is the same for both.

Thus, the current impasse, or crisis, plaguing development theory, I would argue, relates not to the fragmentation of the field but to its unity: to this failure to conceive of development in any other manner. The problem is not simply that prevailing forms of writing and talking about development, as well as the forms of action that grow out of these processes, are irrelevant to the problems they claim to address (Edwards 1989). They must be held at least partially accountable for the serious damage wreaked upon the people and ecosystems of Third World countries in the name of “development” over the last three decades in particular. The final section discusses the work of a number of scholars who have made this claim and their efforts to ground knowledge in local histories and experiences rather than building theory through the use of general conceptual categories and Western assumptions. Although these ideas currently remain on the margins of Third World studies—they do not, for example, appear in any of the “mainstream” journals in the field—it is to be hoped that dependency’s loss of intellectual hegemony has at least opened up a space for them to be taken seriously, in the same way that dependency was itself taken seriously in the late 1960s.

Modernism, Countermodernism and Dependency

As a result of a complex series of events in medieval Europe, including the Enlightenment and the Protestant Reformation, the era of Christendom gave way to a new epoch characterized by both the triumph of the secular nation-state over the universal Church and a distinctively “modern” way of thinking and being. The point here is not to enter a lengthy debate about when exactly modernity began (other than to say that the break-up of Christendom probably

took hundreds of years), or to mention all of the factors that contributed to it. It is simply to highlight what are generally considered by social theorists to be the major influences on modern attitudes toward God, man, nature, and authority, and then to indicate briefly what those modern attitudes are.

In addition to the Reformation, which rejected the traditional role of the Church as mediator between man and God, the Enlightenment challenged ecclesiastical authority through the instruments of reason and scientific rationality. The experimental method of Francis Bacon, the “father” of modern science, dichotomized facts and values, mind and matter, objective and subjective, rational and emotional, man and nature, and secular and spiritual. Thus, instead of a text upon which Divine Providence was inscribed, the world became an unfinished entity to be mastered and placed at the service of humanity. Governed by a set of laws revealed through a process of reasoning about observed facts, the material and human environment could be bent to man’s will as long as he learned to reason correctly.

At least since the end of the eighteenth century, modern discourse has invoked the figure of reasoning man who might achieve total knowledge, total autonomy, and total power; whose use of reason would enable him to see himself, not God, as the origin of language, the maker of history, and the source of meaning in the world (Ashley 1989). The spread of scientific knowledge was presumed to make correct reasoning possible and to enable movement along the path of political enlightenment and progress (see, for example, Hawthorne 1987).

Although I am aware of no such argument to this effect, the case can, I think, be made that the possibility for man to replace God as sovereign being in the world was always already contained within Christian thought itself. This is because the boundary between God and man was historically fragile in two senses: on the one hand, God has often been endowed with human characteristics, as when Christians speak of Jesus as “God’s son”; on the other hand, Jesus himself has generally been considered “both God and man,” that is, a God in human form. From this perspective, modernity is less an era which has proclaimed the “death of God” *per se* but rather the death of “God the father” and the supremacy of Jesus his son.

In its liberal variant, modernist thought has privileged the individual as the ultimate site of sovereignty, but the state, the community, the class, or the people have also been invoked as providing that site (Connolly 1988, 3). In each case, reasoning man is assimilated into a larger agency—as, for example, via a social contract between reasoning man and the state—which itself becomes an invariable presence, an originary voice, a foundational source of truth and meaning (Ashley 1988). It becomes, in other words, *analogous to reasoning man himself*, which is why a discussion of “sovereign states” in anything other than individualist terms is so notoriously difficult.

That the West has so often recurred in modernist thought as the origin of meaning in the world makes it easy to equate modernism with ethnocentrism, and anti-ethnocentrism with anti-modernism. Yet ethnocentrism is itself only

one manifestation of a modernist procedure to which Jacques Derrida (1978) has given the name *logocentrism*. This term describes a disposition to impose hierarchy when encountering familiar and uncritically accepted dichotomies between West and East, North and South, modern and traditional, core and periphery, rational and emotional, male and female, and so on. The first term in such oppositions is conceived as a higher reality, belonging to the realm of logos, or pure and invariable presence in need of no explanation. The other term is then defined solely in relation to the first, the sovereign subject, as an inferior or derivative form. It simply "stands to reason," we might say, that the East should become more like the West, the South like the North, the traditional like the modern. What distinguishes logocentrism for Derrida is a nostalgia for origins; for a foundational source of truth and meaning that is pure, innocent, natural and normal; and for a standpoint and standard supposedly independent of interpretation and political practice.

It is important to realize, as Derrida has pointed out, that even the most radically anti-ethnocentric discourse may evidence logocentric reason. He offers as an example of this the work of anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss, who while legitimately denouncing the supposed distinctions between historical societies and societies without history (the so-called culture/nature dichotomy more broadly) nonetheless constituted "Native peoples" as a model of original and natural goodness, of pure innocence interrupted only by the forced entry of the West. The ethnography of Levi-Strauss exhibits an "ethic of nostalgia for origins," a dream of a full and immediate presence closing history and suppressing contradiction and difference. Logocentrism has not been avoided; the culture/nature dichotomy has simply been reversed.

In addition, Derrida demonstrates how, ironically, Levi-Strauss accepted into his discourse the premises of ethnocentrism at the very moment he denounced them, for while arguing for the superiority of societies with purely spoken language over those with writing, Levi-Strauss failed to consider non-alphabetic signs as examples of "writing." The with writing/without writing dichotomy was therefore dependent upon an ethnocentric privileging of phonetic writing at the expense of other forms. Put simply, the argument that "they" were superior to "us" because "they" could not write remained dependent upon a Western and thus problematic conception of writing (Derrida 1976, 1978).

Derrida's conception of logocentrism is important to this discussion for two reasons. First, it demonstrates how even the most radically critical discourse easily slips into the form, the logic, and the implicit postulations of precisely what it seeks to contest, for it can never step completely outside of a heritage from which it must borrow its tools—its history, its language—in its attempt to destroy that heritage itself. I will try to show in section 2 how this has happened to dependency in the same way that it happened to Levi-Strauss's ethnography. Second, the pervasiveness of logocentric thinking in the field of development studies explains why subversive counter-discourses are not taken more seriously; anyone who rejects the logic of autonomy and growth as

developmental objectives is assumed to be privileging their opposites, dependency and stagnation, and is considered “crazy.”

This does not mean that effective critiques of modernity are impossible, nor that one’s only choices are to be modernist (*for* modernity) or anti-modernist (*for* tradition). It means instead that when faced with a familiar, practical opposition such as nature/culture, a critical attitude questions systematically and rigorously the history of these concepts (Derrida 1978, 284) and experiments with the possibility of going beyond established limits (Foucault 1984). It is not simply a question of reversing the hierarchy but of demonstrating what is at stake politically in the production and maintenance of that same dichotomy. The most effective critique of all goes beyond the point at which most critical theory stops and critically evaluates *itself*, questioning in particular its ability to elude or even subvert logocentric reason.

In sum then, “postmodern” social theory (as in the work of Derrida and Foucault) regards modernity less as an epoch with a well-defined beginning or end and more as an attitude or set of attitudes which, since its emergence, has had to struggle from within against attitudes of countermodernity (Foucault 1984). From that perspective, it is possible to read a good deal of social theory not usually associated with “postmodernism” as “countermodernist.” For example, E. H. Carr (1964) (someone usually regarded as central to the Realist tradition in international relations) recognized that the assumption of an ultimate reality existing outside historical processes and a belief in the possibility of universal progress toward a finite goal undergirded the debates between two supposedly quite different schools of thought: the Utopian, a category which included nineteenth century liberals such as J.S. Mill, Bentham and Smith; and the Realist, comprised of thinkers as diverse as Machiavelli, Hobbes, Hegel, and Marx. This thinking particularly disturbed Carr in the way in which it separated theory from practice,⁶ morality from power, economics from politics, and facts from values. When transplanted to the international realm, Carr objected to the way this mode of thought treated states as analogous to reasoning individuals and viewed nineteenth-century liberal democracy as based on certain *a priori* rational principles which had only to be applied in other contexts to produce the same results, thereby ignoring the historical specificity of each situation. Disconnected from the different conditions pertaining in the non-Western world, theories of liberal democracy were, according to Carr, essentially utopian (1964, 27).

