



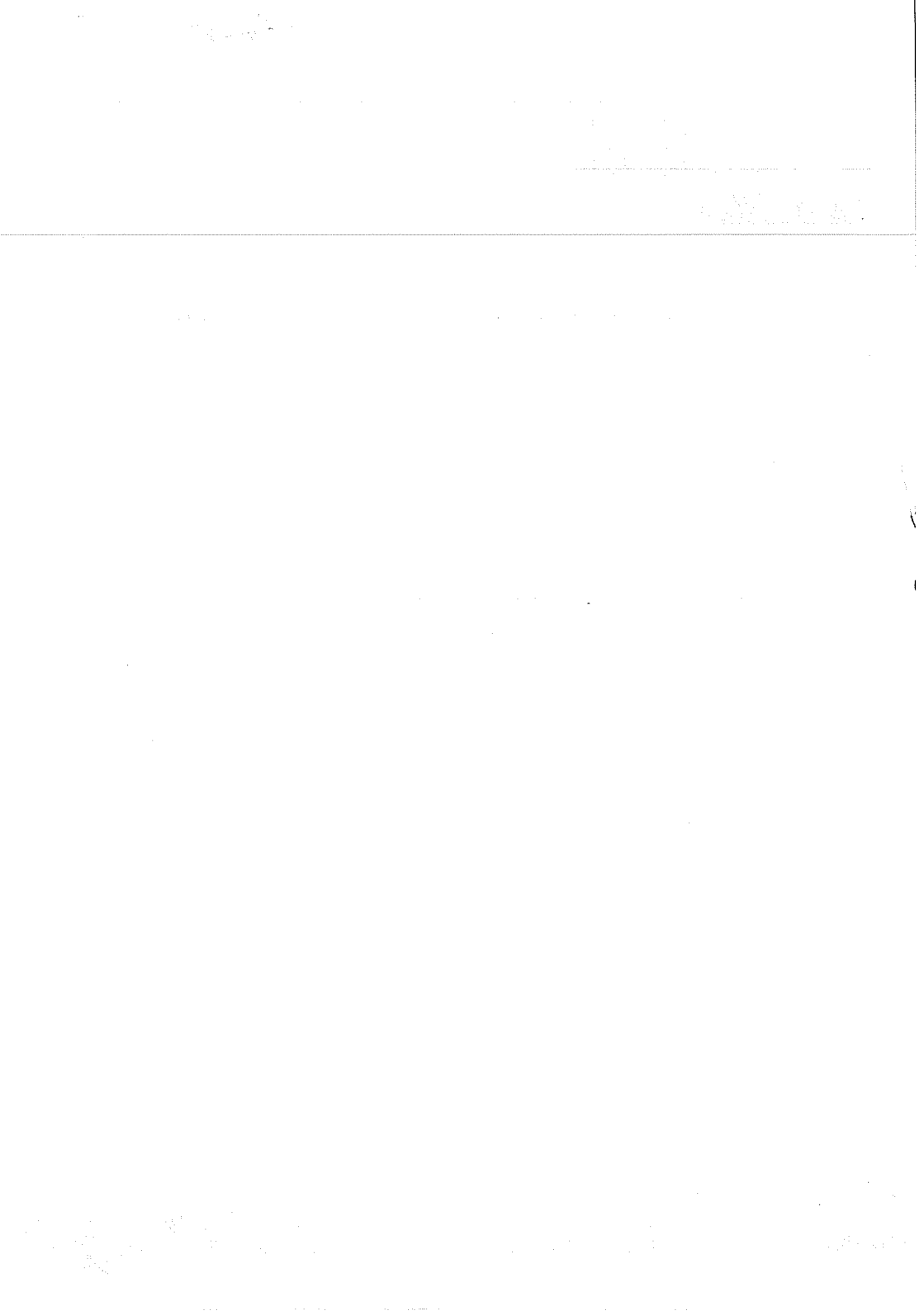
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Culture and Development

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The Prospects of an Afterthought

C.A.O. van Nieuwenhuijze



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Alors, les idées d'hier se dissolvent en bouillies idéologiques qu'on trouve sur toutes les tables, mais qui ont perdu leur saveur. Simultanément, les déterminations de la vie quotidienne se modifient à partir de l'instance principale; depuis le début de l'ère industrielle, c'est l'économie qui prédomine, mais ses difficultés actuelles, la 'crise' comme on dit abusivement, appellent des remaniements et convoquent d'autres instances: spirituelle, esthétique, politique. La convergence d'une transformation des idées et des mœurs avec le coup de frein brutal qui affecte la société d'abondance indique que nous sommes entrés dans une époque de ce type, où les idées anciennes, malgré la révérence qu'on affecte encore de leur porter, se vident invisiblement du dedans. Et l'abus que les marchands de modes font de la 'nouveau' ne doit pas nous cacher qu'un esprit nouveau apparaît ici ou là, dans les places évacuées par les anciens dogmes, le long des articulations disjointes des systèmes hier encore triomphants.
Jean-Marie Domenach, Enquête sur les idées contemporaines, Paris (Seuil) 1981, p. 15.

The purpose of this paper¹ is to assess the prospects and likely implications of what is currently hailed as a new vogue, namely the interest in culture and its significance for development.

Given the incidence of fashions in development studies and development work it seems advisable to begin by inspecting the emergence of this concern as a matter of conceivable interest in itself. That done, it will be possible to consider the context or contexts in which it features. A particularly intriguing question, in this connection, is between which parties the pertinent discourse is conducted. The insight thus assembled will serve as the basis for an analysis of the thrust and implications of the concern with culture's significance for development. The concluding question regards the matter of practicability. Any scepticism shown in earlier parts of the paper should pay off, in the end, in creative realism.

The Backdrop to an Emergence

Hearing about the new interest in culture and development, the seasoned sceptic is bound to ask: another fad again? He - or she, for that matter - will recall that Sorokin's² by now proverbial concern with fads and foibles applies to development studies and development work even more than to any other specialization in the social sciences.

One can fairly well see why this should be so (which is not the same, by the way, as saying it is necessarily so). The question about the true focus, the true substance, of development has been with us for as long as development studies and development work have been pursued. Rather than facing it squarely, the majority of those concerned have indulged in a more or less tacit, largely unwitting conspiracy to just live with it. To keep things pending has probably been facilitated by the possibility to play off entrenched or unproven standpoints in theory against vested interests or experiments in practice. Indeed it is a matter of ambiguity compounded.

On the one hand - to quote the unknown sociologist once again - there has been a coming and going of fashions in unending and unpredictable succession. The earliest one has been technology, as implied in the notion of technical assistance. Since then we have gone through phases of administration, of nation-building, and so forth. On the other hand there is the overriding economic approach to development. One can probably argue that it is as old as the very concern with development, dating back to the early 1950s. Still, by my recollection, it did not emerge in full force until the middle 1950s.³ It has ever since jealously maintained its privileged position, *inter alia* by subjugating, or claiming to embrace, any other approaches one way or another.

To an onlooker who is not quite *nourri dans le Sérail* it must be curious to see that the sequence of fashions and fads on the one hand, and the dominant economic approach on the other, fail to shape up, as one might reasonably expect them to do, as a field of tension if not outright conflict. For all practical purposes the latter has played first fiddle, and the former have played a subsidiary, though not necessarily supportive, role. The question to arise here most naturally is why this state of affairs should prevail. Why is, in the established - yet hardly stable - development paradigm, the economic concern predominant and a variable host of further concerns subsidiary - regardless whether supportive to the economic one or not - and more or less ephemeral?

It will not do to answer that one professional group, those terrible economists, has outsmarted the competition and thus conquered and maintained a position of privilege. Nor could one argue that amongst the social sciences the discipline of economics is so much better than the rest that pride of place comes to it naturally and rightfully. Surely this is claimed on occasion and not always in jest; but proof is another matter. There must be a more adequate answer.

Curiously the better answer does not seem to be readily available. This could not be because the question is unclear or excessively difficult. It must be, then, because this question is hardly ever raised with enough insistence to make the effort to provide the answer seem worthwhile. Next to arise is the question about the missing question: why this lack of inquisitiveness?

This time there is an instant and satisfactory answer: you do not bother to ask questions about what is self-evident. The development paradigm, warts and all, is a faithful replica of what one is so accustomed to as not to notice it – the Western world view and life-style. The genealogical nexus obviates the need for inspection. This is so regardless of the fact that in the development paradigm the reference is not to the West but to other parts of the world.

The provisional upshot is that in order to grasp the present condition and prospects of the established development paradigm – origin, present, prospects – there is no avoiding the detour of inspecting its muster, the Western world view *cum* life-style so far as pertinent to the purpose.

This preliminary exercise requires three prefatory comments to avoid confusion later on: Chinese boxes in boxes, with due apologies to the reader.

First a word on the exportation and imposition of the Western model into non-Western parts of the world. The question that should arise here, but hardly does, is how Westerners could assume this to be a workable proposition, and how, besides, non-Westerners affected could accommodate? The well-known answer to the first part of the question is: expansive ethnocentrism. The bearer of a world view and life-style, in taking them to be fully self-evident, can but consider them as general in the sense of universal: they are his very universe. In this regard Westerners are not better or worse than others. Nor do they differ in an innate urge to conduct themselves expansively if all goes well. They do differ by the degree of efficacy with which they have, over a certain period, done so. As regards the non-Westerners in question, one recalls the somewhat uneasy concept of *colonisabilité*.⁴ Besides there is, for so long as it lasts, the effect of training and employment. There will be occasion, later on, to return to these matters in some more detail.

The second prefatory comment is procedural. Just as we are in no position, given present purposes, to take the established development paradigm as a given, so we shall not go far either if taking the Western world view and life-style for granted. That much we had already admitted. The point now is that the kind of inspection required cannot base itself on identification. Detachment is a necessary condition. Such detachment does not come by itself. Depending upon the effort made it can be achieved – to various degrees – according to standpoint and circumstances.

As regards standpoint the outsider would, at a first blush, appear in a better position, in terms of vantage point for observation, than the insider. Still he has a price to pay in having to account for his own frame of reference in observing: no mean task.

The insider, in order to achieve a vantage point for reasonably detached observation, requires a trigger causing mental distance. Not seldom this is provided by emerging problems sensed to pertain, one way or another, to his world view and life-style. A greater or more effective degree of detachment may be achievable in case the observation is somehow retrospective than when it is fully contemporaneous: involvement is unlikely to be the same in the two cases. For optimal elucidation it is proposed to use, here, all three vantage points enumerated in succession, namely that of the contemporaneous insider, that of the retrospective insider and that of the relevant outsider, or more precisely that of the Third World.

I should perhaps make clear that the present paper is written from a virtually retrospective insider's standpoint. A Westerner identifying with one of the two wings of the West, I am about to consider not Western civilization at large but a phase of Western civilization, and as it happens one whose time is almost up.

This cryptic remark becomes clear in the third prefatory observation, which follows now. The first move towards observation is sophistication: the recognition of specificity in what to one's gut feeling is general, indeed universal. The Western world view *cum* life-style to which reference has been made ever so often in the preceding is not really *the* Western world view *cum* life-style. The reference is actually to the modern West: a limited period that has begun, roughly speaking, with the Industrial Revolution and ended sometime between the two World Wars. It is only because this is 'our' period that we can afford to refer to it in such general, indeed elusive, terms.

Time now to inspect the modern-Western world view and life-style, as the model from which the development paradigm is derived.

First the *contemporaneous* approach. This has of course not been the same all during the modern period, yet something like a secular trend is distinguishable. The modern life-style has forever had a problematic fringe: it has produced problematic fall-out from its inception. The emerging and then forever growing economic-technological complex, in live-and-let-live harmony with the state apparatus, has spawned a growing number of difficulties. Deemed marginal and left fundamentally unresolved, these have built up to major proportions.

The manner in which people have attempted to come to terms with this state of affairs is fraught with problems in its turn. As they accumulated, the assorted issues engendered by the modern life-style have been endowed with a semblance of cohesion, in the sense of intellectual and operational manageability, by applying one label to all, namely 'social'.⁵

Soon two different readings diverge dramatically. Meliorist competes with revolutionary. Enlightened liberalism and revisionist socialism have worked, gropingly, towards what has amounted to the welfare state. For their part revolutionary socialists or communists, adopting the fashionable style of mono-factor interpretation and rendering it in terms of power, have at once predicted and demanded the overthrow of the prevailing order. Conflict or ambiguity?

To all outward appearances the difference between the two is a matter of irreconcilable conflict. It is in light of this interpretation that power games within and between nations are conceived and played out: a circumstance that will then be read as confirming the interpretation.

Still there is reason to argue that all this is an unwarranted and dangerous overstatement. At root this is not a matter of fundamental conflict but of ambiguity blown up beyond proportion. Between diffuse inventorizing under one cover-all label and mono-causal focussing in a description alleged to have at once explanatory and prescriptive power, no fundamental differences are at play. (Their practice is of course a matter apart.) A basically common vision is elaborated in two competing manners. In the one we see the British empiricist at work, the other shows the German fundamentalist projecting himself. *Bricoleur* versus demiurge. The prophecy *cum* prescription of the revolutionary hides, yet does not overcome, the problem inherent in the diffuse-yet-accumulative approach of the meliorist.

This problem resides in the question whether the assorted side- and after-effects of modernity, which prove problematic, are merely coincidental and marginal, or could they have a common source inherent in the state of affairs?

The liberals have not raised the question until very late, and when they did they were embarrassed by the magnitude of the problem identified, on which proper liberal debate still has to begin.⁶ To Marx, defining it has been the primary overriding concern: at the verbal and then at the political-organizational level. The practice of communism, over a considerable part of the globe and in competing variants, suggests that his identification leaves something to be desired. The impression arises that the issue of human rights, purposely degraded into a dissidents' issue, along with further preoccupations, is acting as an effective smoke-screen preventing the re-opening of the debate that seems in order at this end of the spectrum.

Summing up, the net effect of contemporaneous concern about modernity and its main features is critical consideration of the state of affairs with blinkers on. Problems emerging, in being somehow identified and dealt with, have contributed to the further development of this same state of affairs, albeit in two divergent directions: two competing variants of what is and remains at root the same world view. For a more penetrating analysis of this view, greater mental distance seems to be required than the contemporaneous mind was able to muster, what with the expansive sway gained for it over most of the world.

