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Development Theory, Culture and Ethnocriticism:
Can respect for diversity and critique across cultures be combined?

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For a century and a half, the prison had always been offered as its own remedy: the reactivation of the penitentiary techniques as the only means of overcoming their perpetual failure; realization of the corrective project as the only method of overcoming the impossibility of implementing it … the supposed failure [is] part of the functioning of the prison.

Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*

Introduction

Foucault's quote above relates to this paper in two ways. On the one hand, like the prison, Development Theory constantly has to reinvent itself to escape the criticism levelled against it. On the other hand, Foucault's discourse analysis informs much of the literature I will draw on. As such this paper is situated within the tradition of Post-Development -the branch of development thinking that mirrors the broader attack of Post-Structuralism on the social sciences. Similarly to Postmodernism it is often criticised for not suggesting a way forward (Corbridge 1998: 145) or accused of leading to a disabling relativism (Kiely 1990: 49). In some way this paper picks up development where it was left for dead by the Post-Developmentalists, if not to resurrect it but to see what can be done.

One of the most sustained criticisms of Development Theory is that it fails to accommodate difference – culture is said to be "the missing dimension." (See Verhelst 1987: chapter 2) Because of the universalism inherent in Development Theory existing inequalities are perpetuated and relations of domination are reproduced.

The danger of overemphasising culture, however is that relations of exploitation and oppression are obscured. (See Faschingeder 2001: 12) I understand this paper as a contribution to this debate over the tensions between universalism and particularism. Unwilling to stand silent in the face of injustice but equally unwilling to raise my own values to universal standard and impose them on others, what is to be done? The question, then, that I am trying to answer is:

Can respect for diversity and critique across cultures be combined?

Hoping to bring something new to Development Theory I chose an interdisciplinary approach incorporating readings from disciplines such as Anthropology, Linguistics, Interculturalism, Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism, and Ethics. I was obviously unable to master any of those disciplines and often if not usually I had to take recourse to secondary sources. This broad approach also imposed other limits on the text. This work is about theory and as such it may be excused that it suffers from an excessive baggage of theory. However, unwilling to forgo the somewhat more complex arguments I had to decide against backing up the claims with a solid case study. A trade-off I hope the reader will understand. To be sure, writing about culture and development means writing about the utilization of difference and this has very real consequences for real people.

The paper proceeds as follows: To answer the question I first had to establish a notion of culture. Then I traced the role of culture and difference through the history of Development Theory. Summing up

these findings I made a case for difference before looking at cultural relativism and the possibility of a more defendable position. In the last section Ethnocriticism is introduced to navigate the problems of difference and critique in an unequal power-relationship. All of this is spelled out below section by section in some more detail:

In the first section a notion of culture is established comprising of four elements.
According to Stuart Hall meaning is framed by culture specific codes. (See Hall 1997) This process is fluid and, thus, cultures change. Two consequences follow from that which are both captured by Homi Bhaba's concept of hybridity: cultures are not homogeneous and they influence each other. (See Ashcroft 1998 and Pieterse 1995b) Furthermore, Sabbarwal showed that modernity is indigenised in various forms but at the same time threatens traditional cultures. (See Sabbarwal 1995) Finally, Vachon emphasise holism and that cultures cannot be reduced to any one of their dimensions as they constitute each other. The main feature of this notion of culture is its non-essentialism.

The central argument, that difference matters and should be respected is derived from a section on the history of development. I chose a genealogical approach to trace the role of culture in Development Theory. This has been done before (Pieterse 1995a) but other than Faschingeder's doctoral thesis (it was subsequently published, 2001), which is written in German and untranslated so far, I am not aware of a work that focuses on how difference was dealt with throughout the history of development. Escobar (1995) said a lot about the construction of others in *Encountering Development* but he does

not necessarily take a genealogical approach.

In turn, I am dealing with Colonial Theories, Modernization Theories, Dependency Theories, Neoliberalism, Sustainable Development, and Culture and Development. They all share eurocentric assumptions, such as the inevitability of progress and the constant need for growth to occur. (See Rist 1997) Rostow's stages of growth (See Rostow 1960) left a huge legacy as did Huntington's dichotomization of the world into modern and traditional. (See Rist 1997) They inform mainstream Development Theory until today and hold up industrialised countries as the norm. Potentially radical critique is incorporated into the mainstream and robbed of its content as happened with Sustainable Development. (See The Ecologist 1993) Similarly, Culture and Development cannot really sustain its commitment to difference, only diversity based on universal values. (See UNESCO 2000) Generally speaking, culture does not feature much in Development Theory and where it does it is reduced to a resource.