It is within the context of these larger theoretical critiques of modernist discourse, then (Blumenberg 1983), that dependency’s challenge to developmentalism can be understood as at least partially countermodernist. The effort of North American developmentalists to bring to their studies of the Third World “the ideas and concepts of the Enlightenment and nineteenth-century social theory, which at an earlier time had sought to make sense out of European and American modernization” (Almond 1983, 2), resulted in a research program characterized most obviously by ethnocentrism, that is, self-congratulatory and uncritical postures toward Western civilization, and also

by logocentrism more generally. The “modern” world was placed in hierarchical opposition to other areas of the globe which remained “traditional,” that is, less cosmopolitan, less scientific, less secular, less rational, less individualist, and less democratic. They were defined solely in relation to the West, the foundational source of “development,” as an inferior or derivative form. For all of the “nuances, diverse views and approaches” (Wiarda 1989, 68) taken by developmentalists, the majority never classified the countries of Western Europe, the United States, or Great Britain as “developing” or “modernizing” societies; *they* belonged to the realm of logos, or pure and invariable presence in need of no explanation.

Whereas in the nineteenth century, difference had been defined as “uncivilized” otherness to be conquered or assimilated in the name of “civilization,” a century later difference was defined as “traditional” otherness to be conquered (if communist) or assimilated (if non-communist) in the name of “modernization” and “development.” In keeping with nineteenth-century social theory, change for developmentalists was assumed to be a progressive, evolutionary process toward some desired end-state; internal obstacles to progress in “traditional” areas required Western intervention to set the development ball rolling; and, once in motion, these societies would evolve toward “modernity” in much the same manner as the West had. To quote Marx, “the country that is most developed only shows, to the less developed, the image of its own future” (quoted in Palma 1978, 889).⁷

The historical-structural approach and “dialectical analysis of concrete situations of dependence” (Cardoso 1970, 414) problematized these modernist assumptions and generated very different conceptions of the nature of social change in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. At certain historical moments change might indeed follow a linear temporal trajectory, but at others it might display cyclical or even regressive tendencies. The concepts of “change” and “development” are not necessarily synonymous.

Careful attention to imperialist relationships among countries, to asymmetric relations between classes, and to unequal trade relations also led to a rejection of developmentalist attempts to locate the source of Third World problems solely in “traditional” attributes and the solution to them in a process of Westernization. The dependency school, despite substantially different prescriptions for change among its various theorists (who were not, despite conventional wisdom, all Marxists), was united in its refusal to see the West as the privileged agent of change and progress in the “developing” countries. Historical analyses of Latin American political economy were thus not merely a matter of recovering a forgotten past; they were intended to show how developmentalism was in the business of “blaming the victim.”

Dependency also problematized the way in which developmentalism artificially demarcated, then treated as fixed and normal, a series of boundaries between social spaces and fields of practice. The division between “traditional” and “modern” societies, “as if such a dichotomy made not only heuristic but empirical sense” (Smith 1985, 537), is certainly the most widely criticized of

these dualisms (see in particular Tipps 1973; Cardoso and Faletto 1979), but it is by no means the only one. In historicizing and ultimately rejecting the separation of internal from external sources of underdevelopment, and of agents from structures, the dependency school rendered another supposed division problematic—that between an “objective” American academy and United States foreign policy interests.⁸

Dependency’s repudiation of theoretical frameworks purporting to explain lack of development by reference solely to conditions internal to those societies has been widely acknowledged but also much misunderstood. It did *not*, as is often claimed, fall prey to a similar tendency (albeit in reverse) by locating the source of all ills in some external realm, or by forgetting “the strength and independence of local factors” (Smith 1979, 283). The commitment to a dialectical mode of analysis which refused to separate inside from outside or privilege one over the other, but which instead grasped the fundamental relations between internal and external processes, was manifest in the writings of almost all of the “dependentistas.”⁹ Former ECLA economist Osvaldo Sunkel, for example, argued:

although the influence which external relations exercise on national development policy derives from the fact that Latin American countries are enmeshed in the system of international relations of the capitalist world. . . . their freedom of manoeuvre will depend principally on internal conditions. (Sunkel 1969, 23)

Cardoso and Faletto affirmed that “external domination in situations of national dependency . . . implies the possibility of the ‘internalization of external interests’” (1979, xvi), while Peter Evans (1979) coined the phrase “internalization of imperialism” to refer to the process by which a system of domination associated with external forces (multinational enterprises, foreign technologies, international financial institutions, foreign states) “reappears as an ‘internal’ force, through the social practices of local groups and classes” (Cardoso and Faletto 1979, xvi). The internal/external dichotomy of developmentalism thus broke down in concrete analyses of dependence.

Another prevalent misconception of dependency¹⁰ is that it substituted structural-level explanations of Third World dependence and underdevelopment—relating moments of internal structural change to the “logic of capitalist accumulation” on a global scale—for those which tied social reproduction or transformation to the attitudes and behaviors of individual human beings. Dependency attempted to resolve what has recently been called the “agent-structure problem” (Wendt 1987) via an approach that was at once historical-structural and dialectical, emphasizing “not just structural conditioning of social life but also the historical transformation of structures by conflict, social movements, and class struggles” (Cardoso and Faletto 1979, x) and also by asking “how general trends of capitalist expansion turn into concrete relations among men, classes, and states in the periphery” (Cardoso and Faletto 1979, xviii) as well as among classes and nation-states at the international level. Neither agents nor structures were privileged but, rather, given equal onto-

logical status. In this manner dependency added to a growing corpus of work in critical social theory that refuses the separation of human beings and social structures¹¹ in addition to contributing a far richer understanding of the processes of change and development in the Third World than had developmentalism.

The enduring contribution of dependency to development theory is *not* that it offers specific answers to questions about change and development. It does not, for example, argue that all states which exist in a situation of dependence change over time in the same way or for the same reasons: to do so would be to privilege the structure of dependence over historical practices. Nor does it argue that antagonisms between competing fractions of capital in dependent states will always be resolved in favor of one particular class: to do so would be to treat social power as static and not as a dynamic phenomenon subject to change as a result of transformations at both the global and domestic level.

The appeal of dependency is in the questions it asks, not in the answers it provides. Dependency asks how internal and external processes interact to produce change, how social practices reproduce or resist prevailing schemes of domination, and how structures both condition social life and are transformed by it. Historical analysis of concrete situations of dependence, and not the logic of capitalist accumulation and expansion, provides the answers, answers which will differ from country to country and from one situation of dependence to another. Dependency is thus distasteful to those of a positivist leaning who search for universal laws at work irrespective of time and place, under "the blissful illusion that their findings can remove from history all its ambiguities, conjectures, and surprises" (Cardoso 1977, 21). But it is (or should be) satisfying to social scientists who feel that the outcome of such "mechanico-formal" analyses is ethnocentrism, a freezing out of local politics and a determination to make "them" just like "us."

Despite these achievements, the dependency school was unable to break completely free of the notions of the Enlightenment and nineteenth-century social theory that informed conventional accounts of development. For all its insightful criticisms of developmentalism, dependency was like Levi-Strauss's ethnography, sharing many of the assumptions of the dominant paradigm it sought to undermine. Wedded to a modernist discourse that treats states as analogous to reasoning man, dependency equated development with national autonomy and growth—just as the developmentalists had done—and left intact the classical image of the West as *the* image or model of what it means to be "developed." The following section will argue this case with reference to the works of developmentalist writers and those from within the two major branches of dependency, namely the "development of underdevelopment" and historical-structuralism.