Second, now, the *retrospective* approach, no doubt virtually rather than fully retrospective as it is. Whereas the contemporaneous observer seems at a loss for a synoptic view, the retro-vision here in evidence appears marked, to the extent of being potentially marred, by an urge towards stereotyping. It shows a curious inclination to resort, in order to identify the essential features of modern-Western civilization, to the pregnant epithet. This appears to be a matter of art rather than of science, yet scholars enjoy it unabashedly. Echo of modernity's predilection for mono-causal presentation?

As it is, most of the terms that could qualify for the purpose cannot be employed without risk of misunderstanding unless brushed up or even redefined – a somewhat awkward circumstance. Thus some will, in evoking the modern-Western world view (*Weltanschauung*?) and ensuing life-style, rely on the old term 'capitalist', but others will avoid it. Further terms heard in this connection include 'humanistic' and 'economistic'.⁸

Of these 'economistic' attracts me most. To me it suggests a world view according to which man as the subject deals with the reality surrounding him in a subject-object relationship: more precisely in such a way that maximal returns are drawn from systematic effort. The resulting life-style is not just

economic: it is economistic; by extension it is technological and mechanistic. In coming to terms with the world, man creates his universe; in creating it, intellectual mastery connotes operational domination, eventually exploitation. To this bent of mind, technology and the discipline of economics are the privileged handmaidens. There exists, accordingly, a very simple answer to the question why economists play first fiddle. They are riding the crest of an incoming wave, and the beauty of it all is that some of them may not even know it.

But how is it that these days, there is room for this kind of perception *cum* assessment of modernity? What is it that now enables us to realize that market capitalism in the welfare state and the planned economy with state capitalism are both and equally exponents of economism? What, in other words, occasions the would-be retrospective stance? There are both internal and external factors at play.

The internal ones have been brought to public concern – rather than awareness – by the scare whipped up by the Club of Rome and further intellectuals tempted by media glory and best-seller lists. Talk about crisis, and you are assured of an audience. The backlash of conservatism disguised as progressivism that they have unleashed – in curious parallelism to the intellectual deadlock prevailing in the communist part of the world – will take considerable time to subside, and is already causing more of the waste its protagonists claim to combat.

What the internal factors do in fact amount to is the realization that in dominating his universe in a systematically exploitative manner with no holds barred (i.e. with technology overcoming any constraints), man is bound to end up holding himself by the throat.

Externally the same urge to dominate, shaping up as colonial-imperial expansion, has, slightly earlier, spawned similar feedback. The tide of colonialism has turned: domination, rather than subsiding, has turned out to be dependence, and dependence domination. A mutual ambiguity working out as a double bind.

Both internally and externally the need to get off the merry-go-round of exploitation as self-destruction and of domination as dependence is urgent, though apparently not so obvious as to be responded to effectively. The search would seem to be on for constraints which, given technology unlimited, would yet prevent domination to turn out eventually suicidal. Terms like interaction and interdependence are on everybody's lips, whether piously or in scorn. Perhaps there is a renewed need of a *contrat social*, but neither its parameter nor its scope nor its aims or modalities could be as Rousseau, recently commemorated,⁹ has surmised.

In all these regards the post-modern West is *in mediis rebus*. The present phase is distinctly an interim period: it is neither a modern nor a successor phase. Identifying the successor phase's features prognosticatively is even more impossible than discerning the modern phase's features contemporaneously. And, if truth be told, have we really succeeded in identifying modernity retrospectively from the post-modern vantage point? Surely problems, rather than trends, connote prospects; but to turn this basically negative statement into something with positive meaning is not so much a cognitive problem as a matter for effort, groping yet creative.

Before we move from the two different insiders' perceptions to that of the outsiders, notably the Third World, one more topical observation remains to be made. It concerns the meaning of the concepts 'social' and 'cultural' in a context bearing the imprint of economism.

We have already noticed that 'social' is a collective notion covering a motley array of matters that are marginal to the economic preoccupation in an inevitably problematic manner: subsidiary yet critical. Spelling-out exercises customarily result in inventories including such diverse matters as social security, welfare, education and housing, plus an occasional political hobby-horse such as participation or minorities (as economically deprived groups). Upon closer inspection all such items turn out to be conceived in a manner singling out their economic properties or significance. The outcome of this perception appears, for example, where next to economic planning (with or without the name), something like social planning is introduced. The former has, or used to have, a clear profile and a neat efficacy; the latter tends to remain hazy and ineffectual.

In its turn 'cultural' has not achieved anything like the visibility of 'social', but it is conceived in exactly the same fashion. The economic world view is, after all, pervasive. As it happens, the term 'culture' is notorious for its definitional elusiveness. Anthropologists tend to struggle with it – to their chagrin or to their pleasure.¹⁰ But in their professional preoccupation with things abroad, they may tend to underplay the surprising difference between what they will, *grosso modo*, understand by 'culture' and what it means where they are, after all, at home. In the modern West 'culture' is a narrow, marginal something, elusive rather than problematic. Studies like those by J. Huizinga and N. Elias notwithstanding,¹¹ culture, in the standard use of the term, is about museums, orchestras of any kind, paintings and sculpture, folk-dance groups, and the like: all of it in the sense of mostly innocent pursuits of dubious usefulness that cost public money. As it happens I do not have to look far for a poignant illustration.

The Netherlands happens to be endowed – unlike Venezuela with its Ministry of Intelligence – with a Ministry of Welfare, Public Health and Culture. On the side it also handles migrants of various kinds. (Labour and Social Security have their own ministry.) Here marginalization and the ensuing problematic nature are advertised in the very manner of lumping unrelated concerns together, so as to show their common economic meaning: they cost ever more money, and what one buys with it is some economic peace, potentially favourable to the political climate. As it happens, bureaucratic and professional vested interests tend to lose sight of this goal by becoming self-purposive in identifying ever more 'social' and 'cultural' problems in urgent need of attention. This in turn hampers the very reconsideration it should induce.

Third and last, the *relevant outsiders'* approach to the signal features of the modern-Western world view and life-style. Its existence and importance follow from their world-wide presence and impact.

The relevant outsider has been, and perhaps remains, a captive outsider. Regardless of whether those in this category sought the encounter with the West or not, it happened to them as a result of Western expansion. Besides, their number has steadily grown during colonial days and continues to do so in the post-colonial era. New communications technology helps some image or reflection of the West, however accurate or distorted, to reach and affect increasing numbers of people world-wide.

As was mentioned, noteworthy in Western modernity is that its emergence and growth owe as much to normal internal processes as to outside expansion entailing, increasingly, imposition. The ethnocentric mind will anywhere and any time take its own world to be the universe, and other worlds as needing to conform. The modern West more than any civilization on record has put this assumption into practice. This is not the occasion to recall the emergence, peaking and decline of colonialism.

What does deserve notice is that the cultural imposition which accompanies expansion adds a major disturbing effect to the filtering which is a normal feature of intercultural transactions. Their inherent ambiguity will be sharpened to the point where it will prove a major determinant of mutual perception and interaction. This too has not ended with the termination of formal colonial relationships: on the contrary. V.S. Naipaul, in a recent, quite impressionistic book, has brought this out poignantly: the West, said to be in deep agony, is yet the refuge from any problems at home anywhere in the Third World.¹² One must assume, for one thing, that this ambiguity is one of the major

obstacles causing the concern with self-reliance – intellectual, cultural, social and then perhaps political and economic – to remain mired in sloganeering. Like the West, the Third World appears to have a blind spot as to the present and future *problématique* of its key characteristics. To put it this way is a provisional over-simplification to which we shall return for amendment. At this point we are concerned with the Third World perception of the West in either of its two variants.

In this regard two comments are in order. One says that, what with developmentalism succeeding colonialism, the issue of newly regained collective selfhood and that of the changing yet enduring Western impact are hard to disentangle anywhere in the Third World. Identity is a problem first and foremost, rather than a matter of security.

The other comment is that those in the Third World directly or indirectly aware of the West are hardly in a position to discern between modernity as one instance of Western civilization, limited according to time and place, and Western civilization categorically. This inability is the worse if it comes to distinguishing between the modern phase and predecessor phases, let alone conceivable successor phases. The idea that the West should currently be going through an interim phase that one could call post-modern for lack of a better description is invariably lost upon people experiencing such difficulties. An honest analyst like Chelli¹³ is decisively handicapped by this blind spot: to him the West equals the modern West. In what remains a most intriguing manner, he marshalls evidence from Plato and Aristotle to substantiate a description of what is typically the modern-Western world view. If this can happen to a good mind working retrospectively, small wonder that the problem, unnoticed, plays havoc with all those pretending to think prospectively. Their easy way out of the quandary caused by failing to identify the fundamentally transitional character of the present-day West is, inevitably, over-simplification, in the ambiguous manner that good minds like Naipaul, Chelli, and, to give one more example, Laroui,¹⁴ try to overcome in themselves and are worried to find in ever so many others.

This long detour has served a double purpose. It has identified economism as being characteristic of the modern West in both of its variants. It has also shown this identification to be provisional. It anticipates, for its proper vantage point, a successor phase to modernism, of which it fails as yet to identify the key features. It is further handicapped as, for the same reason, the sway of economism as a frame of reference, ambiguously judged and inconclusively debated, drags on.

... We can now resume the thread of the argument at the point where it was said that the established paradigm for Third-World development reflects the modern-Western world view.

We have recognized that exporting this world view and life-style was not strange or objectionable by the yardstick of high colonialism. Given, however, what happened during late colonialism, it could seem anomalous that, in the practice of the development paradigm, history would seem to repeat itself: belatedly on more than one count. Still that would be a too easy judgment.

... The matter shapes up differently in light of two quite diverse considerations. The one says that with decolonization, communication world-wide, including the transmission of ideas and practices, rather than grinding to a halt, grows in volume and importance. Against this backdrop Third-World practice of an originally modern-Western paradigm need not be strange let alone objectionable: less so if one could hope it to be part of a two-way stream of communications. The other consideration says that the substance of this particular message should be up for scrutiny, both on account of its obsolescence problem at the point of departure and in view of the need for a relevancy test at the point of destination, it being a case of cross-cultural transfer. We shall return to these two issues.

In this regard the state of affairs is not encouraging. One finds little evidence, whether among Western development experts or among most of their Third-World adepts-colleagues, of an effective concern to account for the specificity of the development paradigm, let alone for the way this specificity reflects in complexity and indeed inconsistency, as indicated in the preceding. Intriguingly the outlook of non-Western development workers is not unlike what we saw above in regard of the two variants of the modern-Western thought pattern. The majority accept the paradigm blindfold and honestly try to make it work, considering any problems encountered as incidental and marginal, and to be coped with in this vein. A budding minority are on the verge of rejecting it in the name of self-reliance and, additionally, on grounds of irrelevancy; but their frame of reference for spelling out self-reliance and relevancy is more of the same world view.

... These concerns take the argument closer to the point of issue of this section, namely the situation in which the new, cultural, focus of development study and development work is emerging.

We set out from a fact too obvious to receive the attention it deserves. Applying the development paradigm has, notwithstanding all the anxiety and debate that

accompanied it, been a happy-go-lucky affair to all intents and purposes. Nobody has bothered to systematically monitor it, and no amount of incidental evaluations has sorted any cumulative effect. Why? Simply because it was taken to be the natural thing to do. In the early 1950s nobody had a clear definition or vision of development which would be different from enlightened colonial policy world-wide; but this has not blocked the mushroom growth of a professional lobby.

To realize the true extent to which this is so it helps to note that the very definition of the 'Third World' is in fact directly derived from the paradigm, rather than the other way around. The only feature shared in common between all those highly diverse entities making up the Third World is that in their regard, the modern-Western world view and life-style are rephrased in the prescriptive sense, for no better reason than that they do not apply descriptively. The underlying motive of this terminological, and then operational, *tour de force* is ethnocentric comparison undertaken by modern Westerners: important parts of the world do not come up to modern-Western standards, and this very fact automatically translates itself into a programme implying a relationship. This is the development paradigm as necessarily connoting development aid and the resources required to render it possible, namely expertise and funds.

As has been the case in the West the way it appeared to the contemporaneous observer, the economic concerns predominant in the practice of development have soon developed a fringe of accompanying problems, not all of which could be accounted for as underdevelopment to be taken care of by development policies. Some were undeniably development-induced, so to speak, in the same way that physician-induced diseases are said to exist.

This goes to the extent that even those non-economic developmental concerns which have preceded the ascendancy of the economic one have retroactively been subordinated to it. Nothing could have been easier. Economistically inspired anyway, they could but anticipate the economic predominance.

Thus, substantively speaking, the parallelism between the situation of modern-Western economism and that of post-colonial developmental economism is nearly perfect. It is obvious in the way the assortment of so-called non-economic concerns or variables relates to the economic preoccupation: a logically incoherent complex more or less kept together by institutionalization, and kept going mostly on account of administrative vested interests. The parallelism is less than perfect in two ways, neither of them of fundamental

significance. The assortment of non-economic concerns is not quite the same in the two situations, and the order in which they have popped up may also be different. The other difference is terminological. In development the notion 'social' has never achieved the quasi-pivotal status following from its use as a one-term, catch-all indication of the jumble of non-economic concerns playing second fiddle to the economic preoccupation. The term is used, of course, but in a more limited, less salient way. It is a distant echo to the complex of concerns which, in the West, accumulates into the profile of welfare-state provisions. It is a quite restricted echo because the means are seen to be lacking to match the amplitude of provisions said, until recently, to be essential to the welfare state and, to a much lesser extent, due to questions arising about target populations under non-Western conditions. There exist further concerns beside it.

The term is also used in a broader way, notably in the circuit of international agencies. There 'social' features as a kind of equivalent counterpart to 'economic', but the debate concerned, which is nearly as old as the concern with development, has remained inconclusive.¹⁵ There will be an occasion to return to this matter for a closer look.

At face value all this could seem to amount to a fairly stable state, the more so because it admits variation in the margin. New fashions are welcome – up to a point – inasmuch as they may help release tensions emerging from occasional dissatisfactions.

This is how a new accent on social development, such as one may currently encounter it here and there, can be accommodated, and, in its wake, also a cultural one. Further on we shall have occasion to see how this is done.

At this point something else demands attention first, namely the possibility, just suggested, that after three decades of no more than superficial modification, a more profound reorientation might occur. No better way to determine whether to speak of such a possibility is reasonably realistic than taking a close look at circumstances as factors conditioning opportunities.

In the preceding, two potential destabilizers have been identified in passing. One is the circumstance that in the post-modern West the props have fallen away from underneath the established development paradigm: the modern world view and life-style are in hot water. The other is self-reliance as a potential requirement of proof of its relevancy. The significance of each is fundamental, and as a matter of principle either would do to unseat the established development paradigm.