The findings of the history of development are summed up in section three where I am trying to make a case for difference. The major paradigms in Development Theory are ethnocentric and neglect culture but they usually utilize difference, either to justify relations of domination or to assimilate the other. (See Escobar 1995, Faschingeder 2001, Pieterse 1995a, b, 2001, UNESCO 2000, Rist 1997) In the process, the other is subjugated, degraded, destroyed or assimilated. Therefore, difference should be respected as a value in itself. Moreover, there is another dimension to the argument for difference.

Building on the dialogic notion of culture as established in section one, it can be appreciated that cultures mutually constitute each other. We depend on the other for our own existence. (See Bakhtin 1968 and Krupat 1992) Reality is plural and that is what Vachon calls the 'intercultural imperative'. Therefore we need to learn to respect difference. (See Vachon 1997, 1998, 2000)

That this does not necessarily lead to cultural relativism is shown in section five. The cultural difference argument in its most extreme form is admittedly illogical, self-defeating and leads to the complete loss of judgement. (See Rachels 1986) This perceived threat is often used to assert the universality of own values. However, if one accepts that all perspectives are grounded in a normative context already, a recourse to universalism becomes not only unnecessary but also impossible.(George 1994) A more sophisticated relativity can sustain exercising both: critique and solidarity. (See Wong 1991) What still needs to be taken into account for a critique across cultures is that cultures can be at risk from each other. Criticising a less powerful culture from the perspective of a more powerful one demands special measures. (See Krupat 1992) For this reason I introduced Ethnocriticism.

The biggest novum of this work is probably an act of piracy. Impressed by Arnold Krupat's Ethnocriticism I adopted this tool of Literary Criticism to Development Theory. It is important to stress that it is concerned with valid critical acts only.
As such it allows to build a critical argument about the cultural products of others in a situation compromised by power-imbalance. It emphasises dialogism and polyvocality and by

definition resists application in a monologic format such as this paper but demands live conversation.

Ethnocriticism takes cultural contact as a given as it is impossible to insulate less powerful cultures from intrusion. Three main pillars help to balance difference and commonality. Polyvocal polity aims to include diverse voices in order to gain a more complete understanding. Multiculturalism emphasises border learning and the possibility of mutual enrichment between cultures. Its cognitive ethics values heterogeneity as a social and cultural norm. It assumes that criticism can impact positively on both cultures as they depend on each other. (See Krupat 1992 and Muller 1995a) These three elements together form a procedure that allows to perform valid critical acts in an unequal relationship. It could be seen as an ethics for opinion forming, a technique of the self for speaking about others or a research agenda for planning solidarity action.

The conclusion I am drawing is that it is quite possible to accept radical relativity while retaining a critical faculty. Crucial to the argument is the dialogic notion of culture – cultures depend on each other for their own existence. Therefore difference has to be valued and relativity accepted. Respecting difference is a precondition for solidarity with those suffering oppression and for intercultural cooperation. Maybe this could be a first step toward reproblematising Development Theory.

Notion of Culture

To begin with it seems necessary to have a notion of culture before taking a look at how it was dealt with in development theory. This section aims at establishing such a notion. But it is notoriously difficult to define culture and there are literally hundreds of definitions testifying to the fact that there is no standardized idea about it. Of course it would be possible to put a general definition at the beginning. For example like his definition from the preamble of the Mexico City Declaration on Cultural Policies 1982:

> "In its broadest sense, culture today can be viewed as a set of distinctive spiritual and material, intellectual and emotional characteristics which define a society or social group." (UNESCO 2000: 31)

Conceptualising culture like this amounts to little more than saying that there are different ways of life out there. Which is true but also does not provide much insight. Rather than starting with a definition, I would like to follow Frauenlob's advice and put a definition at the end. (Frauenlob 1999: 24) It seems to be more important to understand what elements a useful notion of culture would incorporate.

There are four major elements that are dealt with in turn. Firstly, drawing on Stuart Hall an account of the construction of meaning as fluid and open-ended is given. This allows, secondly, for the conceptualisation of culture as changing. I will draw on Homi Bhaba's concept of hybridisation to explain that cultures are heterogeneous as well as mutually influencing. Thirdly, that this process is not necessarily benign and that

especially modernity is often in competition with traditional cultures is illustrated with Sabbarwar's concept of 'indigenised modernities. Finally, as Robert Vachon explained, cultures are irreducible wholes that have a historical grounding in geographical reality. Being aware that probably the most important feature of this notion of culture is its non-essentialism, the importance of taking cultural difference seriously is asserted. The understanding of culture shapes how difference is dealt with and thus how others are treated. This is an important theoretical reflection with potentially very serious consequences for those who find themselves at the receiving end of development policy making. The first and foremost function of culture is to provide meaning and thus I will begin with the construction of meaning.