Developmentalism and Dependency as Modernist Discourse

Ideal-typical contrasts between the attributes of "traditional" and "modern" societies characterized much of the early work of developmentalists, who

generally agreed that the salient characteristics of a “modern” social system were: 1) a degree of self-sustaining growth in the economy; 2) a measure of public participation in the polity; 3) a diffusion of secular-rational norms in the culture; 4) an increase in physical and social mobility; and 5) a corresponding transformation in personality to equip individuals to function effectively in a “modern” social order (Lerner 1964).

Socio-economic modernization was assumed to logically precede, and eventually lead to, political development. This involved, first of all, political *modernization*, with its three elements of differentiation, equality, and capacity. But political development meant not only political modernization; even more important was political *democracy*.

Democracy was almost always defined in terms of a set of characteristics associated with the values and practices of Western capitalist societies. Lucien Pye (1965, 1966), for example, equated democracy with pluralistic participation, multiparty systems, competitive politics, and political stability; while Gabriel Almond and others equated it with a secular political culture, “open bargaining attitudes,” pragmatism, and autonomy (Almond and Verba 1963; Almond and Powell 1965). Considered together, these attributes of political modernization and democracy meant that political development was quintessentially about *state-building*.

The desirability of Third World states acquiring such evidently Western attributes as growth, autonomy, political participation, rationality, secularism, upward mobility, and modern attitudes, was taken as given, as was the means by which to effect the passage from tradition to modernity. According to Almond and Powell:

American policymakers and scholars spelled out a policy of incremental modernization in which the leaders of the new nations, with foreign and particularly American aid, would begin investing in industrialization, modern education, transportation and communication. This socioeconomic modernization would produce an ever-increasing standard of living for the population as a whole, and a democratic, stable nation-building process would be initiated. (1978, 252)

A minority of individuals in the “new states” were generally acknowledged to be committed to modernization, for, so it was argued, “though they cannot fully understand the subtle balances of the democratic polity and the nuances of the civic culture, they tend to acknowledge their legitimacy” (Almond and Verba 1963, 4). The problem that this partially modernized, often Western-educated elite faced in the non-Western world was that “the majority remains tied to the rigid, diffuse, and ascriptive patterns of tradition” (Almond and Powell 1965, 72), and had yet to learn how to get along in bureaucratized organizations (Pye 1962), adapt to modern needs (Shils 1965), recognize the need for achievement (McClelland 1962), and learn to think like modern men (Inkeles 1969). What was needed was Western-style education and training, although the transformatory power of mass communications, urbanization, and industrialization were not to be overlooked either (on the importance of

education, see Lipset 1960; Almond and Verba 1963. On mass communications, see Deutsch 1966; Pye 1966. On urbanization, see Lipset 1960; Lerner 1964. On industrialization, see Inkeles 1969).

As stated earlier, the discourse of modernization theory is one example of a logocentric disposition, for when First World and Third World states are set in opposition to each other, the former clearly represent the ideal, the model to which the latter must aspire. Within the boundaries of the Western world one finds the already grown, autonomous, rational, democratic, educated, secular, and wealthy state. Outside of this space resides the "traditional other"; ungrown, dependent, emotional, authoritarian, illiterate, superstitious, and poverty-stricken. Analogous to modernity's "reasoning man" in that its desired attributes are those prized in individuals, the Western state is the sovereign subject and privileged agent of change and progress for its non-Western counterpart.

Although not explicitly portrayed as such, the relationship in this discourse between an individual-developed subject and a non-developed object implicitly contains a parent/child metaphor. As Ashis Nandy has pointed out in a critique of such "colonial" metaphors, the child in the modern world is not seen as a physically smaller version of the adult with a somewhat different set of qualities and skills, but rather:

To the extent adulthood itself is valued as a symbol of completeness and as an end-product of growth or development, childhood is seen as an imperfect state on the way to adulthood, normality, full socialization and humanness. This is the theory of progress as applied to the individual life-cycle. The result is the frequent use of childhood as a design of cultural and political immaturity or, it comes to the same thing, inferiority. Much of the pull of the ideology of colonialism and much of the power of the idea of modernity can be traced to the evolutionary implications of the concept of the child in the Western worldview. (Nandy 1987, 57)

Nandy pleads that, instead of viewing children as inferior derivatives who must be "brought up" to resemble their parents, we see them as carriers of a culture which is politically and socially vulnerable, but is nonetheless intrinsically valuable. By the same token, he argues, non-Western cultures have a right to live not because they can be saved or promoted to a higher state of civilization but because of the alternatives they give us in their distinctive philosophies of life (Nandy 1987, 73). Parent/child metaphors are thus not innocent when undergirded by a Western conception of childhood, no matter how pervasive; whether they can be avoided will be discussed in part 3 of the paper.

What needs to be pointed out here is that in modernization theory First World states are the image of healthy adults. In the Third World, by contrast, one finds the newly born; recently released from the wombs of their colonial "mothers," these "children" must rely on the largesse of their beneficent "parents" to nurture, support, and educate them until the day when they are able to take their place in adult society. That the offspring will eventually

resemble their parents in all important aspects can of course be assumed, for “normal” children generally do.

The economic, social, and political instability experienced by so many Third World states during the 1960s was a source of dismay to modernization theorists, for change and development were supposed to be easy.¹² A questioning of many of their assumptions followed, particularly in the work of Samuel Huntington. For Huntington, such problems were not indicative of an abrupt end to modernization but were instead an integral part of the modernization process itself. Statistical evidence apparently showed that stability was not a problem in either the poorest or the richest countries of the world, with wealth measured in terms of GNP per capita. In those countries where *some* modernization had occurred (defined as social mobilization plus economic development), political participation had outstripped the formation of strong political institutions capable of processing popular demands, so that destabilization (coups, insurrections, riots, strikes, and armed struggle) had become the norm.

Huntington argued that “the primary need these countries face is the accumulation and concentration of power, not its dispersion, and it is in Moscow and Peking, and not in Washington that this lesson is to be learned” (1968, 138). After presenting cross-sectional data which appeared to suggest that one-party systems were slightly less vulnerable to military coups than others, he concluded that the one-party option might be the best alternative for newly-independent nations.

Despite the evident contrasts between Huntington’s work and that of his predecessors—the emphasis on accumulating rather than distributing power, on revolutionary struggle between discontented social forces, on “political decay,” and on looking to the East rather than to the West for a political system to emulate—Huntington never really broke free of their logocentric disposition. That the Western state—and an American-type system in particular—continued as *the* image or model of what it means to be “developed” is evidenced by 1) emphasis on the importance of one-party systems *only* for a smooth *transition* from tradition to modernity; 2) the continued equation of political modernity with the Western ideal of rational authority, differentiation of structures, and political participation; and 3) the assumption that only the West—Continental Europe, Great Britain, and the United States—had already become “modern” (Huntington 1968, 93–94).

In terms of a parent/child metaphor, the image of Huntington’s Third World states is no longer that of infants, nor of beings on a par with the mature, stable adults of the First World. They have now reached the state of adolescence, when internal imbalances typically generate irrational, emotional, and unbalanced behavior. Naturally concerned, the “parents” nonetheless ought not to be unduly alarmed, for just as *they* shed such evidence of immaturity as they grew, so too would their “children.”