Upon closer inspection neither proves effective for the time being. Of the

former, the Third World is as yet in no position to take effective cognizance. This is not in the first place a matter of vested interests of Third-World development policy makers and implementors. It is even worse. Either the information does not effectively reach, or its significance is pre-empted by fashionable wholesale condemnation of the West, on grounds that have precious little to do with real conditions there but all the more with deadlocks and frustrations at home, duly extrapolated into prejudice against the outside world, i.e. the West in either or both variants. As regards the latter, i.e. the relevancy test, it has already been observed that self-reliance, to the extent it is merely an expression in obverse direction of the same rejection of the West, seems doomed to remain ineffective as long as it stays at the level of self-gratification by means of slogans. In sum if these two very basic considerations were the only factors at play, one would be justified in looking forward to a long and undisturbed future for the economic development paradigm – regardless of its real effects, whether beneficial or disastrous.

However, in historical developments, it is not necessarily the fundamentals that count for most in triggering change. It does happen that for their full force to show, lesser-order facilitating factors come into play first. This may be the case in the situation we are now reviewing.

The gradual and uncertain shift of attention, accompanied by various alarms, that is currently afoot in development circles may yet prove, to the future observer, the turning-point hoped to occur in the First or Second Development Decades. A shift from the economic to a basically different perception of development (assuming the word 'development' will stay). This hope is fed by the parallelism, across just about a century, between conditions today and those prevailing in the last quarter of the nineteenth century.

Considering that period retrospectively from the vantage point of today, one sees that high colonialism had reached its zenith and changed, almost imperceptibly, into what we can now afford to call late colonialism but what in the euphoric terms of the day rated as enlightened colonialism. It would be naive to attribute this transformation to a mere change of mind, first among the colonizers and then among those colonized. A change of mind usually corresponds to changes in real conditions.

What happened was that the successful intensification of colonial management required the effective involvement, in an active (in the economic sense of productive) rather than an impassive-obliging (in the commercial sense of accommodating and supplying) role of those colonized. This is where the thin line between domination and exploitation is noticeably, not to say

purposively, overstepped. More importantly (though not everybody is as yet ready to see it this way), this is where the balance in the underlying power game shifts. Domination proves an ambiguous proposition. It proves to imply, as an ineluctable ingredient, a dose of its opposite, namely dependence.

For reasons not too difficult to identify, it has been the dubious privilege of certain marginal types among the colonizing category to be clear-sighted enough to wonder what in fact was happening. The signs they read were ominous. Those colonized followed suit at their own time and in their own manner. It is fairly easy, almost cheap, now to see that on both sides the initial interpretations, in being tentative, could not help being off the mark to an extent.¹⁶ Nor does it matter. Eventually the colonizers lost their nerve (a fact that in circles of those formerly colonized is beyond belief even now); on the other side of the fence, *colonisabilité* gave way to an urge towards self-assertion. The balance had been tipped, and the stable state in the ascendancy relationship became destabilized, ever so subtly but irrevocably. The as yet incomplete process of decolonization has been the outcome.

A comparable tipping of the scales may have occurred in or around the 1970s. It is entirely conceivable that the coming generation will, in its proper retrospect, identify a self-induced upset in the state of affairs, in matters of development, which had become established over a quarter century, roughly since the end of the Second World War.

A symptomatic upbeat may have been the emergence of non-alignment. By refusing to be embroiled in the vicious family quarrel dividing the West and threatening the world, one overcomes part of the ambiguous fascination with the West inherited from colonial times.

The critical moment may well have been the realization that like domination, aid is an ambiguous proposition when the chips are down, making for a complex and confusing relationship rather than a simple and ever harmonious one. Aid, whether a provision of intellectual (expertise) or material (funding, credit) resources, is not a one-way street. The less so as, disconcertingly, it proves - as enlightened colonialism did in its day - not to be successful to the point of rendering itself superfluous within a reasonable span of time, and, much to the contrary, threatens to be self-perpetuating, indeed self-aggrandizing. The umbilical cord is strangling the baby.

The upshot in this apparent quandary is that development aid proves negotiable: to the point that, in extreme cases, the privilege of making donations may be withheld.

The fact that negotiations, once resorted to, do not work well, or not at all, is

unpleasant but not necessarily disappointing in the short term. There is no reason whatsoever to expect them to run smoothly, or indeed to run at all. Both sides have to play a game for which no rules exist as yet; what matters is that they recognize they must play it or be damned.

Interestingly the parallel with developments a century before extends to the prompting role, in respect of emerging Third-World attitudes, taken by 'critical' Westerners tempted to champion the cause of the other side. The critique of the adverse effects of development aid began as an internal, politically partisan, quarrel amongst Westerners. To them it was one issue out of several; and the issues, including the developmental one, were primarily internal. This explains why, in this case again, misunderstandings and misrepresentations play a considerable and curious part. Besides there was a wide spectrum of opinions. Two illustrative names, picked out of many, will demonstrate its range: Paul-Marc Henri, then of OECD, and André Gunder Frank. They were both champions, but how very different in outlook and tone, temperament and appeal.

At least as interesting is the way those of the Third World have followed suit. They woke up, in due course, to the realization that, endowed with modern-Western development expertise, they were not just the adepts and the collaborators – whether as extensions or as partners – of their teachers, the Western experts possessed of near-esoteric knowledge-as-power. Placed in roles of policy executives in addition to being counsel to policy makers or policy makers proper, they found themselves working under conditions significantly different from those of the jet-set experts. First they could hardly remain immune to policy outcomes favourable or, particularly, adverse. Next they had to work in symbiosis with the politicians and their constituencies (in the sense of the term 'constituencies' locally prevailing). To a person in this position, development is far from being a neat laboratory experiment with figures. Indeed it can easily become a sordid and risky business.

As a result the Western-trained development worker of Third-World extraction will sooner or later find that he has parted ways, no doubt unintentionally at first, with the Western expert divulging the canon of the established development paradigm. What remains is, first, to spell out the differences, and, next, to envisage implications.

Is it at this juncture, then, that we discern the onset of purposive, incisive, systematic rethinking of development that has as yet failed to materialize in response to the two fundamental challenges identified before? Not really. Still there can be no doubt that it opens up the latitude for such concerns to take shape in, and, what is more, the opportunity to pursue them.

The point is that henceforth, we all know that the practice of development is fraught with ambiguities of many kinds: those 'developing' versus those 'rich', experts versus practitioners, paradigm as prescriptive *summa* of one particular world view *cum* life-style versus manifold different world views *cum* life-styles. As these ambiguities accumulate into an overriding one, of 'more of the same' versus something decisively different, the probability is that slowly but irresistibly the former, in withering away, will make room for the latter shaping up. It is tempting to follow this up by suggesting that once this tendency would emerge, it should have no trouble gaining momentum rapidly. This is hardly the way of the world. These, after all, are the kind of problems which need to be lived through rather than being just thought through. Only intellectuals' arrogance could expect this to be otherwise.

All this tacitly attributes a crucial role to those of the Third World. Do they, at long last, have to 'go it alone'? That would hardly be in line with the ways of the emergent One World. There is bound to be a Western input as well: emphatically post-modern rather than modern, and, besides, not necessarily prompting, but certainly accompanying. Incidental evidence of this is provided, I hope, by the present paper.

In writing off the 'more of the same' prospect for the longer term I am consciously being optimistic. It is the optimism, however, of the one who realizes that of the two options discernible, only one is viable.

Realism demands to recognize that the battle has not been won. The issue is, and will remain for the time being, undecided - indeed in suspense. An interest in social development and another one, related or not, in cultural development are emerging, or indeed re-emerging. Will they shape up as yet further rounds in the fads-and-foibles game, giving a new lease of life to the economic preoccupation with development by patching up its defaults? Or will matters social and cultural, for once, be reconceived in non-economistic terms: in their own right rather than as potentially problematic marginal issues to be accommodated without undue fuss? This is what the balance of this paper is all about.

To limit the scope of the exercise to matters cultural, to the exclusion of matters social, is an artificial and not entirely pleasing device, inspired by nothing better than considerations of space. It is outright awkward in that, both definitionally and empirically, the two are hard to disentangle. Besides in current economistic development practice they begin to be harnessed together in a quite peculiar manner. The growing concern with matters social -

whether in either of the two senses mentioned before or in yet another one – induces a further resort to matters cultural, namely as determinants of the specific substance of social issues encountered. It is arguable that one can afford to turn a blind eye to this nexus – whether a flight forward or something else – on the grounds that the economic set-up of which it is part and parcel (and a problematic part to boot) has no future anyway: but this is neither satisfactory nor entirely convincing.

As it stands this paper is therefore a partial, inevitably provisional, exercise.

II.

The Emergent Concern with the Significance of Culture in and for Development: a Western and a Third-World Perception, and the Quest for a Global Prospect

The current interest in culture and development is largely a Western response, under a typically Western label, to Third-World events not necessarily announced there as cultural. They may occasionally be featured as socio-cultural; or they may – notably in the Islamic world – be announced as religious; or they may even be disguised as political (which I suspect to be the case here and there in Africa and perhaps even in Latin America). In Western parlance the label 'cultural' serves as a catch-all indication of matters sensed rather than identified, apprehended rather than understood.

On the other hand it is clear that, regardless of hazy labelling, something is afoot in the Third World in its turn. This too amounts to a reorientation with regard to development, including a move away from the established paradigm. As a tentative catch-all term ventured from outside, 'socio-cultural' need not be a misnomer. This could seem to put the West and the Third World in the same position as regards the indication of the tentative focus of ongoing reorientation. Indeed this is what many will expect and consider normal, as it is in line with conditions hitherto. Still it would be a mistake to draw this conclusion at this juncture.

There are indications that in several parts of the Third World a rethinking of development has begun which does not derive, once again, from Western impulses. This means that potentially at least they are no longer on one and the same track, and that henceforth it is a matter of either more or less parallel or more or less divergent tracks. Of course world-wide interaction remains, up to a

point, the common frame of reference within which all must operate, willy-nilly, in going their own ways. To this extent what happens on the two sides is never a matter of sheer coincidence. But henceforth it will be more necessary than ever to check for different meanings even where apparent parallelism is in evidence.

This condition of 'coincidental parallelism' is hardly conducive to clarity of pertinent discourse, the less so as there is precious little reason left to treat the Third World as one entity for the purpose.

Under the circumstances it is difficult to design the proper style of analysis. At the risk of playing an obsolete game, we shall first consider the matter from a Western angle, and then from something like a Third-World angle, trying to correct for obsolescence and over-simplification as we go. One main over-simplification to be resisted, on both sides, is the one which says that decolonization as resurgence is the undoing of past and lingering domination. Simplistic and painted in black and white, this model is as attractive as it is suspect. Another equally important over-simplification, equally to be resisted, is to assume there exists something like an objective Western view of the Third World, and *vice versa*. The view is part of, and conditioned by, the interaction it helps induce and maintain; in this interaction the view of the other party is a constituent of the self-view at play, because 'self' mirrors in 'other'.

Culture and Development as a Western Concern

In the preceding section it has been argued that when people refer to the West they mostly refer to the modern West and its post-modern sequel. It has been submitted furthermore that with the advantage of hindsight - perhaps rather than from a contemporaneous or external viewpoint - the salient characteristics of the modern West can be identified, tentatively perhaps rather than definitively,¹⁷ and fairly referred to with the capsule label 'economistic'. Economism has proven exceptionally effective in combination with the expansiveness which marks many a successful entity in world history. On the wings of this success egocentrism and ethnocentrism assert themselves, in seeking the encounter with 'other', in eventual domination and exploitation.

For an adequate understanding of modern-Western expansion it is necessary to look beyond the labels - commercial, political, economic, administrative and the like - by which colonialism and its salient features are customarily designated. True, each suggests an aspect, and several can be used to mark each a phase in the conduct of colonial affairs. One stands to misjudge colonial expansiveness, however, unless one recognizes that it is one out of several ingredients of an encompassing process of intrinsically cultural

or civilizational nature. What is, in the last resort, at play – and at stake – in colonialism is the collective cultural identity of Western Europe: it being the one thing its several states, concerted in competition, share in common.

To discuss this cultural expansiveness, as many a colonial historian has done, in terms of the historical vicissitudes of expansion and the incidental responses elicited thereby, seems too superficial. A more adequate approach will identify the modalities of the process in terms of motive forces at work, initiatives launched and feed-back elicited.

When this approach is attempted, one crucial realization demands to be accounted for. The systematic effort at self-realization as self-vindication, through challenging others – notably those of different cultures – turns out to be inherently ambiguous. In the very interaction initiated, 'other' is not merely a neutral instrument towards the pursuit, by 'self', of assertion – whether as vindication, gain or whatever. Though not engaged on his own terms, 'other' is necessarily also an intrinsic party to the interaction, whose very involvement affects 'self'; and the more so, the more effective the interaction.

This operational ambiguity reflects in the ambiguity of significance attributed. In order to be instrumental towards the vindication of 'self', 'other' has to be not just different but in effect inferior. Still, in order to be a valid touchstone for the purpose, 'other' has to be different but at least as good. Throughout the history of colonialism and extending into the post-colonial era, evidence of this ambiguity is glaring. The myths of the dumb-and-lazy native and that of the *mission civilisatrice* coexist with their counterparts, the myth of the noble savage and the equally mythical expectation, on the part of the Westerners, of self-purification and self-realization to ensue from immersion into the boundless spiritual and material richness of 'the East'. High-colonial ruthless ethnocentric management on the one hand and romantic awe on the other – mutually contradictory – do not merely fail to cancel out, but indeed they constitute the field of tension within which colonialism is effectuated and responded to.

Enlightened colonialism has not modified this pattern in any decisive way, nor has post-colonial developmentalism. The changes marking these periods are more noticeable at the Third-World than at the Western end, and will be reviewed in due course.

The fact that enlightened colonialism, contrary to stated intentions, produces no significant change in orientation is variously attributed, whether to accumulated momentum of patterns and institutions or to historical

vicissitudes. By and large these explanations amount to saying that the growing colonizers' involvement in the conduct of affairs in the colony rendered it harder for them to envisage a severing of ties, let alone their own withdrawal. An apparently opposite explanation is that as overall living conditions improved, more colonizers' wives came from the metropolitan countries, with the result that between the social life of colonizers' families and that of the autochthonous sector a gulf widened. In this explanation the ambiguity is construed in the obverse, but the effect attributed to it is the same: no real change in the colonial socio-cultural pattern or change for the worse.