Representation / Meaning

According to Hall's (1997) constructionist approach to representation there is no inherent meaning in the material world. Rather, meaning is made by forging links between experiences, concepts and signs arranged into language. He emphasises that "meaning does not inhere in things, in the world. It is constructed, produced." (Hall 1997: 24) What he calls 'systems of representation' are fixed by a code, which sets up the correlation between our conceptual system and our language. But "there is no guarantee that every object in one culture will have an equivalent meaning in another precisely because cultures differ, sometimes radically from one another in their codes – the ways they carve up, classify and assign meaning to the world." (Hall 1997: 61). Two

important consequences follow from this:

Meaning must remain fluid. This is not unlike Bakhtin's dialogism where there is no authoritative source of meaning. Rather meaning is co-created by conversational partners. Thus meaning may change, depending on who is included in the conversation. (See Muller 2000: 10) This is an important point and I will come back to it later on. Hall put it this way:

> "One implication of this argument about cultural codes is that, if meaning is the result, not of something fixed out there, in nature, but of our social, cultural and linguistic conventions, then meaning can never be finally fixed." (Hall 1997: 23)

The other important consequence is the implications this has for the conceptualisation of culture. According to Hall, a way of thinking about culture is in terms of these shared conceptual maps, shared language systems and the codes which govern the relationships of translation between them. This constructionist idea of representation accepts a degree of relativism, a lack of equivalence and thus a need for translation. (See Hall 1997: 21) A point that is repeated by Rachels: "[D]ifferent cultures have different moral codes. What is thought right within one group may be utterly abhorrent to the members of another group." (Rachels 1986: 12)

The advantage of conceptualising culture in a non-essentialist way is that it allows for change since meaning is not a given but is continuously reinterpreted and renegotiated. Furthermore it builds on a discursive understanding of representation rather than a purely semiotic one. This will be helpful because a big part of the literature informing this paper relies on discourse analysis for a methodology. When I am referring to discourse it is done in a foucauldian sense. It is used not in a purely linguistic way but meant to be the "complex of signs and practices which organises social existence and social reproduction." (Ashcroft 1998: 71) What can be thought, said and done within the discourse and what not is controlled by unspoken rules, 'regimes of representation'. In this spirit, part of this paper aims to show how 'culture' was written out of existence in development theory. This matters because how culture is conceptualised determines how we deal with difference and this has very real effects for real people.

Hybridity and Heterogeneity

The mainstream literature usually uses cultural difference and cultural diversity interchangeably. However, in Bhaba's understanding, diversity is insufficient as it can have a tendency to essentialise distinct values or patterns of behaviour by assuming them as pre-given. Thus, it gives rise to the liberal notion of multiculturalism and the danger of 'freezing' difference. (See Ashcroft 1998: 60) Yuval-Davies persuasively argued, with regard to institutionalised Multiculturalism in the UK, that it has mainly benefited fundamentalist leaders at the cost of further disempowering women. (See Yuval-Davies 1997)[1]. Against the diversity of Multiculturalism, Bhaba holds the difference of Interculturalism which "is newer simple and static but ambivalent, changing, and always open to further interpretation." (Ashcroft 1998: 61) He introduces hybridity[2] " to overcome the exoticism of cultural

diversity in favour of the recognition of an empowering hybridity within which cultural difference may operate." (Ibid: 119) It is "the antidote to essentialist notions" (Pieterse 1995: 55) and is used to "refuse nostalgic models of pre-colonial purity." (Ibid: 56) The concept is useful for two reasons:

On the one hand hybridity points toward the internal heterogeneity of culture. In the Cultural Studies literature it is frequently used in connection with syncretism and its connotations of montage and bricolage. (See Pieterse 1995b: 55) Thus it emphasises that cultures are no monolithic blocks and that the reproduction of meaning is also a struggle over the power of definition. "Local culture is a terrain of power with its own patterns of stratification, uneven distribution of cultural knowledge and boundaries separating insiders and outsiders – hierarchical or exclusionary politics in fine print." (Pieterse 2001: 65)

On the other hand hybridity is useful because it assumes that contact between cultures has happened and is indeed happening all the time, not least because globalisation 'shrinks the planet' and exchange is rapidly becoming more frequent. It also allows for the possibility of mutual learning. In fact, Verhelst goes so far as to say:

> "In reality, there is no such thing as a culture in the pure sense, developing in isolation from socio-economic factors, foreign influences, from constantly renewed challenges. Rather, there are specific peoples living in quite concrete conditions and tossed by diverse cultural elements, the fruits of numerous borrowing, contradictory evolutions, complex cross-breeding. Long before the West invaded their World, the various cultural communities of the Third World had mutually influenced each other." (Verhelst 1987:53)

Foreign cultures influence indigenous ones as, for example, Buddhism of Indian origin was acculturated into South-Eastern Asia. On the other hand inculturation takes place when the culture of origin becomes profoundly influenced by the indigenous culture. "Thus Buddhism has not essentially 'Indianized' China, instead it has been modified by Chinese culture. (See Verhelst 1987: 53) How mutual the influence is, however, depends on how balanced the power relationship between the cultures in question is. Thus, in the current context of globalisation these processes lead to what Sabbarwal calls the 'indigenisation of modernity'. (Sabbarwal 1995)