By the early 1970s, a shift away from the “developmentalist” paradigm was clearly underway as criticism of both modernization and order approaches mounted, and dependency writings began to be imported into the American

academic establishment. Developmentalism was certainly down, but it was not completely out, for a valiant attempt to revive it was made by a group of scholars who referred to their approach as the “new” political economy:

Political economy may be defined as the analysis of the costs and benefits of alternate uses of scarce resources by political leaders, where resources, costs and benefits are all conceived in both economic and political terms, not just one or the other. This definition distinguishes political economy from either political science or economics. Thus understood, political economy seeks, ultimately, to be able to measure political costs and benefits in economic terms and vice versa. (Packenham 1973, 231)

In trying to determine “what rational courses of action are open to decision-makers in light of availing societal demands and constraints” (Rothchild and Curry 1978, 9), this “new” political economy had more in common with public policy analysis than with the “classical” political economy of John Stuart Mill, Jeremy Bentham, and Karl Marx. In fact the lack of policy relevance of earlier studies of development was seen by “political economists” as one of their major flaws, as was the tendency of these studies to focus on socio-economic modernization as a precursor to political development, and to ignore *political* factors like governmental capacity, choices, leadership, and skill. Political economy was concerned, above all, with *choice* (Apter 1971; Russell and Nicholson 1981).

What political economy wanted, in short, was to take the poor, inefficient Third World decision maker by the hand, lead him into the development candy-store, and show him how to get the best buy for his meager pennies. The image is of the Third World state as a child with pocket-money, who cannot be entrusted to make sound choices without the firm and knowing guidance of his “parents.”

Despite initial enthusiasm, this “new” political economy never did realize its potential and become “the shape of political theory to come” (Mitchell 1969). Although claiming to focus on “attainable” goals the “new” political economy was obviously too ambitious, attempting as it did the construction of a “general theory of social behavior” (Harsanyi 1969). But that was not really the root cause of its problems. It simply was not sufficiently different from earlier approaches to satisfy those who wanted developmentalism overthrown, not modified. Along with its confrères, modernization and order, the “new” political economy got knocked down in the rush to adopt dependency in the 1970s (a few remnants of the approach remain, of course; for a recent example, see Bates 1988).

The “Development of Underdevelopment”

Associated originally with the work of neo-Marxist economist Paul Baran (1957), the “development of underdevelopment” approach argued that instead of promoting industrial capitalism throughout the world, Western imperialism had “slowed down” the development of capitalism in the colonies and pushed

them off their “natural” course. Brought to its logical conclusion in the writings of Andre Gunder Frank, it maintained that Latin America (and other parts of the Third World) had ceased to be feudal and was *de facto* capitalist from the very moment of its incorporation in the sixteenth century into the capitalist world economy. This process of incorporation, Frank argued, led to development in some areas and underdevelopment in others; “economic development and underdevelopment are the opposite faces of the same coin” (1967b, 9).

Following Baran, Frank stressed that underdevelopment was caused by the loss of economic surplus to foreigners (with surplus defined simply as the difference between production and consumption). Replacing the terms “modern” and “traditional” with “metropolis” and “satellite,” Frank argued that the monopoly structure of world capitalism, as well as a high rate of exploitation of labor power in dependent economies, enabled the metropolis to expropriate a significant part of the economic surplus produced in its satellites and appropriate it for its own economic development, so preventing these satellite countries from realizing their potential surplus. These metropolis-satellite relations, which existed at all levels (international, national, and local), extended in chain-like fashion the link from the national metropolises of the capitalist world to every nook and cranny of the underdeveloped satellites, thus enabling surplus to be sucked from even the remotest village and generating, as a result, “economic development for the few and underdevelopment for the many” (Frank 1967b, 8). Since underdevelopment was not an original condition, synonymous with *undevelopment*, but was the consequence of relationships between the now-developed metropolitan countries and their satellites, it would not be overcome until the chains of exploitation were broken. The knots of foreign capital and trade with the West, which bound the satellites so tightly to the metropolis, were obstacles to development and must, this argument maintained, be pried loose if underdevelopment were ever to be overcome.

Frank’s early work had such a great (albeit temporary) impact on Latin Americanists that in the words of one commentator, it “flashed across the Latin American intellectual horizon like a dazzling, fleeting comet” (Halperin-Donghi 1982, 116). His theoretical framework was also applied to regions of the world other than Latin America by scholars disaffected with developmentalism (Leys 1975; Moulder 1977; Rodney 1982). Yet, despite the insights into the exploitative nature of North/South relations that Frank’s historical analyses generated, and the apparent turning of modernization theory on its head (the emphasis on external as opposed to internal sources of underdevelopment), he no more broke free of developmentalism’s modernist discourse than did Huntington.

Whereas modernization theory assumed that Third World development necessitated strong ties between North and South, Baran and Frank argued that such development required Third World countries to be left alone. Yet the *subjects* of development continued to be *states*, and their gradual trans-

formation into Western fascimiles was still considered to be normal and desirable, if not very likely; their being pushed off their “natural” course toward that end was the problem that needed to be corrected. The opposition of metropolis/satellite might have replaced that of modern/traditional but it was still the first of these terms, associated with the West, that was superior.

For the three main branches of developmentalism the parent/child metaphor portrayed First World states as healthy adults and those in the Third World as healthy children. With the “development of underdevelopment” literature, however, the image of the “satellites” is not really that of children, for these individual entities are in fact quite old; rather it is that of adults whose growth has been “stunted” (a term borrowed from Marx’s description of Ireland) because of a long history of relations with others who have systematically stolen all resources necessary for normal development. These “others” in the First World are to be condemned for such exploitation and for afterward claiming only the noblest of intentions toward their poor neighbors, but it is still *they* who represent the image of development to be emulated.

Historical-Structuralism

According to one of the proponents of the historical-structural approach (Cardoso 1977), two misperceptions about its genesis are common among North American scholars: 1) that it emerged as a challenge to so-called ECLA-Keynsian analyses by Latin Americanists outside of ECLA; and 2) that its formulations were greatly influenced by the North American and neo-Marxian intellectual current (i.e., Baran and Frank). Neither of these misperceptions is difficult to understand, especially the first. Latin American scholars *did* disseminate dependency ideas in response to ECLA’s publications, but some of those who did so, such as Celso Furtado and Osvaldo Sunkel, were actually affiliated with ECLA and not separate from it. As for the supposed influence of Baran and Frank, the results of research by the most influential of the “historical-structuralists”—Furtado, Sunkel, Dos Santos, Marini, Cardoso and Faletto—began circulating in the mid to late 1960s, the same time that Frank’s publications began to roll off the presses.

This is not to suggest that the influence of Baran and Frank was zero, or that their work was not read; the point is that historical-structural dependency was not a temporal successor to the “development of underdevelopment” approach, in the same way that political order followed modernization. That it is often mistakenly viewed as such is no doubt due to a certain time-lag between the publication of works in Spanish or Portuguese and their availability to English-speaking audiences.

Although this group of dependency writers took for granted that countries existing in situations of dependence had been affected by the expansion of capitalism, they wished to avoid “vulgar” analyses which saw all peripheral states as essentially similar, and thus explained social change in dependent societies by reference to external factors. The fact that they did not “see

dependency and imperialism as external and internal sides of a single coin, with the internal aspects reduced to the condition of ‘epiphenomenal’” (Cardoso and Faletto 1979, xv), was what distinguished them from the “development of underdevelopment” theorists. The distinction between the two main “branches” of dependency, however, should not be overdrawn. Frank’s later work became, as mentioned previously, far less “mechanical” than his earlier writings (Frank 1969 and 1972). And fierce controversy often raged among the “historical-structuralists” themselves on matters such as the nature of local bourgeoisies in dependent states, the degree to which dependent capitalism tends toward stagnation, and whether or not the periphery’s only political alternatives are socialism or fascism. They were not, as already stated, all Marxists.

Despite important differences, it is in this body of writings that the equation of development with national autonomy and growth is particularly manifest. Celso Furtado (1970), for example, argued that with the failure of import substitution industrialization policies to promote national autonomous development and growth, only structural reform and regional cooperation would enable Latin America to break from dependency and stagnation. Osvaldo Sunkel (1969) agreed, and analysed the extent to which groups which derived no advantage from existing development policies, such as national entrepreneurs displaced by foreign private enterprise and technicians and technocrats of the public and private bureaucracy, might be willing to support a truly national development policy.