Either way, the deeper the involvement in the colony, the worse the ambiguity. In the Netherlands it has been played out, duly ritualized, in the feud, during the 1920s and 1930s, between the Leiden and Utrecht schools training future civil servants for the then Netherlands Indies.¹⁸

The most poignant illustration is 'modern' education, introduced, by and large, as a symptom of enlightenment. Initially it was designed to serve the colonizers. Their children were supposed to receive the schooling they would have received had their parents not gone to the colony, to the point of being able to move back and forth between metropolitan and colonial schools at will. In Dutch the principle concerned had the lofty name of *concordantie*. Upon second thoughts this school system began to admit, ever so gradually, a selection from the children of those colonized, in line with their integration in the pursuits of colonial administration and commerce. These children were the future administrative and commercial manpower, and their needs were deemed to be best served by enabling them to enjoy 'modern' education. As the pattern expanded some adjustments were introduced; these remained well within the confines of the overall culture pattern of which this schooling was and remained typical. Everybody remembers the joke that was no joke, about *nos ancêtres les Gaulois*. In retrospect it is easy to say that all this was a matter of unabashed culture imperialism: the systematic spread of the modern-Western economic pattern, ethnocentrically maintained in regard of situations where its relevancy might have been a matter of separate concern. That such a judgment, not to say verdict, is inappropriately easy follows from the circumstance that 'modern' education was, and still is, welcomed, indeed demanded, by an ever-growing segment of those colonized, as one of the very few avenues of betterment open to them. Today the colonizers of the past continue to be blamed for not having been ready to provide more modern education than they did, rather than for deliberately or unwittingly supplanting traditional autochthonous education and thus causing autoch-

thonous civilization to wither on the vine. It is intriguing to note that this *problématique* is by and large ignored by someone like Ivan Illich.¹⁹

Considering the post-colonial phase of developmentalism, which by now seems unlikely to last for very much longer in the same manner, one recalls that on the part of the West, the onset of decolonization is a matter of disorientation and loss of nerve. Intensified interaction in the colony does away with the unwitting – if you like, innocent – ruthlessness of naive ethnocentrism, at the very moment when its efficacy becomes heightened rather than toned down. In the midst of this disorientation the Second World War breaks out, causing new ambiguities to mark the colonial pattern, which nobody has the time to reconsider fundamentally. Considered from a Western viewpoint these ambiguities amount to a rift between practical policies and verbal rationalizations. More than ever, the colonies were pawns in the geo-political struggle and suppliers of badly needed resources. At the same time enlightened verbiage expressing lofty – Western – ideals was freely used world-wide, what with the Americans getting into the act, innocent of any sobering colonial experience.²⁰ In their own ambiguous way the Japanese had seen fit to employ parallel-sounding verbiage.

When the peace broke out, those colonized were ready to cash in on what to them were promises made. Decolonization began not according to any blueprint, but in the sordid way human history seems bound to proceed any time anywhere, with occasional reference to ideals as opportune. Formally and constitutionally this caused fewer problems than organizationally and managerially. The gaping void, in the latter regard, was more or less instantly filled by 'development': a concept complete with budding operational complex which seemed to meet everybody's needs and availabilities in a near-miraculous manner.

The freshly-minted power wielders of the newly independent states – whether former charismatic leaders of independence movements or not – saw their lack of experience, perhaps competence, covered up by the free availability of expertise, and the malaise, of millennial expectations unmet by the transfer of sovereignty, alleviated by a time perspective towards their fulfilment being interposed by the prospect of development. The Western world-wide involvement, with its subtle element of control, continued in a slightly more open framework, under a more attractive label, and according to more mutually pleasing rules. The flow of benefits, allegedly one-way from colony to metropolitan country during colonial days, was said to be reversed henceforth: development aid as a way of getting even. In due course it was

inevitably realized that during both phases the flow had inevitably been two-way rather than one way, and in a manner rendering it difficult to draw up a balance sheet. More time will be required to sort out the implications of this realization, complicating and disconcerting as it must seem both to negotiators in the North-South Dialogue and the like, and to the slogan-mongers of the day.

There is, then, some reason to allege that developmentalism is a belated replay of enlightened colonialism, occasioned by the way sovereignty has in fact been transferred. But it is not a complete replay. There is a subtle but decisive difference in the conditions. It shows in the absence of the constitutional link. Self-perpetuation of the relationship is not self-evident. Curiously self-perpetuation is now promoted, wittingly or unintentionally, by various kinds of Western do-gooders who, like social workers in the West, find ever more injustice to indict and ever more causes to champion. Self-styled champions of what they deem the cause and revindications of the other side, they are the real - naive? - neo-colonials of the day. Fortunately their role, though confusing, is unlikely to carry any real weight for future developments. Static on the line.

The matter of self-perpetuation of belated enlightened colonialism is important in yet another manner. It signals the fundamental issue of needed constraints to expansiveness in the world of tomorrow. In order to see this issue in its proper perspective one needs to recall the significance of colonialism in terms of world history. The cumulative effect of ever so many contrived and maintained encounters with other civilizations, no doubt unforeseen and unintended, has been the establishment of a proto-One World pattern, as an irreversible trend. When it seemed, in the aftermath of the Second World War, to collapse, this pattern has in fact survived and gained significance. We live in an emergent One World, even though we are as yet unclear about how it works and, for that matter, should work. To refer to it, we use vintage labels that are manifestly obsolete, such as 'the New International Economic Order' (how economicistic can you remain, and how fascinated by 'order'?). Though much about it remains unclear for the time being, there can be no doubt that this will not be a pattern made up of watertight compartments as socio-cultural-economic-political monads, but rather one functioning in the manner of interaction in interdependence. The interaction is likely to occur between entities that may well remain to be defined or redefined for the purpose. The present sovereign states, with or without nations as their substance, are woefully inadequate for the purpose, both singly and, witness the dismal track record of that trade union of governments, in the United Nations jointly.

Now the point is that to any participant in the new world-wide game of interaction-in-interdependence, expansiveness is bound to remain a crucial element: its own as well as that of the others. This begs the question as to restraint or, if needs be, constraints. The hallmark of modernity is that it does not recognize, indeed does away with, constraints, and that it does not believe in restraint, except for others who might get in its way. Technology, in every sense, is what renders this feasible and effective. If it is true that modern-Western civilization deviates from a Common Human Pattern, this is so because in it, man's control over what he deems his context, knows no bounds.

Or so it has seemed for quite some time. As discussed before, the awareness is currently dawning that after all there may indeed be bounds – namely there where man, as we have put it, turns out to have himself by the throat; in other words, where the domination he exerts over his world backfires. This is the case of the Club-of-Rome scare, and that of the onset of decolonization, and not to forget, that of the deadly embrace in which the two superpowers are currently holding one another. The trouble is that by the time the realization dawns, it is really too late. Is disarmament a viable proposition?

At issue, then, is the need for constraints to natural expansiveness. Given the loss of inherent ones, as a result of technology having become self-propelling and apparently unlimited, a new kind of constraints need to be built in, with no cheating possible. The challenge is by now reasonably clear, though far from generally recognized in anything like an effective manner. (Still we do save some energy, it seems.)

Now this is an eminently cultural or civilizational issue. As such it is the hallmark of current culture change both in the West and in the world. The prospect for the emergent One World, *n'en déplaie à* the Society for International Development (which for its 1985 world conference chose the McLuhanesque theme of 'The Global Village'), is clearly not one culturally homogeneous world society duly institutionalized as such. Indeed this is the failed dream of modern-Western colonial expansiveness, which has come precariously close to turning out to be a nightmare. The interdependence that the S.I.D. tried to bring out with its unfortunately chosen theme will, in all likelihood, feature in a pluri-cultural world.

The emerging problem accompanying the emergent One World, then, is the need to envisage two apparently irreconcilable facts as existing side by side, not just peacefully but fruitfully. One is that every culture is a universe to itself, neither equipped nor prepared to envisage the rest of mankind as anything but secondary, marginal and essentially problematic. The other is that there exists

not one such culture but many, and that they coexist in effective relationships without the possibility of clearing by resort to handy common denominators. Ethnocentrism on the one hand and the requirement of live-and-let-live on the other are both equally indispensable to the survival of each and all: all through each and each through all. The field of tension delineates itself without any lack of clarity.

The real question is how not to envisage it as a dilemma, as we Westerners are inclined to do at a first blush, but rather how to work it as a creative challenge, as we are accustomed to do without too much talk about it.

Back to the established development paradigm. Considered against the background just sketched, its time-and-place conditionedness and its consequent obsolescence are an embarrassment, from which it is nonetheless hard to become disentangled, for lack of an appropriate successor paradigm. Criticism levelled at in the interval seems more and more to concentrate on the realization that, claimed to be 'general', it is far from being 'culture-free'. With the erosion of the model comes that of the expert status, and this is certainly more than just a matter of paternalistic attitudes and shirking responsibility for outcomes of measures recommended. Once more world view and life-style prove to be closely interwoven.

Culture and Development as a Third-World Concern

First a disclaimer to prevent misunderstandings about this subtitle. The intent here is to regard the matter of culture and development as it is likely to feature in a Third-World context. This is decidedly not the same as an attempt to present the Third-World approach to it (assuming there exists such a thing: there may be several approaches). That is not a job this writer could undertake.

On the part of the Third World the colonial interlude is, and will remain for some time to come, a topic of vivid historical debate directly pertinent to the understanding of the present and of future prospects. There is bound to be an amount of 'writing history backwards' and some overload of attributed mythical significances. There are also bound to be some skeletons people will want to keep in the cupboard. Amongst them is the issue of *colonisabilité* and the question who, in fact, underwent, and responded to, the colonial impact, whether cultural or otherwise: in which way and to what extent.

Keeping all this in mind, currently emerging concern with the non-economic properties of development conveys a sense of *déjà vu*. Or if not that, then of a delayed-action fuse. It seems to hark back, across a longish time interval during which the cultural concern must have been dormant, to what, to the colonizers,

must have been the shift from high to 'enlightened' colonialism, and, to those colonized, the emergence of the liberation urge styled – for no good reason yet understandably – nationalism. In those days resurgence – now labelled self-reliance –, regardless of its political and subsequently economic overtones, was comprehensively socio-cultural, including social-psychological.

Had it not been this way intrinsically, it should yet have had to be presented in this manner, for both strategic and tactical reasons. Given a major cultural thrust, nationalism was bound to hit the soft underbelly of colonial rule. I refer to the ambiguity discussed in the previous subsection. The *mission civilisatrice* has never been a single-minded commitment, accompanied as it was by the countervailing search for the golden fleece – in oriental wisdom, wealth or whatever. Had Edward Said been ready to recognize this and account for it, his *Orientalism* could easily have become more than the belated political pamphlet it is.²¹ If, in the transition from high to 'enlightened' (= late) colonialism, the West has lost its nerve, it is on this account.

One face of the coin, namely the respect for alien cultures, was bound to be a godsend to nationalists of all feathers. As argued, it was one of those values preached but not practiced, and readily available to be turned around for use as invincible weapons against domination.

In becoming articulated in the mounting confrontation with the colonizers, the colonial liberation movement everywhere seems to have become politicized at the expense of its cultural thrust. This is curious to say the least, since the colonizers, commercial-political enough during early colonialism, had tended to assume a more administrative, covertly political mien during high colonialism. The reversal to an outright political pattern of conduct, in search of a common denominator in terms of which to enact the upcoming confrontation, is a matter worthy of more attention than it appears to have received. Overshadowed by politics, the cultural thrust seems to have dissipated into incidental cultural issues of one kind or another. Sometimes these did in fact play into the Western economistic and atrophying conception of culture. There have, for example, been experiments with schools that steered a middle course between 'modern' and 'nativistic'. At other times they played for contrast rather than affinity. Religious issues are the main case in point. Even if disguised, in pertinent dispute, as matters ideological, their comprehensive-cultural significance could hardly be ignored.

Independence, in bringing to power a category of fairly westernized technocrat-politicians, has not immediately affected this state of affairs. The established development paradigm was adopted and applied in the tacit

assumption, first, that it was an administrative rather than a political matter, and, secondly, that being 'general' and therefore culture-free, it was socio-culturally neutral. The circumstance that, this time around, it was intellectual and not constitutional-political authority deciding upon policies, may have rendered the matter palatable to the alert part of the public.

Now that second thoughts about the practice of the established development paradigm emerge and need terms in which to become articulated, resort is had to social and cultural considerations. The initial meaning of these terms is no doubt negative: non-economic. Their positive meaning remains by and large to be spelled out. This burden does not necessarily fall upon those identified with the achievement of independence and the adoption of the development paradigm.

The nationalists of the first hour, with their explicit and quite particular cultural outlook, confused as it may have been (and we shall turn to this presently), are retired or dead. The economic technocrats who have gradually had to take over from them are out of their depth in matters socio-cultural; but they surely know that the Western technocrats with whom they negotiate all the time are equally out of their depth in this regard. There seems to be an opening, then, for some others to try their hand. There is no entrance exam with set requirements. A free-for-all?

It is time to take a closer look at the framework within which these developments occur. Recall that the transition from high to late colonialism is marked by a second actor joining the hitherto sole actor on the scene: whether shadow, offspring or counterpart does not really matter. Inasmuch as his appearance was in response to changes in the colonizer's role, he had to cast himself in a countervailing role. Hence, once more, inherent ambiguity. Nationalism as the philosophy of colonial liberation movements is and remains fascinated by the colonizers (including past colonizers), both in wanting to eliminate them and in wanting, for this very purpose, to emulate them. In this connection decolonization is often seen, as suggested before, as a simple move away from domination by foreigners towards resurgence as self-assertion, or, if you prefer, self-reliance. This suggests that Western imposition comes to a halt and that truly autochthonous, and as such appropriate, patterns flourish unimpeded. This is the kind of utopianism which befits the mood of nationalist propaganda during the liberation struggle, and which proves a liability once independence is formally attained. The world, including the former colonizers, will not go away - indeed it cannot. Constitutional independence is not just a matter of lowering one flag and hoisting another. To be for real, it has to

come with United Nations membership. It connotes a change of framework for modified-yet-ongoing ties rather than a mere severing of bonds. Under these conditions colonial ambiguity is simply succeeded by post-colonial ambiguity *vis-à-vis* the outsider, whether former colonizer or not.

The same or parallel ambiguities recur internally. The power-and-policy void left by the departing colonizers has to be filled instantly. The nationalist leadership, in filling the seats of power, avails itself of the development paradigm, ready and waiting as it is said to be, for the purpose. If this could raise questions one way or another, those are for later. And 'later' is now, the 1980s.