Interplay and Power

In the campaign literature around the anti-capitalism movement, such as Naomi Klein's *No Logo*, it is commonplace to criticise the International Financial Institutions (IFIs) for destroying non-Western ways of life. Neoliberalism is said to impose its values, namely competition and individualism on others. Thus consumerism and materialism rapidly fragment traditional cultures and destroy indigenous identities. Commonly this is referred to as cultural imperialism or Westernisation. The argument that everywhere will become like the West is easily refuted, though, taking into account the

'Japanisation' of Western business culture, the 'Indianisation' of US spirituality, or the 'Asianisation' of British cuisine. (Pieterse 1995b: 46) On this obvious level there seems to be just a postmodern mingling of tastes and habits. The claim, however, that modernity is spreading around the globe, in the process uprooting whole communities, which leads to the loss of vast vernacular knowledges, has somewhat more substance.

It is condescending to claim that people all over the world are so lured into the glitz of the Western life style that they just cannot help themselves but imitate it. Sabbarwal states that the role of the local perception and interpretation of modernity is ignored. She explains further how a myriad of particular global-local encounters go beyond the dichotomy of homogeneity / heterogeneity to create indigenised modernities. As examples she cites the tailoring of BBC and CNN programmes to suit the tastes of local audiences all over the world or the introduction of lamb burgers by the Indian branch of McDonald's. Modern institutions like bureaucracy, profession, Western education, or democracy are all moulded and ethnicised to suit the local reality. Modernity is reworked and mediated by layers of tradition to produce an ethnicised, a simulated modernity. (See Sabbarwal 1995: 84-6) People everywhere are capable of making modernity their own but at the same time what is perceived as a progressive life-style rivals traditional modes of life. Verhelst quotes the International Federation of Institutes For Advanced Study:

> "All over the planet, the cultural integrity and vitality of the different human groups find themselves threatened by development strategies which stress economic growth and institutional efficiency at all cost. […] Too often the values of the third world are damaged by models of social change based on consumption, competition, acquisition and on the manipulation of human aspiration." (IFDA cited in Verhelst 1987: 19)

This is a point well taken by Sabbarwal. She said it would be naïve to believe that in the interaction of different cultures the relationship will be reciprocal. She claims that Western modernity is a meta-culture with globalising tendencies of imposing itself on others. Culture, she cautions, is not something unified but involves a dynamic contest between different interests and needs. (Sabbarwal 1995: 88)

Understanding Culture

An adequate notion of culture, then, has to take into account all the above. It will comprise of four main elements. First, to provide meaning, culture draws on difference and is therefore relative to a degree. Difference, however is not the basis of a static skeleton of binary essentials but rather gives rise to continuously renegotiated meaning through interaction and dialogue. In a bakhtinian sense meaning is mutually constituted and fluid. Thus, second, a satisfying notion of culture must allow for change. Bhaba's understanding of hybridity captures the internal heterogeneity of cultures as well as the interaction and mutual fecundation between them. No culture is neither pure nor homogenous. Third, Sabbarwal contributed to this conception of culture the insight that the interplay

between cultures takes place in a power-relationship and is thus not necessarily benign. While mutual learning and cross-pollination have positive effects, especially Western modernity competes with traditional cultures often to the detriment of the latter. The fourth and so far missing element of a concept of culture is the understanding of culture as a whole.

What is referred to in anthropology as 'holism' is the idea that all aspects of a culture are inter-related. Art, religion, economics, family, etc. cannot be separated from culture because they determine each other. Neither can culture be reduced to either one of them. Vachon, in the journal of the Intercultural Institute Montreal (IIM) describes it like this:

> "It is a non-reductionist and non-residual notion of culture. Culture is inseparable (but distinct) from nature, philosophy, religion: It is a notion which stems from a deeper and invisible stratum than that of a conceptual and intelligible framework." (Vachon 1998: 33)

In the same edition of *Interculture* Krieger describes culture as the 'encompassing myth of a collectivity' at any particular moment. It is what renders plausible and credible the world we live in. He states that this accounts for the flexibility and mobility of myth as well as the impossibility of grasping our own myth, except when we here it from the mouth of others. (See Vachon 1998: 107) While I do not want to suggest that culture is the same as myth, this definition is interesting because it acknowledges the importance of the other in learning about and actually constituting the self. The concept of

border-learning will be important later on for Ethnocriticism. In the meanwhile this dialogic understanding of culture is compatible with, but also wider ranging than the semiotic approach of Geertz and is therefore preferable for the ends of this paper. Contrasting the two will help to better understand culture.