That dependency need not necessarily generate stagnation but might coexist with economic growth was emphasized by a number of the “dependentistas.” In his work on Brazil, Ruy Marini (1972) showed how the technocratic-military dictatorship of Marshal Humberto Castelo Branco in the late 1960s placed a high priority on commercial expansion in order to stimulate economic growth. Expansion of exports thus became the alternative to structural reform. Castelo Branco also planned to create a Latin American Common Market under the aegis of Brazil, and to increase military expenditures as a means of wasteful consumption.

Often considered the exemplar of an historical-structural approach to dependency, Cardoso and Faletto’s (1979) analysis of dependency and development in Latin America argued that since 1945, with the passage from British to American global dominance and the expansion of industrial corporations at the world level, a new situation of dependence had become apparent in Latin America. In this “new dependency,” the public sector, the multinational corporation, and the modern capitalist sector are joined in fundamental alliance, an alliance in which local enterprises constitute the junior partner. Economic growth is based on closer relations among producers, who become the most important “consumers” in the economic expansion: each enterprise sells machines and final goods to the other.

Cardoso (1973) coined the phrase “associated-dependent development” to describe this process, but he and Faletto argued that it must not be mistaken

for “true” development, which they understood as “less dependency and self-sustained growth based on the local capital accumulation and on the dynamism of the industrial sector” (Cardoso and Faletto 1979, 10).

That criticisms of situations of dependence have so often “been framed in terms of deprivations of national autonomy” (Beitz 1979, 119) has not escaped notice (see also Duvall 1978). The image of Third World states in the “growth with dependence” models is that of young adults, who although almost as grown-up as their “parents” remain totally dependent upon them for money and know-how. Although seemingly quite “developed” to those ignorant of their situation, they appear doomed never to acquire that independence so characteristic of full adulthood.

To summarize this section of the article, it has been argued that both developmentalism and dependency portray the advanced capitalist states of the Western world as *the* image or model of what it means to be “developed.” The former sees strong ties between North and South, in the manner of a “normal” parent-child relationship, as requisites to Third World development, whereas the latter blames such ties for throwing the South off its “natural course” and perpetuating its dependence. But the differences are fundamentally about the *prospects* of emulating the Western model of national autonomy with growth, not about its very status *as* a model. Development has thus become one of those words—like security or democracy—which apparently requires no definition, for everyone knows, instinctively, what it is. It is what “we” have.

The final part of the article will argue that there is an ongoing need in Third World studies to problematize this conception of “development,” while at the same time retaining those elements of the dependency approach already identified as countermodernist.

Countermodernism and “Development”

A reconsideration of the charges levelled against developmentalism at the end of the so-called Development Decade of the 1960s might offer a way to begin to articulate alternative possibilities for the concept of “development” (for a recent overview of these criticisms, see Wiarda 1989). That the dominant paradigm of the era continued “to evaluate the progress of nations, like its nineteenth century forbears, by their proximity to the institutions and values of Western, and particularly Anglo-American societies” (Tipps 1973, 206), was considered to have a number of negative repercussions.

One argument was that because the countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America were perceived as “stagnant” unless moving along the development trail supposedly blazed by the West, much of what was actually happening in the Third World was being lost from sight (Wiarda 1981). Another was that because it postulated that the only way to participatory democracy was via the path of Western-style capitalism, developmentalism condemned every other route followed as bound to lead to a developmental dead-end, whereas,

in fact, historically the Western route was only one of three (Moore 1966). Starting their drive for development in changed conditions and circumstances a full century after the United States and Europe began theirs, the new states might be well advised *not* to try to emulate the growth experiences of the already-developed world.

A third argument was that the superimposition of American values and choices on all other societies was a form of “cultural imperialism,” whether the practitioners realized it or not (Tipps 1973, 210). And finally, it was pointed out that masquerading as definitions of political development were mere descriptions of Western (usually American) political processes; theorists never actually defined what it was they wanted their theories to explain (Packenham 1973; Tipps 1973).

All of these critiques of developmentalism are, of course, still valid, particularly the last. However, the ability of the dominant way of thinking about development to persist into the 1990s, *even* in the writings of its opponents, necessitates adding to them more recent critiques which may be located within the larger debates about modernity. In this regard I will focus on the writings of three rather diverse yet nonetheless connected groups of thinkers: liberation theologians; feminist ecologists; and Western development practitioners. After discussing the arguments of each under separate headings, I will point out what I take to be the major strands linking them together, and then discuss the implications of their endeavors for resolving the current crisis plaguing development theory.

Liberation Theology

There are some rather obvious connections to make between liberation theology and development, specifically: its rejection of the Western development model; its reliance on dependency analysis; and its equation of “integral development” with “liberation.” These connections are no doubt important—I will discuss each in turn—but I also want to suggest that it is in liberation theology’s epistemological and ontological break with Western theology, that is, it is in its more “esoteric” debates about the nature of theology itself, that its most far-reaching implications for development theory lie.

As Phillip Berryman (1987) has pointed out, it is not really surprising that the most influential of Latin America’s theologians have become strong critics of the continent’s capitalist development path. By 1973 the church, and in particular the bishops, were emerging as clear opponents not only of human rights abuses but of the human consequences of Brazil’s (in particular) approach to development, which they felt provided small elites with luxurious lives while the majority lived in dehumanizing conditions. A pastoral letter written by a group of Brazilian bishops in 1973, for example, called capitalism “the greatest evil, sin accumulated, the rotten root, the tree that produces fruits we have come to know: poverty, hunger, sickness, death” (quoted in Berryman 1987, 123).

In somewhat more measured tones, liberation theologians have thrown their critical rocks onto the standard pile of critiques of developmentalism that mounted during the 1970s. Gustavo Gutiérrez (1973, 83–84), for example, has faulted developmentalism for giving insufficient attention to political factors, for staying on an abstract and ahistorical level, and for making it impossible to appreciate “both the complexity of the problem and the inevitable conflictual aspects of the process taken as a whole.”

Other theological critiques of developmentalism which are less conventional in the West have described it as gendered and as idolatrous—charges which, I will argue later, link liberation theology to other subversive discourses on development currently on the margins of Third World studies. The major proponent of the first perspective, Enrique Dussel, has argued that the parent/child metaphor central to modern political and economic activity is not gender neutral:

Latin America is the *child* of the European conqueror and its Indian mother, Amerindia. For almost five centuries it has been prevented from explicating its own “distinctiveness,” its own way of participating analogically in the catholicity of Christ’s one and only church. (Dussel 1979, 195–196)

Furthermore, Dussel describes the “child,” Latin America, as in a situation of oppression in which his European “father” has forced his “mother,” Indian women, into a condition of prostitution; hence both child and mother are subservient to patriarchal authority and domination (quoted in Pottenger 1989, 105).

The second perspective, that of developmentalism as idolatrous, runs in various guises throughout much of liberation theology, which has argued that idolatry is a far more serious challenge to Christian faith in the modern world than is atheism. The point has been made that in the New Testament idolatry refers not so much to religious practices as to the pursuit of money, power, or pleasure, and that in its promise of these things the modern idol of “development” demands the sacrifice of human life, in the same way that ancient gods such as Moloch did (see Richard *et al.* 1984). Dussel (1981) has also described attempts to universalize a particularist European theology as idolatrous, because it amounts to a denial of the Other.

In making these arguments, liberation theology has undoubtedly drawn heavily from dependency writings in its analyses of the Latin American situation, so much so that many of the “theological” debates between liberation theologians and their critics would be right at home in the pages of any development journal. To cite just one example, theologian Michael Novak (1986, 127–142) has criticized Gutiérrez and others for adopting a dependency-type explanation of social conditions in Latin America because that theory fails to account for recent “economic miracles” such as Hong Kong, Singapore, Taiwan, Japan, and South Korea. To see liberation theologians as no more than “dependentistas” in priests’ clothing, however, would be a mistake, and

not merely because their work is informed, in addition to the obvious, by a broad range of social theorists from Feuerbach to Foucault.