Underneath the ambiguous response to the development paradigm, which, historically, seems to shape up as a see-saw from more or less automatic acceptance to as yet insufficiently articulate qualms, further ambiguities are hidden. Nationalism in the basic sense of revitalization is bound to induce, amongst those having achieved national liberation, divergence or indeed polarization – on three counts. First it continues to polarize those fascinated by the West: will emulation serve towards interaction under conditions of affinity or towards elimination and rejection? Next it polarizes those more and those less affected by the Western impact. If the former have become convinced nationalists, the latter may have acquired little more than a sense of dissatisfaction by colonial conditions and some utopian longing. Once independence is achieved, the two can but part ways. Thirdly it divides those searching for a firm anchorage for the purpose of regaining and re-asserting their individual and collective identity, as a stepping-stone towards self-realization and self-vindication. Must there be a return to the purity of pre-colonial conditions, – and can there be? Or should one refer to those elements under colonialism which triggered the liberation impulse – and could one? Or, third possibility, should one simply take it as from the present? Nor is this all. Between the internal and external dimensions, yet another ambiguity may emerge, namely that between – in G. von Grunebaum's terms²² – orthogenic and heterogenic classicism: if one needs a model to rely on, will it be taken from one's own orbit or from a significant outside reality?

All these fissures are at once developmental and cultural. They are cultural in two senses. They refer to the way people will regard, and deal with, their own civilization. At the same time they reflect what that civilization is going through.

So long as development expertise and development work remained in line with the established development paradigm, these fissures did not acquire critical significance. But as negotiations, increasingly constrained within that frame, became subject, over time, to mounting frustration – what with aid acting

as an indestructible umbilical cord –, argument gave way to brinkmanship, and self-reliance became the password. Is self-reliance economic, political or cultural – or a bit of all? Or is there, perhaps, a tacit consensus to the effect that little is to be gained by raising, let alone trying to answer, such questions? Still, pending the answer, ambiguity remains.

In fact it sharpens all the time. For the sake of decolonization an unbroken thread runs, meandering, through recent world history. Violent shake-ups have become accepted as the proper means: Iraq, the Belgian Congo, Cuba, Algeria, Iran and so many other cases. A major instrument is Jacobinic terror, unleashed and in search of legitimacy and a workable *modus operandi*. All the while Third-World students, politicians and business people flock to the West – regardless whether damned capitalist or horrible communist – by the thousands, in search if not of refuge then of its spiritual and material riches, as the true means towards their self-realization. Either way the significance of culture contrast, not to say conflict, is manifest; yet neither way it is effectively dealt with. The ambiguity simply returns in each horn of the dilemma.

Symptoms abound. There is, for one, culture shock and cultural alienation, a favourite topic of the more sensitive intellectuals. Many of them prefer to point out its dark face, of being a quandary, rather than its bright one, of offering new opportunity. There is, more important still for present purposes, the worry that the development paradigm does not work, or at least does not work miracles. Here again the response is ambiguous. Either one learns to live with it, indeed make the best of it one way or another – if need be at the peril of one's skin, e.g. that of a top politician. Or one allows oneself to be caught between the horns of yet another ambiguity, already alluded to, namely that between either inconsiderately pursuing the trodden path or jumping onto any bandwagon that happens to come by – such as the new concern about culture and development, for example.

There are two graver problems, to neither of which a ready answer exists. One is that in the ongoing fascination with the West, ambiguously articulated as it remains, those in the Third World appear quite unprepared to account for culture change in the West and concomitant change of the stance of the West in the world. The 'West' to which they continue to respond in the manner of the emulation/elimination dilemma is virtually a matter of the past. The West as it is now trying to reconceive and reshape itself is not a proposition that can be appropriately responded to in the manner of emulation-and/or-elimination. There is a need to find a newer and more appropriate response. It may not be readily available, but that is not the problem. The problem is that the search for it is not yet on.

The other problem, equally grave, is that, probably due to the same lingering fascination with the West, there is no evidence of the effective recognition of the significance of intercultural interaction in other directions than the West. One of the main reasons why the North-South dialogue, piously recommended for political and economic purposes, remains embryonic and risks proving abortive may well be that its cultural dimension is as yet not taken seriously.

Summing up, the Third-World aspect of the issue of culture and development differs from the Western one in quite significant respects. The established economistic development paradigm happens to be in trouble in the Third World as in the West, and the difficulties coincide in time – not too surprisingly; but what makes it so on each side is not the same. The economistic tenor is not at home anywhere in the Third World. (As remarked before, it is this negative aspect that is the one common feature of all regions making up the Third World as a definitional rather than a living entity.) Economism is imported and adopted, first in enlightened colonial policies and then, more assiduously, with development policies. This has been done with remarkably little concern about adaptation; and what is even more curious, less concern in the development phase than in the enlightened-colonial phase. The paradigm is upheld, in applying it, by the power-wielding elite – a cultural minority in their very expertise – whose rapport to the grass-roots level is, on this very account, proving increasingly tenuous. Under the circumstances, development has tended to acquire, throughout the Third World, political-bureaucratic overtones somewhat out of proportion to the straightforward application of the economistic blueprints. For all practical purposes this is a matter of historical coincidence. But nothing will prevent that these overgrowths will hark back to, and link up with, conceptions of power and patterns of power-wielding – colonial or pre-colonial – at home in the area concerned. In this respect at least rulers and ruled will have little difficulty operating on the same wavelength. Initially this modification has proven to enhance the viability of the established development paradigm as practiced on the spot. But in the longer run it is increasingly proving unable to take the sting of the essential 'alien-ness' of the ideas underneath economism which, after all, inform the paradigm.

This is the backdrop against which the demand for development as self-assertion re-emerges, and the cultural or socio-cultural thread of budding nationalism seems to be resumed. The onset is by and large negative: there is a wish to move away, conceptually, from the economico-politico-bureaucratic practice of development and the dissatisfaction it breeds, and by implication from the economistic vision underneath, which lacks affinity to the traditional

and somehow prevailing world views and life-styles of the several areas of the Third World.

Self-assertion, in this context, plays the same crucial role as does expansiveness in the West. It is the vital expression of a world view *cum* life-style which, under present circumstances, is of acute concern to those living them.

Just as in respect of Western expansiveness the salient issue is about the need of built-in constraints preventing it from turning out obnoxious to relevant others, so there is, in the case of self-assertion, an emergent issue which refers to latitude. The danger here is not that it would end up obnoxious to the neighbours, but that in self-entrenchment – whether placid navel staring or violent quasi-orthodoxy – it might end up abortive: the preoccupation of Naipaul and many others. There exist, notably in the several variants of classicism referred to in passing, seeds of self-destruction which tend to elude those concerned.

This subsection remains open-ended in that it must beg, yet cannot answer, the question concerning the meaning of culture, the way it appears in the context of a Third-World approach to the matter of culture's significance for development. Two caveats demand instant attention. First, with economism not present as a parameter, there is no reason to expect a meaning of culture as narrow and as marginal-problematic as it has become in the modern and post-modern West. Second, with the notion 'Third World' having little substance beyond negative definition in economic terms, there is every reason to stop discussing the matter in terms of a Third-World frame of reference: that is simply not realistic. Instead one must specify the culture area to which reference is made, and then try to probe deeper. This kind of exercise is beyond the present scope, and, again, by and large beyond this writer's competence. All that can be said about it here is that in all probability, recognition of a given culture context as a valid frame of reference in which to consider and operate development will not stop at a discussion of modalities and tactics. It is bound to penetrate to the level where, first, the question as to the perception – if you like, definition – of development is asked, and then that about development goals and pertinent strategy.

Both the two warnings and the more positive prospect suggested here sound like forcing so many open doors. I should not have indulged in stating the obvious, were it not that there is evidence – indeed discouragingly much of it – in the recent spate of writings about the subject which proves that what seems self-evident here is not equally self-evident to everybody else.²³

III.

Who Conducts the Debate about Culture and Development?

Having reviewed the somewhat murky background, on each side, from which the current interest in Culture and Development seems to emerge, it is worth noting between whom the pertinent debate is being conducted, and in which vein. As often happens when new fads arise, this is hardly a debate in the sense that one clearly argued viewpoint confronts another. It is rather a matter of certain people, regarding themselves as convinced, not to say converted, trying to persuade others, as yet unconvinced or unconverted, to see the light. The recognition of the significance of culture for development is not necessarily at stake in any articulate manner. Few would be boorish enough to deny it categorically.

The upshot, then, is that we hear certain spokesmen for an allegedly new cause take the floor and belabour an uncontested point, for the benefit of an audience either indifferent or sympathetic. It matters little, for all practical purposes, whether those playing the spokesmen's role identify with the West or with the Third World: both will be westernized and both will champion what they see as the best interests of the Third World (always categorically) as against the terrible culture imperialism of the West. They reckon, however, that as long as they sing in close harmony their power of conviction will be all the better, and this is perhaps why there is little appetite for undue detail or precision. There is, then, in all this a grain of *doncichoterie* which will, depending upon one's gut reaction, appear either endearing or reckless.

What is perhaps more intriguing is that the twice-born developmentalists advocating the cause of culture, in engaging upon their crusade, seem to have missed out, for the time being, at least two categories of interlocutors who could appear rather more promising than the typical broadcast-audience they appear to have chosen as their prime target. I have in mind two kinds of persons having, the one, a professional affinity, and the other, a visceral identification, with culture: not in any vague categorical sense, but with culture as a quite specific, lived and living, reality. It is, after all, culture in this specific sense, rather than culture in any 'general' textbook sense, one should have in mind when reflecting upon the nexus of Culture and Development. The former kind of people are the anthropologists – outsiders looking in; the latter kind are all those active culture bearers somehow involved in the maintenance or innovation of aspects or elements of their own civilization: insiders naturally involved. Both

kinds will reflect in addition to either observing or acting, but their styles of reflection are bound to differ.

As regards the anthropologists (to whom one could, for good measure, add people like orientalists), the developmentalists have tended to remain quite aloof, notwithstanding various significant attempts, on the anthropologists' part, to offer contributions.²⁴ Short of ignoring them, developmentalists have tended to go through the motions of seeking a niche, within their standard frame of operations, where the anthropologist – and, for that matter, the sociologist and a few others – could fit harmlessly, i.e. inconsequentially, or alternatively they have persevered in the expansive-economistic pursuit of social indicators, largely under their own steam.

The matter of developmentalists versus active culture bearers²⁵ offers the opportunity to resume a loose end left in the previous subsection. This may be done by referring to the divergences arising between those looking for a muster to guide their steps, whether derived from outside or from inside their own cultural orbit, and, if inside whether identified in pre-colonial, colonial, or post-colonial days.

IV.

The Significance of the New Concern as a Reorientation

The emerging concern with Culture and Development would be justified, regardless of the way the pertinent discourse is conducted, provided it were (1) a genuine *aha!-Erlebnis* – a significant realization newly dawning upon experienced and open minds – and (2) clear as regards its meaning and implications. Neither of these conditions is fully met.

There have always been those warning the economistic developmentalists that their blithe disregard of matters socio-cultural was sooner or later going to interfere with their best efforts. The response they got was either the cold shoulder or, just mentioned, pathetic efforts to overstrain economic techniques.²⁶

As regards the second requirement, it is obviously not good enough to preach respect for indigenous civilizations, or to blame the failure of particular economically-inspired developmental measures on the lack of such respect.²⁷ What matters most, in both regards, is that given the way culture is now singled out as a key consideration in connection with

development, one has to do, not with a fresh realization but rather with an afterthought – and one that remains, even now, to be spelt out.

Let us once more separate a Western from a Third-World perspective in trying to sort out what is actually happening where the sudden developmental concern with culture surfaces.

Western concern about the disappointments of development work has, not for the first time, expressed itself in what purported to be a shift of focus yet amounted to rather less than that. Economic policies were recognized to have non-economic, perhaps 'social', preconditions and/or after-effects – the one equally problematic as the other. The first attempt to cope with them has invariably been to make them go away by including more 'non-economic' variables into economic models. Only when this did not work was there felt to be occasion for a more direct probe – for which, however, the ways and means did not seem readily available. Either way the point of departure, and concomitantly the angle of approach, was invariably economic. Education, health, housing and the rest are conceived and planned in terms economic first and foremost. Few have been effectively concerned by the patent fact that such a conception of things social could but misrepresent them: they were marginalized and rendered problematic in advance, on behalf of the primacy of things economic.

At any rate there has been, nominally at least, a move – regression or flight forward? – from economic to social concerns. This move once having been made, a subsequent move proved soon inevitable: from social to cultural. Things social, it soon transpired, derive their true nature, indeed their specificity – i.e. their stubbornness to those trying to deal with them – from culture. Culture is the ulterior framework, somehow immovable and tenacious. (This realization could, and perhaps should, have raised the question whether, if cultural determines social, it will not eventually also determine economic; and if so, what is the matter with the category 'economic' relied upon by the developmentalist. But clearly the established paradigm has, in its assumed generality, provided adequate immunity, to those who might face this issue, from such hazards.)

It is worth noting, in parenthesis, that in the connection just cited, the word 'culture' was in fact rarely used. For once the sociologists have been helpful in adopting a decidedly less daunting concept, or rather set of concepts, namely 'values and attitudes'. The way they were wont to localize these in their models of hierarchical grand theory turned out to facilitate, in a most welcome if perhaps entirely unforeseen manner, the

conceptual regression just described, from economic to social to cultural. With the disconcerting advantage of hindsight, one must now add the recognition that, in substituting for 'culture', the 'values and attitudes' nexus is vitiated in two important ways. First its appearance of generality, not to say universality, risks camouflaging the crux of the matter, namely cultural specificity. Values-and-attitudes do not come in random congeries: they are optimally coherent constituents of meaningful configurations. Second, if resorted to in an attempt to iron out some of the wrinkles hampering the smooth implementation of economic policies, values-and-attitudes are bound to suffer the same marginalization, and consequent misrepresentation as problematic subject-matter, as did the social realm before.

For the time being these problems remain foreseeable rather than proving acute. The reason is that those invoking the significance of things cultural for development appear quite hesitant to forge ahead and undertake the task they have implicitly set for themselves. As yet there is remarkably scant evidence of a systematic effort to spell out the cultural parameter of self-reliance. Instead many will suffice, as already noted, by either preaching respect for autochthonous civilizations categorically - as if this were the 1880s rather than the 1980s - or on the other hand indulging in some incidental nit-picking. The common feature of the unspecific and the overly specific *pis-aller* is that they are ineffectual, if not eventually counter-productive. So long as this kind of sufficing will remain fashionable, there is no real hope for an effective reconsideration of the established development paradigm. By the same token the emergent concern with Culture and Development may soon prove a passing fad. It is built upon shifting sands.