Geertz, as a contemporary anthropologist, is most famous for his 'thick description' of Balinese cock fights. For Geertz culture is like Weber's 'webs of significance' in which we are all embedded. Studying culture, thus, means interpreting it. The cultural event 'cock fight' becomes meaningful because of the rules and structures surrounding it. He "describes meaning as something imposed" (Alexander 2001 :14) The meanings the cock fight communicates to its participants, as Geertz takes for granted, have already been established. His cultural analysis takes elements of everyday practice and transforms them into a fixed social discourse, a finalised 'text'. Culture, thus, is enclosed within a prescribed structure of rituals, symbols and practices. In contrast to Geertz, Bakhtin argues that in cultural analysis meanings are always in a process of being and becoming, always as dialogue, and cannot be established as given before analysis. (See Swingewood 1998: 117)

For Bakhtin, culture and identity are continuously unfolding and never completed. Bakhtin believed in contingency and human freedom and described people and cultures as 'unfinalizable'. For him, to theorise culture is to celebrate richness, fluidity and diversity. Culture is created through human action in which the dialogic element breaks down the borders. It exists as an open-ended state between cultural actors,

belonging to neither of them. The problem with theorising culture as a bounded and self-sufficient world, like Geertz does, is that this vital process of continuous creation is ended. For Bakhtin, culture cannot be built from solid, finished elements. (See Swingewood 1998: 132-3) An understanding of culture as open and fluid, always depending on the other for its existence is also shared by the Sarai Collective. When asked whether there are unique Indian qualities to their work the Delhi-based media activists rejected the idea of national culture as a source of identity:

> "Culture is something that never respects borders and territories. It is infectious, nomadic and volatile. We see culture and cultural intervention as an agile constellation of people, practices, connections, and objects that come into being when different disciplines, histories and attitudes encounter each other in a global space. This does not mean that we subscribe to the view that there are no cultural affinities, but that cultural affinities and differences are not reducible to the mere notations of current political cartography." (Raikan speaking for the Sarai Collective, cited in Caloud 2002)

That there is more to culture than territoriality is also emphasised by Pieterse. He identifies two concepts of culture in relation to place: First, a territorial, inward-looking one that is, according to Pieterse, prone to essentialising difference. And second, a translocal, outward-looking one, which emphasises fluidity and interpenetration. (Pieterse 1995b: 61)

To illustrate translocal culture he uses Doreen Massey's concept of "a global sense of place" meaning "the specificity of place which derives from the fact that each place is the focus of a distinct mixture of wider and more local social relations". (Massey cited in Ibid)

This wider, translocal concept of culture can incorporate the narrower 'territorial' one and is useful to conceptualise 'globalisation as hybridisation', the title of Pieterse's article. It comes out of evolutionary biology and nature / nurture debates. Sometimes referred to as "software" (Banuri cited in Pieterse 1995b: 61) it is the widest possible understanding of culture. Thus it is often used in debates about whether animals have culture and boils down to "the non-genetic spreading of habits and information." (Waal 2001: 30). While Pieterse is right to keep up the guard against the dangers of essentialism, the changing and hybrid nature of culture has been sufficiently laboured here to avoid its pitfalls.

Since my concern here is how to exercise critique across cultures, there is a point in accepting a degree of territoriality in conceptions of culture such as in Vachon's 'emphasis on the great cultural areas': The Asiatic, Western, Black African, and the Native Indian worlds. According to Vachon each of these developed over millennia from relatively distant and independent areas. He said that there is a depth to those cultural matrices, which escapes definition and is the source of their inherent creative dynamism, which can take many diverse and constantly changing forms through time and space. (See Vachon 1998: 37). Now clearly this list is not exhaustive and it is not meant to play on 'clash of civilization' stereotypes. It is but a

means to emphasise the reality of difference and of avoiding conceptualising culture as one big global melange. Krupat's eloquent concept of culture would only loose if transcribed, I will thus quote him at length.

> "Culture is best conceived in a manner analogous to Bakhtin's conception of language. As a socially plural construct in which our own speech is never entirely and exclusively our own, but always heteroglossic and polyvocal, formed always in relation to the speech of others. As Bakkhtin says, 'language lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's' (Bakhtin cited in Krupat 1992: 237) – as culture is always half someone else's, at least never one's own. No more than language as a medium of actual communication could culture in historical time ever be pure; only as the projection of an idealized logic could one posit either a strictly pure speech or culture." (Krupat 1992: 237)

To sum up: The notion of culture established here relies on several elements. The central function of culture to give meaning to the world is sustained by a continuous renegotiation of meaning in dialogue. Thus cultures change; they are internally heterogeneous as well as hybrid, constantly incorporating other cultures. If mutual fecundation would happen in the form of cooperation and learning on an equal footing this process would be benign. However, cultures are situated in power-relationships and do compete with each other. Local knowledges are lost when traditional livelihoods are uprooted by globalised modernity. Additionally culture has to be understood as a whole. Thus difference is real and needs to be dealt with. In the next chapter the spotlight will be in the role of culture in development theory and how it dealt with difference.