Liberation theology does not equate “development” with national autonomy and growth; in fact the only time the nation-state is ever mentioned is within the context of critiques of the national security state (on this point, see in particular Comblin 1973). Following somewhat in the footsteps of Pope Paul VI, who once used the term “integral development” to refer to “the transition from less human conditions to those which are more human,” liberation theology recurs to the theme of “integral development” more frequently than to questions of Marxism or violence, for example. The ultimate goal is “liberation,” which for Gutiérrez has three interpenetrated levels of meaning. On one level it refers to the aspirations of the poor; on a second level it refers to the gradual expansion of freedom, understood as the ability of human beings to take charge of their own destiny; and on a third level, liberation means communion with God and with other human beings. It is in the saving work of Christ that liberation finds its full realization (see Berryman 1987, 94–95).

In sum, liberation theology has some obvious connections with development theory in its critiques of development models, in its affinities to dependency, and in its understanding of development as “liberation.” But the more far-reaching implications of this body of work for the current crisis of development theory, I suggest, lie less in its understanding of development and more in its approach to theology.

According to political theorist John Pottenger (1989, 3), it is in response to the shortcomings of liberal theology, especially its inability or refusal to confront the problem of social injustice, that liberation theology emerges. Specifically, “liberation theology attempts to solve the problem of how the modern era can properly overcome its most debilitating characteristic: the dichotomy between *facts* and *values*.”

Liberation theology’s critique of modernist theology is grounded in a number of specific arguments, all of which have implications for modernist development theory. Perhaps the most far-reaching is the notion that the “problems of man” cannot be subjected to an independent and supposedly objective “plane of knowledge,” and then applied to specific historical contexts. In what he has called “Christologies of descent,” for example, Jon Sobrino (1978) has faulted European theologians who ground their views in the Enlightenment for trying to superimpose on any given cultural setting a prepackaged, abstract scheme of salvation. Theology should begin with the actual events of the lives of oppressed peoples. Jose Bonino (1975) has argued that theology must emerge out of the lives of the oppressed in their own encounter with the biblical texts, while Hugo Assman (1976) has stated that Christians who see the world from the epistemological perspective of the poor will advance not only the liberation of the poor, but their own liberation as well. Thus, theology must be contextualized and grounded in the actual conditions in which people

live. Knowledge of "salvation" cannot be determined *a priori*, imported from Europe, or allowed to rest upon a spiritual/temporal "ontological dualism."

Accepting these arguments means that theology must operate in the manner of what Juan Segundo (1976) has called a "hermeneutic circle." This begins, first and foremost, from the rejection of a fact/value dichotomy, or of "objective" social science, which serves to perpetuate the status quo; commitment to knowledge means commitment to the poor. Second, through interaction with the poor and an engagement with critical social theories (i.e., those which critique ideologies used to justify society as it is), the reasons for their suffering must be understood, and ways found to alleviate them. The third step is an interrogation of "mainstream" theology; does it allow itself to be manipulated by the rich and powerful in society, justifying the physical, cultural, and economic sacrifice of the many, or does it stand with the oppressed in their suffering? If the former is the case then that theology is itself idolatrous, and must be rejected. The final step is a reinterpretation of Scripture from the standpoint of the contemporary situation of oppression and poverty. When the contemporary situation changes, the circle begins again.

What are the implications of this approach to theology for development theory? If taken seriously, it means that there can be no single model of either "salvation" or "development," there can be no pretense of objectivity, no separation of theory from practice, in fact no presumption that we can know, prior to political practice, what "development" is. Like theology, development theory would emerge out of our encounters with the oppressed.

Phillip Berryman (1987, 8) has also pointed out that liberation theology has spent a great deal of time on seemingly ethereal questions such as the relationship between the Kingdom of God and efforts to achieve human dignity here and now. In contrast to the traditional theological understanding of the Kingdom, as something transcendent beckoning humanity from beyond the "real world," liberation theology argues that God's Kingdom is constructed by man from within history now (on this point, see Segundo 1981). By the same token, "development" from a "liberationist" perspective is not a transcendent force which beckons societies from without, but a situation which will emerge from concrete historical practices by men and women in different settings.¹³

Liberation theology, in summary, is explicitly against modernist theology, and has countermodernist implications for development theory. Does it, however, manage to subvert or avoid logocentric reason, or does it succumb to the same problems as Levi-Strauss and dependency? It seems fairly clear that liberation theology does not strive for a standpoint or standard independent of interpretation and political practice; hence its rejection of "value-free" social science and its insistence on grounding knowledge and biblical interpretation in the concrete experiences of the poor. A somewhat more tricky question is whether liberation theology displays an "ethic of nostalgia for origins," that is, stands with the oppressed because the poor are considered pure, innocent and uncorrupted. I would say no, that "Christian-base com-

munities” set up by liberation theologians were as much the outcome of a concern over the way religion was popularly practiced in Latin America as they were of a desire to learn from the poor. Popular religion seemed to the church hierarchy to be based more on legends about the saints than on the gospel of Jesus Christ, and on a concern for religious services rather than the ethical demands of Christian love (Berryman 1987, 69). If anything, the danger lies the other way: that in trying to “conscientize” the poor about their religious practices and situation of oppression, liberation theologians will cease to see the poor as active agents or subjects of their own liberation but rather as objects to be manipulated. This does not seem to have happened yet, but it is a danger that all of the disciples of Paulo Freire must face—a point I will return to later.¹⁴

Feminist Ecology

Probably the foremost articulator of what might be called a “feminist ecological” perspective on development is that of Indian physicist Vandana Shiva, who abandoned a career in her country’s nuclear energy program to become a political activist and writer. Like liberation theology, her work is grounded in the experiences of the poor—rural women—and, like liberation theologians such as Dussel, she has been extremely critical of India’s Western development model for being “gendered.” Shiva (1989), however, goes far beyond even most feminists—who argue that development policies favor men more than women (see, for example, Mies 1986)—in her claim that modern science itself is violently gendered in its assumptions about women and nature.

Critiquing “maldevelopment” for continuing the process of colonization, Shiva argues that it militates against equality in diversity and superimposes the ideologically constructed category of Western technological man as a uniform measure of the worth of classes, cultures, and genders. Nature and women are turned into passive objects, to be used and exploited for the uncontrolled and uncontrollable desires of alienated man. The new impoverishment of rural women lies in the fact that resources which supported their survival have become absorbed into the market economy while women themselves have been displaced and excluded from it. In tones reminiscent of liberation theology, Shiva (1989, 13) suggests that whereas survival is based on the assumption of the sanctity of life, maldevelopment is based on the assumption of the sacredness of “development.” What is needed is simultaneously “an ecological and a feminist political project which legitimizes the way of knowing and being that creates wealth by enhancing life and diversity, and which delegitimizes the knowledge and practice of a culture of death as the basis for capital accumulation.”

In attributing rural poverty and environmental disaster to Indian “development,” Shiva does not identify the problem as “sexism.” The problem of violence against women and nature is at a deeper level, explainable by the

fact that the type of knowledge on which that development process is based is itself a source of violence.

In making this claim, Shiva points out that in Bacon's "scientific" method, the severe testing of hypotheses through controlled manipulations of nature and the necessity of such manipulations if experiments were to be repeatable, was formulated in clearly sexual metaphors. Scientific knowledge, according to Bacon, had the power to conquer nature, to "subdue her and to shake her to her foundations" (quoted in Shiva 1989, 16). Nature was no longer Mother Nature, but a female nature to be conquered (i.e., raped) by an aggressive male. In dichotomizing culture and nature, mind and matter, and male and female, the mechanical school represented by Bacon devised a conceptual strategy for the former to dominate the latter, and was thus associated with a set of values based on power which were compatible with the needs of commercial capitalism. The modern "ontology of dichotomization" is thus constitutive of, not separate from, contemporary ecological crises (Shiva 1989, 41).