Third-World concern with Culture and Development relates back to the liberation urge of late colonial days. We resume and pursue again what was developed before. The urge to reassert the identity - collective and perhaps individual too - of those colonized was a crucial part of it. Due to its power implications and concomitantly political manifestation, nationalism has tended to be mistaken, not just by the colonizers, for a political matter first and foremost. But it takes little reflection, or, for that matter, little study of early nationalistic source materials, to realize that the political mean is in fact the tip of a cultural iceberg. The ambiguous reactions, back and forth, which we have discussed before would be utterly incomprehensible, indeed out of order, had the issue been merely

and narrowly political. Nationalism as revitalization is a cultural phenomenon first and foremost: it takes on a political hue where and when it runs into power constraints: and this is soon and often. (Much the same reasoning, we recall, applies to colonial expansiveness in its prime, and to its economic-political overtones.)

To cultural nationalism, the ambiguous response to the would-be dominant alien civilization of the colonizer can never be more than one face of yet another, underlying ambiguity. Its other face is what we have recently learned to call the quest of roots. This resembles the quest of the golden fleece in important ways, for example in that the *locus*, the moment, and the nature of the roots may well prove elusive. (Here we pick up the loose end left dangling in the final paragraph of section III.)

First off, the elimination-emulation ambiguity returns in a rather more acutely dilemmatic form, as rejection versus adoption (invariably *cum* adaptation). However, the alternatives are not as drastically apart as they may first seem. Both take a hue of classicism, the pious observance of the classical paradigm recognized to apply. One wants to retrieve one's roots so as to become more firmly grounded, more true to oneself. Still classicism comes in two variants: orthogenic and heterogenic – and both can be presented as fully legitimate. The dilemma is real, particularly in that both options can be cogently and convincingly argued.

If heterogenic classicism characterizes Westernizers as moderate and rabid, the orthogenic variant is a more complex proposition. This is the second consideration. Crudely put, there are at least three competing options.

In searching for a solid sheet anchor for the move towards cultural self-identification and self-realization, one may take recourse to salient elements of the phase of late-colonialism, during which nationalistic revitalization – or, if you like, cultural resurgence (not seldom a beatific name for emergence) – took impetus and shape.

Those to whom this phase is too close to the peaking Western impact to allow for a pure perception of self, may prefer to refer back to the preceding phase. High colonialism is the time of inception, or at least conception, of the nationalistic revitalization urge: the period during which, for example, the eventual shape of the 'state-nation' concerned was, in many cases, somehow determined. Of course that memory is, once again, tainted by painful episodes and features.

Thus many are inclined to look even further back, to the assumedly

pristine purity of autochthonous civilization in pre-colonial days, unaffected by any corruptive Western impact. Unfortunately even that remote retrospect is not free from difficulties, of which colonizability may well be the least.

There are more teasing questions. Does one know enough about the civilization of those halcyon days to draw a reasonably honest picture of it, to stand model for the life-style of the newly independent state-nation? If so, is this model effectively imitable, albeit with the benefit of a *mutatis mutandis* clause, under the circumstances of today and, not to forget, tomorrow? Work is under way, here and there, addressing the first question - at the peril, already mentioned, of writing history backwards. Whether it has proceeded far enough to allow the second question to be addressed appears uncertain. More is needed, to that purpose, than a reasonably strong base of facts. There are those who will not be bothered by such qualms. They will brazenly offer an affirmative answer to both questions: no doubt out of conviction in the sense of faith rather than out of conviction in the sense of insight systematically built. They are the representatives and champions of orthogenic classicism in its extreme and most obdurate form. Their name is 'fundamentalists'.

Placed alongside heterogenic classicism, the three variants of orthogenic classicism could be seen to result in something like a typology of attitudes for the post-colonial mind to adopt. Its rigour is hazy, though. The three phases here distinguished are handy ideal-typic, classificatory devices for purposes of simplification on behalf of tender minds; they could never obfuscate the flow of change-in-continuity into which the analyst has introduced them. Likewise the affinities, already noted, between the orthogenic and heterogenic variants of classicism take their effect. In other words the resulting typological grid is fuzzy.

The matter is further complicated by the fact that on issues like these, people will rarely be of one mind. The heterogenic classicist has no reason to shun orthogenic-classicistic arguments that could bolster his position, and so forth. Those idealizing the pristine pre-colonial past do so with regard to their actual living conditions.

The net effect is that what at a first blush might seem to amount to a dizzying *embarras du choix* will, as often as not, boil down to incidental and occasional polarizations. The matter has been alluded to twice before. A salient one is that between Westernizing modernizers, including developmentalists relying on the established development paradigm, and fundamentalists.

In all this it is to be remembered that any shift away from second-hand economism to somehow more socio-cultural concerns is bound to remain accompanied by the enduring overgrowth of political and bureaucratic power which, in the Third World everywhere, has put its imprint on the practice of the development paradigm hitherto. The powers that be are invariably requiring a supportive nation, complete with a homogeneous national culture, amenable and reasonably responsive to government initiatives and directives. Governments, even when expressly relying on 'culture' in pursuit of what to them is development, have a quite noticeable tendency to run scared of cultural expressions of any kind that, by not having their explicit or implicit *imprimatur*, are not demonstrably in line with official thinking. Especially he who invokes 'culture' is ever mindful of the hazards of subversion. The ill-famed Unesco debate on the media has brought the East Bloc and a number of Third-World governments together for no better reason than this gut fear of what is in the last resort creativity.

This brings us back more directly to the matter of Culture and Development. In the perspective of nationalism as a revitalization philosophy, the development urge features as the substitute for, and continuation of, the liberation urge, as from the moment of 'blossoms in the dust'²⁸ - the aftermath of the non-event called transfer of sovereignty. Its essentially cultural nature is obfuscated, not to say emasculated, by the tacit consensual adoption (by outgoing and incoming élites jointly) of 'modern' statehood and, as were it a necessary concomitant thereto, the development paradigm - allegedly general yet distinctly modern-Western. Where economism has a field-day, autochthonous civilization is in disregard, perhaps disrepute.

Sooner or later the cultural heart of the matter is bound to resurge into public view, and then, almost inevitably, as a problematic issue. The Third-World developmentalist arrives at it, not to his joy, and the demand for self-reliance notwithstanding, in much the same way as the Western expert: very much the wrong way. As a result he suffers from two drawbacks. His realization of the significance of culture for development will, at best, reveal his incompetence to deal with it. Besides it deprives him of the possibility to dialogue with those who should, at this moment of his dire need, have proven his helpful interlocutors: those actively involved in particular aspects or elements of their, and his, culture. Between him and the fundamentalists yawns a deep rift, as mentioned. And between him

and those who seek modernization in continuity without undue insulation for the world and the West as part thereof, no flash of recognition seems to occur, perhaps because each is groping rather than knowing his way, unable to see the other as a fellow traveller.

In the Third-World case as in the Western one, the concern with Culture and Development is built upon shifting sands. For the moment it is at best a new departure.

Between Afterthought and Primordial Consideration

Is my caustic welcome for the new fad of Culture and Development an attempt at one-upmanship? Am I paving the way for a claim to the effect that, far from being a somewhat embarrassing afterthought, this concern should have been a primary consideration all along, and instantly be recognized as such, however belatedly, now that the propitious moment has finally arrived?

A tempting prospect indeed, and one that, considered in definitional terms pure and simple, may well seem unassailable. It could shape up as the claim that for epiphenomena such as development, however crucial they will appear superficially, culture is and remains the frame of reference, both cognitively and operationally. Cognitively in that the very conception of development, rather than being categorical and 'general' in the sense of being valid anywhere at any time, is fully and thoroughly culture-conditioned, and accordingly entirely specific. In the context of any given civilization one must begin by asking what meaning the term 'development' may have, if any. Operationally in that no development goals are achievable (or, for that matter, effectively conceivable to those concerned), and no development effort stands a chance of success that is not at least compatible with the culture context in which they do, or are meant to, occur. Just take it from here, and reconsider development wherever in the Third World you may happen to be.

I do not accept this prospect, even though I am convinced that as a challenge to the established economic development paradigm and its adherents it is proper and valid. However, it is an appropriateness predicated on the very nature of the target of the challenge, and it is bought at the price of overstatement.

For any other purpose this is an illusory prospect, both in view of its consequences and on account of its premises.

The ultimate consequence is Khomeini's dream - and not his alone:

this is culture as a normative system, complete with its privileged interpreter, rendered effective as a bed of Procrustes; it checks, and if desired 'corrects', people's every move and, for that matter, thought. Development, to this vision, is the return to ever stricter observance of the timeless yet omni-relevant norm literalistically applied.

Fortunately this consequence, along with the conception from which it is drawn, stands condemned by its very premises. Culture, to the extent one cannot really identify it with a hard-and-fast set of norms deemed to have absolute validity, is not a readily accessible, straightforward reference system.

Besides culture is neither stable, nor is it a lone monad in the, or its, universe. It is constantly changing, though now more than less perceptibly, and variably so according to who perceives and interprets the change. It exists, increasingly in our present One World, in interaction with other civilizations, the post-modern Western one (including residues of its modern predecessor variant) more or less conspicuously amongst them.

An understanding of culture in the vein of Khomeini and similar culture anti-heroes is at fault, empirically speaking, in wilfully defining culture as being no more than the literalist observance and upholding of a rigid, primary frame of reference within which the world, i.e. any culture universe, must move: an unchanging norm for any events; occurrences and efforts. In saying this, does one really have to invoke Heraclitus?

The upshot, then, is clear. The established development paradigm, precisely in being economic, is not in the least culture-free. Yet to the extent it is not recognized as the exponent of one culture, it lends itself to application beyond its proper culture orbit in total disregard of the cultures whose orbits it is thus invading. To say that this is colonialism does not help to understand what is happening: less so since colonialism presupposes colonizability.

What matters is which effect is achieved, and how. Under colonialism and its sequel, developmentalism, there is imposition, first as a tacit expectation and then as an actual occurrence up to a point. Under post-colonialism, which does not really set in until the middle 1970s, the pendulum swings towards the opposite extreme, with polarization as its initial effect: economic, exposed as the exponent of an alien civilization, is matched by an equally strong yet differently focussed claim to be

possessed of what is, in effect, absolute truth. Self-reliance as culminating in Khomeini.

Neither position gives much hope for the future. A more hopeful prospect could be envisaged if the effect were to steer a middle course between imposition and polarization, by proving interactive. Far from being inconceivable, this effect could be achieved by means of recognition of, and accounting for, the cultural context at play on each side. This, after all, is the proper answer to the naive and/or ruthless ethnocentrism that underpins both imposition and polarization.²⁹

This takes us back to implications once more. Confronting those operating the economic development paradigm with the assertion of cultural specificity on the spot can amount to a caveat of critical significance. But it cannot extend into construing a conflict between pure autochthonous culture unduly disregarded as against expansive modern-Western economism trying to overwhelm it. This kind of construct would, of course, be grist to the mill of those, notably in the West today, who are unable or unwilling to envisage reality otherwise than in terms of conflict and who, to this purpose, do not shy away from setting up an occasional scarecrow - or windmill, if you prefer - to render the occurrence of conflict possible and that which is supposed to be at stake in it identifiable. All this is not seldom in suggested analogy meant to be conducive to real conflict they are bent upon fostering elsewhere - usually at home. Things are difficult enough without prompting by such minds.

Surely such conflict is another implication to avoid. This is quite possible, given the realizations just mentioned. The world today is unstable and holds no watertight compartments. What matters is to render interaction workable, i.e. mutually beneficial.

For present purposes all this means, once again, that one is to envisage culture, any culture, as changing and interacting with other cultures. What is more, the state of affairs thus envisaged is inherently part of the more general condition described as development, or, if you like, the need of it. What has been missing thus far, to a large extent, is the awareness of the connection between the two. It is the resulting myopic view that has led to undue preponderance, indeed unwarranted monopoly, for developmentalism along the lines of the established economic paradigm.

The conclusion, then, amounts to stating the obvious - or rather, what should have been obvious but clearly was not. Between culture and

development there exists a connection that is at once vital and highly significant for any dealings with development, whether intellectual or operational. This connection does not shape up in the manner that culture deserves consideration in development work by way of a somewhat embarrassing afterthought. Neither does it come to the fore, by revenge, in the manner of culture having to be recognized, all of a sudden, as a firm checklist of dos and don'ts. There must be a better way.

V.

Development Work as a Confluence

We have before us a double realization. One is that the economistic world view and life-style are on the wane in the West and subject to mounting diffidence in the Third World. This pulls the prop from underneath the economistic development paradigm. The claim that it is indispensable is a punctured balloon.

The other realization is that the expansive application of economics, as prompted by economism, is in trouble on two counts. It is increasingly said to get bogged down, in a manner not unlike diminishing returns. It turns out to have a distorting effect upon non-economic phenomena expansively embraced.

There is one evident conclusion that need not concern us here, beyond mentioning it. This state of affairs calls for an effort to step up the reconsideration, hesitantly going on here and there, of the nature, possibilities and vocation of economics as the self-styled lead discipline of the social sciences.

The other conclusion is directly in line with present concern, and perhaps more important than the first for other reasons as well. There is a call for development-oriented dealings with matters social and cultural in a perspective not dominated by economism. The bag of tools required for this purpose may not immediately be in perfect working order, but there is no cause to claim it is lacking. What is needed is a clear challenge, for those concerned (and competent) to respond to in what is to them the appropriate manner. In response to this challenge as they discern it, those competent in the social or cultural dimensions of the matter of development *in a given specific situation* should absolve their duties as they see them, not as economism demands they should. Initially at least, they will need to work according to arrangements sheltering them from the guide-

lines of economics and the economists, and more important but more difficult, from the pervasive impact of economism.

Thus generally phrased, this second conclusion, *horribile dictu*, in the injunctive mode, sounds like another academic's day-dream. We shall have to be more practical about it if this conclusion is to be credible.

Before we can do so, however, a parenthesis must be opened to deal with an intervening question. Memories are short. To those with longer memories the conclusion just drawn in the form of a suggestion may sound like putting the clock back. When development studies were young, some thirty years ago, interdisciplinarity was a recognized and much-discussed proposition. Soon degraded to the status of a pious wish, it has gradually sunk into oblivion. Is resuscitating it the proper answer to the present quandary of development?