The central criterion of a critical viewpoint is very simple: Any scientific theory or position which looks like a metaphor of the social ideology, or which can be construed as contribution to the psychological, social, or material alienation of any class or group in the society is automatically suspect.

Anthony Wilden

History of Development

Development has been heavily criticised for some time now and it continuously reinvents itself to respond to the challenges it faces. But some critics think the whole enterprise is flawed:

> "In practice it has proved quite possible historically for development to occur without alleviating poverty. Some even argue that development necessarily entails worsening poverty." (Thomas 2000: 3)

It is argued that Development Theory is ethnocentric and that it does not allow for intercultural exchange: "Development planning and its theoretical underpinnings in development economics, were almost entirely a creation of thinkers in the West." (Edwards 1999: 35) In the light of this criticism I want to undertake a brief genealogy of Development Theory, following through time how it dealt with culture and difference. Only a few major paradigms will have to suffice and in turn I will deal with Colonial Theories, Modernisation Theories, the Latin American Dependistas, Neoliberalism, Sustainable Development and Culture and Development. The focus will always be on how the respective theories deal with culture, difference and the 'other'. At first, however, a brief explanation on the choice of method.

Why Genealogy?

One way to criticise development is to historicize the development-idea itself. In an attempt to provide a mini-genealogy this section will outline, in the briefest of fashions, a few of the major traditions within development thinking. This serves two aims: First, to show and make explicit the omitting of culture from development theory as well as the consequences this omission has for the construction of the other. Second, to provide the historical background against which current debates around culture and difference are played out.

Before I begin to give an overview of historicisations of the development idea I want to briefly outline why many writers in the field subject development discourse to archaeological excavation.[3] Wolfgang Sachs begins with this infamously stark expression:

> "The idea of development stands today like a ruin in the intellectual landscape. Its shadow, originating in a past epoch, nevertheless obscures our vision. It is high time to set about the archaeology of this idea and to uncover its foundations, along with the numerous constructions above them to see it for what it is: the outdated monument of an immodest idea." (Sachs 1990: 2)

For Sachs the concept has become empty and useless because of the many meanings it was given over time and his approach is a meant to 'push aside the rubble', to clear the ground for work on a new paradigm. Gerald Faschingeder's work uses similar terminology. He, however, is decidedly less concerned with ushering in a new school of thought. Instead his focus is on the relational aspects of development theory asserting that the different meanings of 'development' also are indicators for the relationship between those willing to develop something/someone and those to be developed. His archaeology of development wants to look at the construction of the concept in a diachronic perspective.

> "A history of development theories is always also a history of the development idea itself and is thus a history of the construction of the other, who is constructed as in need of development. The construction of the other also has a function for the construction of the self and indicates via this demarcation the end of the inner and the beginning of the outer." (Faschingeder, 2001: 27, own translation)[4]

In contrast to this search for ruptures, Gilbert Rist uses genealogy to highlight the importance of the "continuity of discourse" in an attempt to "draw out the logic of the great texts" of each period. He finds that "the apparent innovations are merely variations on a singular theme." What remains unchallenged is the central theme of growth or linear progress, which is hidden by the discourse and thereby rendered natural – beyond critique that is (Rist, 1997: 2).

Genealogy or archaeology, then, is a tool to make visible the breaks and ruptures in what often appears to be natural and homogenous but it also traces recurring themes and unquestioned common-sensical assumptions. This makes it possible to see changes of who is in power and who is dominated, who is speaking and on behalf of whom, and maybe also for who or what theory is. It is "in the light of [these] current concerns" (Lechte, 1994: 112) that I want to look at the history of development. I will begin, unlike most historians of development, with Colonial Theories.

Colonial Theories

Most development historians choose president Truman's speech in 1945 as a starting point but some critics argue that development is a continuation of colonialism. Thus it is necessary to examine pre-war approaches to theorizing international 'cooperation'. The problem faced by the colonizers then was twofold. On one hand the young industrial economies needed to expand as Cecil Rhodes' said:

> "We must find new lands from which we can obtain raw materials and exploit the slave labour that is available. The colonies also provide a dumping ground for the surplus goods produced in our factories." (Cited in Edwards 1999: 29)

On the other hand justification was needed for the other contempt with which human life was treated. Racism fulfilled this task by utilizing difference in such a way as to legitimate slavery. According to Memmi it exaggerates and valorises difference only to utilize this

valorisation in order to legitimate the interests, aggression and privileges of the colonizers. (See Frauenlob 1999: 38-9)