Shiva gives numerous examples to demonstrate her point. Destruction of delicate ecological systems is considered "production" for the market; nurturing survival through living in harmony with nature is seen as "passivity;" economies based on indigenous modes of knowing and being are considered "backward" and "unproductive;" women's holistic and ecological knowledge of nature's processes is considered "unscientific;" and forest resources necessary to sustain life but which have no commercial value—the leaves, the roots, the flowers, and so on—are destroyed as mere "weeds." Faced with the damage it has created, Western science then develops "miracle" trees and seeds, which only exacerbate the problem by depleting the soil, drying up water supplies, and introducing pests. The only way out of this mess, Shiva concludes, is to reclaim the feminine principle, written out of modernist approaches to nature, as a nonviolent, nongendered, and humanly inclusive alternative. Although what she offers is a far-reaching explanation for contemporary Third World problems, the major implication of Shiva's work for development theory is, I think, its insistence that local knowledges be taken seriously, and that the ontological and epistemological assumptions that undergird current development models are responsible for violence and death. "We," in other words, need to learn from "them."

Shiva clearly grounds her social theory in the experiences and political practices of rural Indian women, so, like liberation theology, there is no evidence of a quest for a universal standard or standpoint outside of history. I remain unconvinced, however, that she fully avoids logocentrism, for the rural women whom Shiva works among are portrayed as all-knowing, all-caring, and somehow exempted from the violent power relationships that bedevil their fellow countrymen. As Rajni Kothari notes in the forward to Shiva's book, it is as if "all women are by definition conservationist, life-enhancing and equity-seeking" (quoted in Shiva 1989, x). One wouldn't want to follow her in making that assumption, even while recognizing the necessity

for a more ethically grounded, humane, and less gendered form of “scientific” knowledge.

Alternative Development Strategy

Predominant attitudes toward development are being rethought by the practitioners of development projects in Third World countries, as well as by academics and social movements, in a manner that can only be described as “countermodernist.” For example, Michael Edwards, an extension worker with Oxfam, has outlined the way in which conventional approaches to development are predicated upon three practical oppositions: expertise/popular knowledge; objectivity/subjectivity; and understanding/action. In each case, Edwards argues, the former term is privileged, a natural consequence of seeking to promote human welfare by improving technical knowledge of various aspects of the world. People then become objects to be studied rather than subjects of their own development; general solutions manufactured from the outside are offered to specific problems which are highly localized; and any hint of “subjectivity” is ignored as not worthy of inclusion in “serious” research about development. Overall, there is a complete divorce between research output and the subjects of this research—poor people themselves—so that the practice of development studies remains, despite public commitments to the contrary, antiparticipatory (Edwards 1989; see also Maxwell 1984).

In insisting, like Shiva, that local knowledge and cultures be taken seriously, there are development “experts” who argue that it is not just a matter of developing “them;” our own development requires it as well. Thierry Verhelst, for example, is a senior project officer with the Belgian development agency, Broederlijk Delen. Considering the argument that development constitutes a rape, whether by coercion or by seduction, he argues that we must rid ourselves once and for all of the arrogant, mistaken notion that the Third World has the problems, and the West the answers. It is not simply a matter of the West being a source of harm rather than help; the problem is that the West has become culturally underdeveloped because it, too, is the victim of the idea of progress and the model of development which it has transmitted to the Third World and which it imposes on itself. Techno-bureaucratic developments have allowed the state, in addition to foreseeing and regulating, to control, arbitrate, and repress deviance or originality. This jeopardizes the right to be different, in the same way that monocultural development models jeopardize the right of Third World peoples to be different. “Western modernity,” Verhelst argues, “is in pursuit of a ‘false infinite,’ that is to say a quantitative in-finite according to which one constantly produces, consumes and ‘progresses’ more and more. Today, the consequences of this Faustian undertaking are devastating . . . Western modernity produces a substitute for transcendence” (Verhelst 1990, 70). A respectful, considerate dialogue with

the cultures of Third World peoples offers a way for the West to resolve its own cultural crisis.

Verhelst (1990, 26) is careful to avoid what he calls the “myth of paradise lost,” that is, the notion that the West is horribly corrupted and the Third World still innocent, and wants to ground development in local meanings and experiences. In arguing for the right of each people to forge its own modernity, its own new response to present-day challenges, his arguments do, I think, successfully avoid succumbing to logocentric reason.

What, if anything, ties these various writers—Latin American theologians, an Indian feminist, and Western development practitioners—together? All see development as in some sense gendered; root their theories in concern for the physical and cultural survival of the world’s poor; tie “scientific” knowledge to power; are concerned about the exclusion of certain groups as knowers and subjects from Western-initiated development projects; adopt a “bottom up” rather than a “top down” approach to development (i.e., they do not equate state-building with development); and avoid parent/child metaphors because the units of analysis are not individuals (whether states or people). All, in addition, question the “progressive” nature of practices that demand human and environmental destruction in the name of “development,” and reject the modernist practice of separating facts from values, ethics from politics, nature from culture, and so on. All, in other words, are counter-modernist.

What has begun to emerge from these diverse efforts to rethink development is an approach called Participatory Action Research (PAR), initiated in a number of countries in Latin America, Asia, and Africa during the 1970s (see Escobar 1984; Fals-Borda 1988; Edwards 1989). Central to PAR philosophy is the question of how to generate popular power (rather than economic growth) so that people may gain control over the forces that shape their lives. PAR projects combine techniques of adult education, social science research, and political activism. At root is a rejection of abstract, “top down” development plans which attempt to universalize the Western experience; an encouragement of local grassroots initiatives; and stress on the need for economic processes that are both rooted in the needs of specific communities and appropriate for local ecosystems. Emphasis is placed on grass roots inquiry into what development means to poor and disenfranchised people in “developing” areas. As a consequence, it is hoped, development ceases to be something that is done to, rather than by, people, and becomes instead a process in which people participate in the making of their own communities. PAR stresses diversity, plurality, and empowerment.

If taken seriously, PAR does not mean heroizing the poor (which would render it open to the charge of logocentrism), but rather listening to what people in the Third World say about development—instead of telling them what it is and how to get it—so that development theory becomes more of a dialogue between researcher and subject than a monologue from subject to object. Just as importantly, it means a rejection of the divisions between

research and practice, subject and object, and inside/outside so central to Western philosophy and empiricist social science. It conceives of science as the result of a process in which theory-building and popular organization for change are combined and become part of the same historical process. And it tries to go beyond the limits of current thinking by recognizing differences without being internally compelled to define many of them as forms of otherness to be conquered or assimilated.¹⁵ As such, its departure from conventional conceptions of development has been as described as “revolutionary” (Edwards 1989, 128) and “radical” (Escobar 1984, 391).

Despite its seeming attractiveness, there are a number of actual or potential dangers in PAR’s being considered a panacea for all development theory’s problems. First, when any body of social theory becomes reducible to a single expression, there is a tendency for it to be considered a “paradigm,” even if the various writers are united in their rejection of universalist paradigms as a way of managing and comprehending human affairs. Like dependency, PAR is more an approach to generating knowledge than it is a set of propositions and testable hypotheses, but, like dependency, it runs the risk of being portrayed otherwise. If instead of leading development theorists to question their own ontological and epistemological assumptions, PAR becomes appropriated as a “third paradigm” to replace developmentalism and dependency, it will not have lived up to its revolutionary or radical billing.