I submit that it may well be. This is not a case of returning to square one. The present situation differs from that of thirty years ago in at least three important respects.

First the dominance of the economistic outlook in the West is waning (though you would not always say so when listening to economists and politicians discussing public affairs), with inevitable consequences for the credibility of its product, the established development paradigm. These are, besides, reinforced by Third-World concerns of self-reliance. In this light there is every reason for social and cultural approaches to be pursued, as just proposed, in terms optimally independent of economism.

Second the abstract generality inherent in economism ethnocentrically pursued (which, by the way, also informs the very concept 'Third World') is bound to make room for considerations of specificity and relevance. In this regard, ongoing reorientation has made more headway so far than in respect of the first point. Still the consequences remain by and large to be drawn.

Third a better-balanced division of labour, aimed at cumulative result, between the economic, social and cultural approaches requires consideration both of the nature and role of each, and of the ways in which they can be combined, and the purposes for which.

Returning now to the substance of the multi-aspect approach envisaged, the matter has two dimensions, namely policy making and, on the other hand, teaching and research. We shall briefly consider each in this order.

Imagine three trains of thought and action, each marked by a particular focus and a concomitant working style, concerning themselves with distinct aspects of reality – in this case, of a given instance of reality recognized, by all three, to be marked by development or, rather, the need of it. This could easily lead to worlds apart, as in fact it mostly does. Ministries of economics, of social affairs and of culture will readily indulge in mutual entrenchment such that not even the most powerful super-ministry of coordination can do much about it. What is needed is to create natural confluences, which moreover must be effectively workable. A first move in the proper direction would be to think of separate planning agencies operating side by side – say, an economic, a social and a cultural one. (Although our concern here is with culture and, more or less a *contrario*, with economics, it would of course be senseless to ignore the social dimension.) But, then again, if each of these three were to provide inputs, on its own terms, into the total development policy, the worst confusion is to be feared. Shifting our metaphors somewhat impulsively, a mere confluence is not good enough. The need is for an efficient turntable, where inputs from various sides can be co-ordinated and indeed integrated.

For this more precise purpose one may then decide to discern, in mutual accord between the three sides, a set of specific policy areas, in such a way that inputs refer to one of these at a time. Instead of thinking of ministries or planning offices, one begins to envisage task forces, not necessarily *ad hoc*. Examples of such policy areas could be socialization and education; health and population; shelter; environment and resources; technology, crafts and industry; infrastructure and communications; food and energy; the man-land relationship; security; and national complexity (including socio-economic stratification and ethnic, linguistic, religious, etc. diffraction). It will be helpful to assign co-ordination and integration, within each policy area and as between them, to special clearing houses catalyzing and facilitating the discourse between the contributing streams. This is where certain specialisms might find use that could not identify immediately with one of the three streams, for example the educationists in the technical sense for the policy area of education. However, sticking to the example of education it is of the essence that first off, the economic, the social and the cultural perspectives have each their full say. A comparable role should, as regards infrastructure, go to the engineers.

Translating a design like this into terms of administrative bodies and competences is a matter that need not necessarily be dealt with within the present framework – beyond saying, that is, that if it would require some more or less drastic redesigning, it may well prove a blessing in disguise. After all the more or less administrative framework just envisaged will not make sense unless the substantive rethinking – which, in presupposing it, it anticipates and should stimulate – is duly forthcoming.

The teacher's task that follows from the argument proposed here can be described as sensitizing future development workers to the significance of their people's culture or cultures for its development, and enabling them to account for this significance in first studying and eventually promoting development. Unfortunately this mouthful does not really say very much.

A little probing should help to clarify the matter. Assume the task just proposed to be part of a redesigned curriculum. Then what about the whole into which it should fit? Could that be left to remain 'business as usual'? Not really: it would have to be attuned, one way or another, to the new element, because this implies an overall vision which should inform the total curriculum. If this sounds like a serious aggravation of the redesigning task to be undertaken, there is cause for satisfaction. It conveys the message that for once, the introduction of a new concern is not just a matter of tinkering on the margin. It pertains to the overall conception of the curriculum and the underlying vision informing it.

What matters now is to spell out this general realization into more practical terms. This is obviously not a one-person job, nor could it fit within the present scope. All that can be offered is a few pointers at what is bound to remain an uncomfortably general level. Although I am writing this in one European development studies centre – which inevitably is my immediate frame of reference in thinking about matters educational, rather than the North American universities where I have taught – I intend to submit ideas that should be reasonably valid both in Western and in Third-World training facilities. The preceding argument provides important clues, both in its negative, 'deconstructive' and in its positive, creative aspects.

Negatively it is in order to identify economism as the pervasive philosophy underlying the entire standard curriculum, and to account for the fact that through it, culture-conditionedness, including obsoles-

cence, belongs to its salient characteristics. Short of an effort at rethinking economics and the social sciences in general, as a preliminary to effective redesigning of curricula (there is no stopping the train to change wheels), this should have at least two effects.

First it should make for greater readiness to consider feedback from the execution of economic policies as an integral part of their prescriptive presentation coupled to the inculcation of underlying theory as standing wisdom. In this effort the Western and Third-World experiences should not be kept separate; nor should the Third World be treated as one coherent complex.

Second the vested interests of the profession of economics in multidisciplinary settings such as universities and research centres should become a matter of explicit scrutiny, aimed at curriculum and related personnel policies towards balanced multidisciplinary, as a precondition for fertile interdisciplinary work, such as envisaged in the passage about policy making.

Positively and with regard to the Western aspect or dimension of the curriculum, it will no longer do to presuppose the modern-Western intellectual tradition, whether tacitly or explicitly, as the given frame of reference for intellectual effort anywhere. Nor even will it do to present it in such a way as to promote a more solid grasp of what is said to be its substance: 'a deeper understanding'. The experiments with this kind of exercise that I have seen have invariably misfired. To present the West as a matter of culture-historical specificity in addition to, or besides, referring to it as the obvious frame of reference for any intellectual effort is an altogether disorienting device. The need is for a presentation that, whilst probing and clarifying - and in order to do so -, will relativize. This is proper in view of what is going on in the West: it is also in order in view of the disgusted wholesale condemnation which, to many in the Third World, substitutes for considerate critique. There are two ways to achieve this, and they may have to be combined for better effect. One is to employ the retrospective or virtually retrospective Western vantage point that has served us throughout this paper. The other is to use an intercultural vantage point, looking as if from outside.

Positively again, and now with regard to the Third-World aspect, the prime need is to liberate the curriculum from the shackles imposed by the crucial role attributed to the unitary categorical, essentially negative, concept 'Third World'. In order to make sense in the future, the discourse

about development will have to refer to any number of specific situations world-wide: each somewhat different from the next on a number of counts – including, notably, the cultural frame of reference. (Whether in the course of this reorientation the term 'development' will or will not give way to a more appropriate designation of what is at stake, is, of course, not really important.)

This means that there has to be explicit discussion on the nature or substance, as well as the goals, of development. Nothing can be assumed in advance, and nothing can be deemed 'general' as a matter of principle. (I shall return to this point presently.) Didactically this is perhaps the key issue. As soon as the discussion on the perception – rather than definition – of development opens up, development training becomes an entirely new proposition.

Of course it should be silly to introduce this overnight in a context of formal curriculum redesigning. No teacher could face the challenge thus emerging; nor, surely, could any student. The need is for gradual ways of slipping the issue into ongoing courses or seminars, as searching questions asked in specific connections where they are appropriate efforts at deeper probing. Even so, this will tax the teacher's stamina, but at least the resulting exercise will be a manageable discussion, where teacher and student may well find themselves joining efforts in breaking new ground.

Regardless of the modalities of opening up this basic issue, the combined result, upon the student, of relativizing the West and loosening up the notion of development can hardly be comfortable. The exemplary value of the West is replaced by something that is of comparative reference value at best: it makes the West a much harder proposition to deal with, and Western standard theory a dish in need of a pinch or two of salt. Rote learning, hypothetically but never factually anathema, is effectively out. The identity – and ensuing self-respect – derived from belonging to the Third World is equally out. Where does this leave the student? He might seem to be in for identity crises of a vehemence compared to which the occasional culture shocks in evidence among students in international programmes are mere child's play.

The proper approach should obviate such hazards. It will have to induce a more effective interest than one often seems to meet, in the student's own socio-cultural background, as part and parcel of the curriculum. This is no mean challenge, whether to the student or to the one who is to guide, or rather accompany, him or her in this effort. All the

ambiguities catalogued before risk coming into play, as problems of cultural identity. The practicability of the proper exercises will to a large extent depend upon the availability of expertise. This in turn may limit the number of culture areas from which a given institution may enrol students. The main thing, both in the didactic and in the scholarly perspective, is to ensure that these exercises of reintegrating oneself into one's own socio-cultural context (an aim furthered rather than thwarted by distance) result in considerate identification enhanced by not-uncritical understanding. Comparison will be of great help here – both that with the West just mentioned, and, if possible, that with yet another civilization in addition; the exercises foreseen need, indeed should, not be solitary.

A major problem, practical as well as fundamental, is how to match all this with the study of specialist fields of theory and action, and with the inculcation of practicable skills. It is on the strength of these that careers are invariably built. Someone has once remarked that the things I was – and am – advocating were to him as a curriculum designer like the icing on the cake: most welcome provided the budget was lavish enough. His tacit assumption was, of course, that his nuts-and-bolts design of methods and techniques was sufficiently 'general' – in the sense of 'culture-free' – to warrant his dispensing with the kind of high-faluting intellectual luxuries I was holding out. This assumption, however, is not really warranted. Gut ethnocentrism will tell you it is correct, but nothing else can. The gist of the argument in this paper is that economism is pervasive in the entire body of development theory and practice, and that it is part and parcel of Western modernity. The implication of this is that the ethnocentric tenet as to the generality of modern-Western knowledge is due for revision. It is likely to be replaced by a different assumption, namely that of a framework of communicating partly open systems. In such a framework everything must be taken to be culture-specific prior to being proven, perhaps, to be general in the sense of communicable or comparable up to a point. The question, then, is whether the thresholds determining the identity of the several systems involved will allow it to enter or block its way.

Pending the further clarification of insight into these hitherto elusive matters, up to the point where it can be translated into didactic arrangements, we shall have to live, circumspectly, with what we have. I would, then, modify my interlocutor's verdict by saying that, whilst I am ready – indeed bound – to accept his nuts-and-bolts complex under benefit of inventory, he would be taking undue and incalculable risk by

considering essentials as supererogatory luxuries. For him to agree to this it is necessary that he become aware of the Western-ethnocentric and economistic constraints that affect his thinking. This is, of course, what I hope this paper will help achieve.

This can never mean that the bulk of existing training programmes can continue routinely without renewed scrutiny. What has been said a while ago about economics and related fields applies throughout the social sciences. There must be gradual yet relentless reconsideration of standing offerings in the light of the two key problems repeatedly mentioned – obsolescence here and relevancy there. This reconsideration should be an integral part of curriculum evaluation and planning.

This need is particularly evident when teaching programmes are dedicated to any of the newly emergent fashionable topics, such as basic needs, employment, human rights, relevant technology, woman's role, the environment, disarmament and so on: there is no end. Each and every one of these, without exception, is initially an internal Western issue, mostly with political or ideological overtones. It is claimed to apply to development situations on account of the common tacit modern-Western assumption that what is at stake in the West is at stake in the world. This does beg the question about relevancy and opportunity, in short about appropriateness; but the protagonists of these preoccupations appear rarely willing and seldom equipped to pay heed to them, let alone to try and settle them. Their interests are different. The faintest semblance of an echo from what they suppose to be yonder side will do to convince them that they have a hot issue worth fighting for: teaching as proselytizing.

Research is in a different position due to the well-known vicissitudes of project funding: whose money one takes, his hang-ups one studies. With bureaucratic economism rampant both in the West and in the Third World, and tempted to shore up its control by hand-outs as its grip on public affairs becomes insecure, the prospect for innovation through research is not bright. Indeed it is somewhat gloomier than in the case of teaching, where usually the scope of a programme is wide enough to allow latitude for innovative initiatives.

An interesting preliminary question arises: research for what? Recently there has been some discussion on the alleged difference between research aimed at theory-building and research aimed at producing data and insight towards policy-making. The latter appears to

be conceived as a social sciences equivalent, of sorts, to 'R&D' (research and development) in technology. The distinction is not entirely convincing.³⁰ It raises the moot question whether difference in goals makes for difference in substance. On the other hand one can readily see that the problems posed, and the manner in which they will be rendered into a research design, may be significantly different.

Given this distinction it is commonly assumed that development-related research is bound to be of the policy-oriented kind. There is good reason to question this proposition. In light of the relevancy problem, repeatedly mentioned before, and its critical significance, there appears to be an urgent need for research aimed, if not at theory-building, then at least at theory verification. This is fairly thankless work, as it makes one seem to go against the grain with all those who find comfort and security in continuing to believe, without bothersome questions asked, in the universality of the social-sciences theory of modern-Western imprint. By the same token, however, it is of the essence that this kind of work be undertaken: the more systematically the better. There is, by the way, no demonstrable reason why Third-World scholars should have more of a calling, or be better equipped, in this regard, than their Western colleagues.

This introduces the matter of problem identification. (It unfortunately ties in with the problem of funding. Let us agree to ignore this complication at this point, for the sake of clear argumentation.) It is imperative that both the obsolescence problem and that of cross-cultural relevancy should be addressed in research ventures explicitly undertaken for the purpose. Loading these questions, phrased in line with the manner they feature in a given connection, onto standard research projects across the customary range of topics is also necessary, but it could not suffice. Implicit in this there is a requirement of sophistication greater than, or different from, what is customarily achieved in the design of development research. This sophistication is substantive prior to being, perhaps, methodological.

These new ventures and reorientations have an internal-Western reference, a reference to any given instance of the Third World, and a third one to intercultural transactions in and by themselves. In order to stay within the confines of the scope adopted for this paper we shall leave the internal-Western aspect aside, not without stipulating that this subject matter could by no means be the exclusive and privileged hunting ground of Western scholarship.

The Third-World reference recalls research ventures into what, in public administration, is - curiously - called 'ecology'. This is the systematic effort (if I am not mistaken, and if I am I will simply say it should be) to account for the specific setting - socio-cultural and everything else - within which the administrator has to function and, to this purpose, to fit: controllably.