A second form of appropriation of PAR, into official development jargon, has unfortunately already happened. Thus the UN’s Economic and Social Council at the end of the 1970s recommended its member states “adopt participation as a basic policy measure in national development strategies” (quoted in Rahnema 1990, 201), while the World Bank has begun to advocate “participant-observer evaluation” of development projects (Salmen 1987). It must be emphasized that evaluation of projects conceived by World Bank “experts,” or a commitment to “participation” (e.g., people in a village dig their own wells) as a means to the faster export of cash crops, is decidedly not what PAR is about. Nonetheless, governments and institutions interested only in greater efficiency and productivity have plucked the concept of participation from PAR and used it to promote business as usual.

If the first two dangers associated with PAR cannot be attributed to its adherents, this last one can. The problem here is that many PAR activists rely heavily on Paulo Freire’s notion of “conscientization” (see note 14) to underpin their dealings with the poor. There is nothing wrong with the concept *per se*, but whose consciousness is it that presumably needs to be raised? If, as Majid Rahnema has pointed out, the “change agents” are not really on a learning journey into the unknown but are more concerned about finding the most appropriate participatory ways to convince the “uneducated” of the merits of their own convictions, “then the scenario is hardly different from that of the conventional developers, and their coactors are hardly more independent in their acting than the extras participating in development projects” (Rahnema 1990, 205).

Rather than jumping on the PAR bandwagon, development theorists who perceive the current state of Third World studies to be one of crisis might instead begin by taking seriously some of the questions, concerns, and possible approaches to their own work suggested by liberation theology, feminist ecology, and alternative development strategy. If, instead of bemoaning the theoretical vacuum created by the demise of dependency, we were to critically evaluate the bases and usefulness of our own knowledge, and to take the position that "development" cannot be defined independent of the political practices which promote it, we might go a long way toward changing the field of Third World studies for the better.

Conclusion

This article has argued that the field of Third World studies is once again in a state of crisis. The problem, in a nutshell, is that for all of its challenges to developmentalism in the 1960s, the dependency school was unable to detach itself fully from the assumptions of the mainstream paradigm it sought to undermine because it was equally rooted in nineteenth-century social theory. Remaining wedded to a modernist discourse which treated states as analogous to reasoning individuals, dependency equated development with national autonomy and growth—just as developmentalism had done—and left intact the classical image of the Western state as *the* image or model of what it means to be "developed." When the outcome of yet another decade of attempts to universalize the Western experience has been global environmental devastation and the consignment of untold numbers of people in Third World countries to the margins of existence, the need to question critically such ways of thinking about "development" has become more urgent than ever. The survival of the planet and everybody on it is quite literally at stake.

This is not to suggest that dependency ought itself to be consigned completely to the margins of social theory. The questions that it asks—how internal and external processes interact to produce change, how social practices reproduce or resist prevailing schemes of domination, and how structures both condition social life and are transformed by it—are as important now as they ever were. Historical analysis of concrete situations, and not the logic of capitalist accumulation and expansion, still provides the best attempt at answers. What is needed now is for social theory to take seriously the ideas of those who argue for grounding knowledge in local histories and experiences, rather than building theory through the use of general conceptual categories and Western assumptions.

Notes

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1. Developmentalism lives on, of course, in the continued writings of those who initially spawned it. See, for example, Weiner and Huntington (1987). For a recent "vindication of modernization theory," see Pye (1990).
2. The authors make the important point that the formalistic interpretation of Weber by later sociologists such as Parsons—whose influence on modernization theory has been enormous—was but one possible interpretation of Weber's work. However, it is doubtful whether some of the writers they designate as neo-Weberian, such as Anthony Giddens, Claus Offe, and Pierre Bourdieu, would consider themselves as such.
3. Critiques of dependency were legion in the 1970s, but rather than call for a new approach they tended either to re-affirm the classical Marxist branch of developmentalism or to insist that dependency be considered a continuous rather than a dichotomous variable (and thereby failing to recognize that for its theorists, dependency is not a variable at all but rather a context of inquiry). As an example of the former see Warren (1973); of the latter see Lall (1975).
4. One could read Sheth (1987) as a major exception since he argues that a presumption of universalism links alternative "structuralist" and "normativist" approaches to conventional theories of development. Yet, I would argue that he still sees dependency and developmentalism as discrete in the sense that the model of development of the former is supposedly quite different from that of the latter. My claim in this article will be that, in fact, the model for both is actually the same.
5. Chilton's desire to ground the concept of political development normatively—to be able to talk about "change for the better" without assuming Westernization—is admirable, and I certainly agree with his conclusion that "development policy is best targeted at fostering indigenous developmental resolutions to a culture's indigenous problems, not at imposing Western institutions" (1988, 110). Nonetheless, I remain unconvinced that his own concept of political development, based as it is on Piaget and Kohlberg's "stages of moral reasoning," is as non-Western as he thinks it is, even if one ignores the modernist move of treating societies as analogous to growing people. At stage five, for example, (the highest stage yet reached by any known social form), interpersonal relations are based on recognition of individual autonomy and rationality, willingness to compromise, fair competition, and scientific testing. Many cultures in the Third World, particularly in Africa, value community well-being and harmony more than individual autonomy; are they somehow "children"? Given the Western nature of stage five characteristics, it is surely no coincidence that only the advanced capitalist democracies of the West can be considered currently the most "developed."
6. "Political thought," he argued, "it itself a form of political action" (Carr 1964, 5).
7. Although sometimes forgotten, developmentalist assumptions hold sway in the work not only of postwar American liberals but also in the classical Marxist tradition as well. For an overview of this literature and a discussion of neo-Marxism's deviations from it, see Foster-Carter (1973).
8. Andre Gunder Frank (1967a), for example, described development theory as "the emperor's clothes, which have served to hide his naked imperialism."
9. The early work of Andre Gunder Frank is the most notable exception, giving primacy as it does to external explanations for underdevelopment (see Frank 1967b). In response largely to criticism from colleagues, though, his later work gave greater emphasis to the relationship between the internal and the external (see Frank 1969 and 1972).
10. At least one dependencia theorist has acknowledged that "if there have been so many distortions in the consumption [of dependency], it is because the original production was not clear regarding several of these points, and may even have included, in latent form, much that later appeared as simplification and inconsistency" (Cardoso 1977, 17).
11. Although dissimilar in many ways, both postmodernism and structuration theory have adopted this attitude. For a good overview from a "structurationist" perspective, see Wendt (1987). For postmodernism, see Der Derian and Shapiro (1989).
12. According to Robert Packenham (1973), four often inarticulated assumptions of the liberal tradition, abstracted from the myth of an American trouble-free, happy journey to development, undergirded most of the modernization literature: change and development are easy; all good things go together; radicalism and revolution are bad; and distributing power is more important than accumulating it.
13. Chilton (1988, 74–76) makes a somewhat similar point when he argues that the *content* of development cannot be identified *a priori* for any culture; only the *structure* can.
14. Paulo Freire was a Brazilian educator, who taught adults to read by building upon "key words" and images provided by the people themselves to describe their daily lives. The term *conscientizacion* (roughly "consciousness-raising" in English) came to refer to the process by which poor people were brought to a critical consciousness of their situation, and then helped to come together as a community,

to articulate their needs, and to organize to effect change. By seeing people as "subjects of their own development," and grounding political practice in their own local histories, knowledge, and experiences, the "Freire method" seemed to offer a way for outsiders to go to the poor in a nonpaternalistic way. It has been adopted not only by church people but also by leftist intellectuals and development practitioners in many Third World countries. Although not inherent in the approach, which stresses listening before teaching, seeking to understand, and not importing "solutions" to problems from outside, there is a tendency for "conscientization" to become a one-way street, where "experts" with all of the knowledge, all of the answers, and all of the power end up treating the recipients of their "help" as mere objects. If this happens, then the "conscientizer" is no different from the average World Bank employee. On the method of "conscientization," see Freire (1975); for a critique of the way in which the method has often been put into practice, see Rahnema (1990).

15. On such an attempt in political theory more generally, see Connolly (1989).

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