It is this research interest which, customarily neglected in far too many cases, needs to be articulated and pursued in practically any and every policy - or indeed theory - problem the researcher is called upon to elucidate. If you care to enhance woman's role in development, you are in fact raising the matter of woman's place and role in the kinship group and in society as a problem. (Clearly to some, the former is an excuse for the latter.) But who will take time out and, in order to secure a firmer hold upon this tangly matter, begin to ask how, in the setting concerned, the prevailing culture pattern attributes socio-cultural significance to the given (*vorgefundene*) physical-biological differences between the two sexes into which mankind finds itself divided, and next, how this sense attribution reflects in standing socio-cultural constructs and operational patterns? Examples abound. *Pace* Schumacher, relevant technology is another hot case in point. It is an equally profound issue in that in the last resort it raises the matter of man's view of his own place and role in the world around him. There are social scientists who will duck when they see such questions approaching, and their excuse will be that these are philosophical and not social-science matters. A lame excuse.

The big shockers, in this regard, are basic needs and fundamental human rights. The question how universal these really are is by and large anathema. Raise it nonetheless, and you are bound to find (1) that whether needs are basic or not *in any specific situation or culture area* depends (a) on whether the human collectivity concerned employs a distinct socio-cultural category referred to by the word 'needs' or its equivalent, and (b) on whether amongst these needs some are discerned as basic as against others that are not basic, and furthermore (2) that, assuming your findings up to this point are encouraging, whether basic needs are *universal* depends on (a) whether all or a considerable number of human collectivities - civilizations, cultures or whatever - do recognize basic needs, (b) besides recognizing them categorically, identify a number of specific ones, and (c) show significant parallelism, as between one another, as regards the ones thus specified. If, having done this daunting

job, you find that all signals are green, feel free to proceed and develop action or policies concerning basic needs. Of course I am exaggerating. But that there is work to be done that hitherto has been left undone for no good reason is beyond doubt.

Again, fundamental human rights are neither fundamental nor universal unless and until proven to be so. The significance of signatures to pertinent United Nations documents is conditioned by (a) the cultural background of signatories and (b) the occasion, not to say the opportunity. (Macchiavelli being one of the stronger candidates for acclaim as a teacher of universal truths.) There is no valid reason for abstaining from needed research, prior to passing any kind of judgment. Let the East and West wings of Western civilization take one another to task about human rights and third baskets: that is within the family, i.e. there should be enough common ground, culturally, to make accusations back and forth potentially meaningful exercises, however exacerbating. Beyond the confines of Western civilization no common ground can validly be assumed: it must be proven to exist.¹⁶ Of course the research needed for this purpose is not needed to keep Amnesty International in business, but their efficacy is another matter.

The other emergent field of research interest is inter-cultural transactions in and by themselves. Where the prospect of the global village, of modern-Western imprint no doubt, has made, or is making, room for one of a polycentric, pluralistic network of more or less open systems interacting in interdependence, the assumption of ideas or practices that would be general in the sense of universal, and as such self-evident, is out. This reorientation instantly translates itself into the need to pay systematic attention to goings-on between systems interacting in this - budding - network. Precious little can be taken for granted here, as there is every indication that it will be a while before some recognizable procedural pattern will have crystallized out.

This emergent research field has much to do with communication, but the manner in which may well be novel in important respects. For one thing, the entities between which it occurs cannot be assumed to be known and taken for granted in consequence. Inter-cultural communication is not international relations. There is no reason for singling out the state as the agent of communication. At best the state, in this connection, is one phenotype pertaining to a genotype which remains, by and large, to be identified for the purpose. Say 'civilization' or 'culture', and you have a

question where you need an answer. Nor can it be settled in anything like a preliminary manner.

For another matter, in addressing communication it will be necessary to go beyond those historical phenomenalities that are commonly considered to provide enough food for thought. It will be in order to probe further and deeper. Under present circumstances virtually all systems are communicating willy-nilly, and ill at ease about their inevitable openness. This is the present-day replay of some of the visceral ambiguities reviewed before.

Two issues open up. One concerns the nature of what is communicated, the channels through which, the quantities in which, and the significance of it all for those concerned. To reduce this significance to terms of power, or wealth for that matter, is of course an unacceptable over-simplification: the matter of common denominators deserves attention for its own sake. This ushers in the second issue, which is the matter of modalities. One sensible way of focussing this somewhat elusive topic is by inquiring into what Norman Daniel has called 'barriers' and what a while ago I have called, rather loosely, thresholds.³¹ The point is to understand when, under which conditions, to which extent, and under which adaptive constraints 'messages' from outside a system will reach and be directed or diffused within, and vice versa. The access-and-delivery interest of a few years ago could be referred to as, in retrospect, a faint beginning in the right direction. A notion comes to mind which belongs to the realm of electricity, namely impedance; but before suggesting yet another act of borrowing terminology from science, it may be wiser to wait and see what concepts social scientists may come up with of their own accord if and when setting themselves to this new task.

What remains worth noting is that in this connection, the evaluation of teaching programmes and research projects will soon turn out to acquire a new and fascinating dimension, and it will have greater reliability in consequence.

NOTES

1. An earlier version of part of this paper was presented at the 25th Anniversary World Conference of the Society for International Development, Baltimore, MD, July 1982.
2. P.A. Sorokin, *Fads and Foibles in Modern Sociology and Related Sciences*, Chicago (Regnery) 1956. A daring and stimulating book when it first appeared, it is somewhat disappointing in retrospect. The need now goes further. Beyond an inventory that sounds like an indictment of pious and not so pious frauds – not less needed now than then –, clarification of basic causes is in order. A limited move in this direction is attempted in Chapter 5 of my *Development Begins at Home*, Oxford (Pergamon) 1982.
3. However, this recollection may be based on limited experience in one small country. Admittedly my reading is debatable. In his review of J.M. Lee and M. Petter, *The Colonial Office, War and Development Policy*, London (Temple Smith) 1982, I. Duffield writes in *The Times Literary Supplement*, Sept. 17, 1982, 'the Office was quite unprepared for the scope and pace of constitutional change after the war, and its wartime planning came to put its main emphasis on the modish concept of centralized economic planning; social welfare, let alone political change, had to take second place.' I take consolation from the fact that this reading of the situation strengthens my argument even further.
4. M. Bennabi, *Vocation de l'Islam*, Paris (Seuil) 1954.
5. Elaborated in my *On Social Development: The Social Welfare Approach*, The Hague (Institute of Social Studies) 1979 (= Occasional Papers 76).
6. R. Dahrendorf, *The New Liberty, Survival and Justice in a Changing World*, London (Routledge & Kegan Paul) 1975; R. Nisbet, *Twilight of Authority*, London (Heinemann) 1976; B.A. Ackerman, *Social Justice in the Liberal State*, New Haven (Yale U.P.) 1980.
7. In the culture-comparative, ultimately relativizing sense of K. Jaspers, *Psychologie der Weltanschauungen*, Berlin (Springer) 1954, 4th ed.
8. D. Ehrenfeld, *The Arrogance of Humanism*, Oxford (U.P.) 1978. Using the term *l'économique*, G.-H. de Radkowski, *Les jeux du désir*, Paris (PUF: Croisées) 1980, offers an analysis that is in more than one way close to the present one. Unfortunately this work reached me too late to use it in writing this paper.
9. *Daedalus* 107/3, Summer 1978: 'Rousseau for Our Time'. See A. Tévoédjrè, *Poverty, Wealth of Mankind*, Oxford (Pergamon) 1979, on 'solidarity contracts', a notion currently also fashionable amongst French socialists.
10. A.L. Kroeber, C. Kluckhohn, *Culture, A Critical Review of Concepts and Definitions*, Cambridge, Mass. (Harvard U.P.) 1952 (= Peabody Museum Papers on Amer. Anthropol. and Ethnol. XLVII/1).
11. J. Huizinga, *Cultuurhistorische verkenningen*, Haarlem (Tjeenk Willink) 1929; idem, *Geschieden wereld*, Haarlem (Tjeenk Willink) 1945²; N. Elias, *Über den Prozess der Zivilisation*, 2 vols., Basel (Zum Falken), 1939.
12. V.S. Naipaul, *Among the Believers, An Islamic Journey*, London (Deutsch) 1981.
13. M. Chelli, *La parole arabe*, Paris (Sindbad) 1980.
14. A. Laroui, *L'idéologie arabe contemporaine*, Paris (Maspéro) 1977.
15. This was reviewed in my *Social Development – Supplement or Corrective to Economic Development?* The Hague (Institute of Social Studies) 1979 (= Occasional Papers 69).
16. For one illustration out of many I refer to the aftermath of the *cultuurstelsel* (the sys-

- tem of compulsory cultivation of export crops) in Java, as responded to first by Dutchmen such as Van Hoevell and Multatuli, and then by Indonesians such as Raden Ajeng Kartini. On misreadings of the situation compare my *Development Begins at Home*, *op. cit.*, p. 11f. A near-frantic attempt at corrective re-reading retrospectively can be found in Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *The Earth of Mankind*, Harmondsworth (Penguin) 1981.
17. It is beyond the scope of this paper to ask in which way the modern West differs from earlier phases of Western civilization, from the classical Greeks to the Industrial Revolution. But at least we recognize this is a valid question to ask – something most people in referring to the West fail to do.
18. Still one ambiguity entails the next. A Professor of customary (*adat*) law of the 'progressive' Leiden school, honestly and intelligently respectful of autochthonous civilization, found himself first having to face the dilemma of codification or no codification. The former threatens the very vitality of customary law by ossifying it; the latter (under the prevailing pattern of statute law) jeopardizes due legal process. As if that was not enough, he then found himself invited to South Africa, there to be claimed, to his embarrassment I assume, by the protagonists of apartheid.
19. I.D. Illich, *Deschooling Society*, London (Calder & Boyars) 1971.
20. One out of many examples of arrogant *naïveté* is R. Emerson, *Representative Government in Southeast Asia*, Cambridge, Mass. (Harvard U.P.) 1955.
22. See E. Said, *Orientalism*, London (Routledge & Kegan Paul) 1978. Of the many critical reviews see Bernard Lewis, 'The Question of Orientalism', *New York Review of Books*, June 24, 1982, and my 'Palestinian Politician-Scholar Hits Back Hard', *Bibliotheca Orientalis* XXXVI-1/2, 1979, p. 10-16. There are better ways than Said's. Gita Mehta's *Karma Cola, Marketing the Mystic East*, London (Cape, 1979) is both more amusing and more deadly.
22. G.E. von Grunebaum, *Modern Islam, The Search for Cultural Identity*, Berkeley (U. of Calif. Press) 1962. We shall return to this matter later on.
23. A disconcerting example is the *Advies culturele aspecten van ontwikkelingssamenwerking* [Advice on Cultural Aspects of Development Co-operation], written by a committee of the Nationale Advies Raad voor Ontwikkelingssamenwerking [National Advisory Council for Development Co-operation], 's-Gravenhage (Staatsuitgeverij) 1981 (number 70).
24. E.g. G. Cochrane, *Development Anthropology*, New York (Oxford U.P.) 1971; R. Bastide, *Applied Anthropology*, London (Croom Helm) 1973; D.C. Pitt, *Development from Below, Anthropologists and Development Situations*, The Hague (Mouton) 1976.
25. Some examples from the Muslim world: Syed Hussein Alatas, *Kita dengan Islam, Tumbuh Tiada Berbuah* [We and Islam, Growth without Fruit], Singapura (Pustaka Nasional) 1979; Alfian, *Politik, Kebudayaan dan Manusia Indonesia* [Politics, Culture and Indonesian Man], Jakarta (LP3ES) 1980; Z. Sardar, *The Future of Muslim Civilization*, London (Croom Helm) 1979.
26. Let me, for further clarification, rephrase this in the manner of debate by means of a quick response to a note by F. van Dam in *Economisch-Statistische Berichten* 67, no. 3374, for Sept. 29, 1982, entitled 'vlucht naar de marge' [Flight into the margin]. In this note he argues, certainly not for the first time, that whereas it is more than obvious that core developmental concern is with matters macro-economic, there is a constant dissipation of effort due to brushfire interests of ephemeral, indeed dubious signifi-

cance, such as environment, human rights, disarmament, and indeed culture. In the latter connection he takes some potshots at the report of the Netherlands Advisory Council on Development Co-operation already referred to, which fail to expose its essential weakness. What keeps worrying me in his presentation is the obstinate refusal to ask how and why it is that so many people, not necessarily fools all of them, keep resorting to the flight forward (or, with his nicer variant, flight into the margin). However objectionable all these brushfires may seem, they must have a significance. The only significance I can envisage is that of being symptoms of enduring, indeed mounting, dissatisfaction with the economic preoccupation and its net effects. How is it that some good minds are unprepared to raise this question and then answer it in this – or any other – way? Blinkers in consequence of professional deformation?

Again I agree with Van Dam that the concern with culture risks going the way of all others. Had he attended, at the S.I.D. Baltimore Congress, the workshop on Culture and Development as I had to, his comments might have been more scathing than they are now. Yet unless he brings proof that this is the way it is bound to be, he in his turn is open to be challenged on grounds of passing insufficiently founded judgment. Indeed it is entirely possible that he is fighting a rearguard battle.

27. This temptation is traceable in part of the special issue on 'Culture: the Forgotten Dimension' of the S.I.D. journal *Development*, 1981: 3/4.

28. Title of a book by Kusum Nair, New York (Praeger) 1961.

29. Let me clarify this a little further. From imposition to polarization to interaction I do not envisage an ongoing see-saw movement, of the kind that appears to be implicitly suggested in a statement by Galen Strawson (*The Times Literary Supplement*, Dec. 31, 1982, p. 1445): 'Cultural difference has been much glorified in recent years. Academics have exulted in radical otherness for its own sake, and not always for good reasons. There is, doubtless, beauty in the mere fact, as well as in the individual facets, of human variety, cultural and otherwise. But it is perhaps those who are most aware of aspects of human thought and experience that have a more universal character who are in the best position to appreciate this. And to the pleasure of difference there correspond the opposite and (at least) equal pleasures of sameness.' Transposed into the present context this suggests a movement from a global village of sameness-by-imposition, through an interim of its being scattered by polarizing difference, back to a global village of sameness in ways transcending cultural specificity, which otherwise would remain to be identified. My concern here is with their identification, as a precondition to the third move, and implicitly with what distinguishes the third move from the preceding ones.

30. M. van de Vall, *Sociaal beleidsonderzoek: Een professioneel paradigma* [Policy Research in the Social Field: A Professional Paradigm], Alphen a/d Rijn (Samson) 1980.

31. N. Daniel, *The Cultural Barrier, Problems in the Exchange of Ideas*, Edinburgh (U.P.) 1975.