The construction of this difference originates in the theological arena as 'heathen depravity' and turns into a belief in technological inferiority of the other. This is followed by the conviction that the climate determines diligence and people in warmer zones are therefore lazy and need to be disciplined for work. Finally difference is seen as unchangeable racial characteristics. Difference thus is viewed as deficiency and was frequently dealt with in two ways. The different other was either destroyed or an attempt was made to assimilate her. The latter task was taken over by the Church and missionaries like Bartholomé de Las Casas effectively insured the physical survival of the other while bringing about her cultural destruction. (See Faschingeder 2001: 44)

The role of culture in this context, as far as it features at all in the rudimentary colonial sociology, is to serve as a resource to legitimate domination and to optimise exploitation as illustrated by 'indirect rule'. Lord Lugard's 'double mandate' tried to combine the civilizing mission to 'develop' the natives with the obligation to legitimise colonialism. (See Faschingeder 2001: 30-3) Religion and science provided the rationale for that. Similar assumptions inform development thought throughout and surface in different schools at different times. In modernisation theory the double mandate turned into economic development. The essential thrust, making others conform to a eurocentric norm and thereby marginalizing them, remains the same. As Sachs states:

"[T]he two commandments of the double mandate converge under the imperative of 'economic development'. A change in worldview had thus taken place, allowing the concept of development to rise to a standard of universal rule." (Sachs 1990: 3)

Modernisation Theories[5]

What makes Modernisation Theories so important is that they share a common assumption - the inevitability of industrialisation enabling countries to catch up with the West - that informs most of development theory up to now. Modernisation Theories can be understood as further development of colonisation theories and as a reaction against the imperialism models drawn up by the radical left. They are set against the background of the Cold War and intense competition between East and West and give rise to the Marshall Plan as the first major program of economic assistance. The classic example cited in the literature is president Truman's 1949 inaugural speech in which the term 'underdeveloped' was coined, ringing in a new era in development thinking. He claimed that "greater production is the key to prosperity and peace" and that we must make "the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas." (Truman cited in Rist 1997: 249) Wolfgang Sachs observed:

"Clothing self-interest in generosity, Truman outlined a program of technical assistance designed to 'relieve the

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suffering of those peoples' through 'industrial activities' and a 'higher standard of living'." (Sachs 1990: 3).

Truman is able to make those demands only because they are rendered intelligible by the underlying belief in progress and democracy – two central tenets of modernisation theory. It was assumed that all countries would follow the same path of industrial development and democratisation like the European nation-states. Again, this idea has a history that, once uncovered, will undermine the universality of its claim. As Edwards stated:

> "[T]he idea of development as a natural progression to the same end state goes back to the Christian belief in providence[6], the continual upward movement toward universal perfection that is God's gift to the world." (Edwards 1999: p28)

The inevitability of progress and growth informs all of modernisation theory but is especially obvious in Walt W. Rostow's work, which is central to the school. It is one of the corner stones of development theory that still remains unquestioned in mainstream institutional policy making today. One of the major aims of the development enterprise is still to enable countries to 'catch up' with the industrialised West.

When Rosotw first published 'The Stages of Economic Growth' in 1960 he gave it the subtitle 'A Non-Communist Manifesto'. His own summary of the text begins like this:

> "It is possible to identify all societies, in their economic dimensions, as lying within one

of five categories: the traditional society, the pre-conditions for take-off, the take-off, the drive to maturity, and the age of high mass-consumption." (Rostow 1960: 4)

Rostow uses the aeronautical metaphor 'taking off', suggesting uni-directionality toward a utopian end-state, consumerism as salvation. The paradox of his anti-communist consumption-teleology is how closely it echoes Marx' class-less society. (See Faschingeder 2001: 67-9) With Marx he also shares an epistemology deeply influenced by evolutionism. He frequently makes use of biological terminology and talks of the "essentially biological field of economic growth". (Rostow 1960: 36) Thierry Verhelst considers this in relation to culture:

> "According to the social Darwinism that characterises this approach, societies evolve from lower to higher forms. Cultural differences, according to this theory, are merely a question of backwardness. Modernization will bring about the universalisation of culture peculiar to modern industrial society. Thus modernization simply means Westernisation." (Verhelst 1987: 11)

That progress demands sacrifices seemed to be clear. After all that was the painful experience of Europe's industrialisation that was held up as the yardstick against which all efforts were to be measured. What might seem surprising, with hindsight, is the casualness with which those 'side-effects' were accepted as necessary and unavoidable. This willingness to forgo the present in favour of an

anticipated future permeated the development project to the core and found its way into the policy-making institutions that aimed at a total restructuring of 'underdeveloped' societies. For evidence Escobar cites a UN report published at the time:

> "There is a sense in which rapid economic progress is impossible without painful adjustments. Ancient philosophers have to be scrapped; old social institutions have to disintegrate; bonds of cast, creed and race have to burst; and large numbers of persons who cannot keep up with progress have to have their expectations of a comfortable life frustrated." (UN, Department of Social and Economic Affairs cited in: Escobar 1995: 4)

This interventionist logic is based on an ethnocentric conception of the good life which by definition has to be culture blind. Two thirds of the world are defined as underdeveloped which means they need to look outside their own cultures for salvation. With the assumption of universal stages of growth that all people have to pass through it becomes possible to measure the distance each must 'catch up'. Verhelst says:

> "It is the same social Darwinism that serves to justify the notion of hierarchies of cultures, which in turn legitimises the hierarchisation of societies and hence colonialism. The ideology of development shares the same logic and thus facilitates neo-colonialism. Any idea of cultural difference is denied by the evolutionist theory.

> Societies are doomed to extinction if they do not go through the different stages of 'growth'." (Verhelst 1987: 11)

Difference is denied inasmuch as it is believed possible for all to follow the same path. It, however, gets tied up with economic advance where levels of industrialisation indicate the backwardness of countries. The other then is only perceived as what she is lacking to be like us. As Rist points out:

> "[T]he other can never be recognized in his otherness: he only exists by comparison with the model, namely Western society; thus is always unfinished, incomplete, 'on the way to development'." (Rist 1987: 15)

It is when this assigned inferior identity turns into a self-definition that the real damage is done to cultural identities, what Fanon called the colonization of the mind. (Fanon 1981) If Rostow left a huge economic legacy, Huntington left a social one:

One of the major legacies of modernization theories is its dichotomisation of the world into modern and traditional. (See Faschingeder 2001: 72-4) This ethnocentric view of the other still informs policy and has to take part of the blame for the consistent failure of many development projects. Ever since, efforts toward international cooperation suffer from a condescending attitude that conceives the other as someone who needs help. Even at its samaritan solidaric best it sees the Third World as lacking the means to modernize itself so to close the gap between it and the West. Those engaging in development

cooperation stand accused of "having a preconceived notion, therefore, of the desired futures of the countries" they work in." (Verhelst 1987: 11)

Fifty years later it is fair to say that growth, where it occurred, often did not bring improvement. On the contrary: The gap between North and South is steadily widening and "the 'pillage of the Third World', far from ending with the formal declarations of independence, has increased." (Verhelst 1987: 12) The eurocentrism of catch up theory remains an essential feature of development cooperation and instead of improving the lives of others often helped to maintain or even worsen the appalling social conditions in which they find themselves. "The indigenous cultures of the peoples of the Third World have been largely neglected" (Ibid: 13) and we must pay more attention to them. The task today is to find ways to transform development cooperation into a genuine two-way process.

The Latin American Dependistas

The paradigm shifted from right to left as a new school of thought began to dominate development theory. The achievement of the Dependistas was to contextualise development by putting it in a global framework but unlike imperialism theory, with a view from the South. The one thing Dependency Theories have in common is that 'underdevelopment' is not conceptualised as a lack of integration into the world market but rather as a result of the uneven integration into a capitalist world system dominated by the industrialised nations. The authors shift the focus away from explanations that favour endogenous reasons to exogenous, structural causes for underdevelopment. Despite these

communalities dependency theories are varied and heterogeneous and only a tiny fraction of authors will have to suffice to represent the core ideas of the school. According to Colman and Nixon there are two distinct traditions. (See Colman & Nixon 1986: 45)

The structuralist tradition of the ECLA (UN Economic Commission for Latin America) headed by Raúl Prebisch "emphasised the failure of exports to stimulate growth because of the alleged long-run secular decline in the terms of trade between primary products and manufactured goods." (Colman & Nixon 1986: 45) It recommended a policy of an inward-oriented development path of import-substituted industrialisation, the failure of which would become the point of departure for the second tradition within dependency theories.

The (neo-) Marxist tradition of the dependistas was built around a set of ideas that formed the pillars of its theoretical architecture. The name-giving concept of dependence was defined by Dos Santos as a "conditioning situation, in which the economies of one group of countries are conditioned by the development and expansion of others." (Dos Santos cited in Colman & Nixon 1989: 51) Another core argument was surplus transfer.

According to Paul Baran the industrialisation of 'underdeveloped'countries was held back by their position in the world economy. A constant surplus transfer from South to North blocked the 'real' development of those countries or as he put it: " [A] very large share of it [their potential economic surplus] is withdrawn by foreign capital." (Baran 1957: 228) Western imperialism 'distorted' capitalist development and

destroyed indigenous industries. (See Colman & Nixon 1989: 47) This groundwork made it possible to conceptualise a 'glass-ceiling' in development.

Building on Baran, Frank coined the 'development of underdevelopment'. With this term he referred to the ongoing process by which capitalist development generates "underdevelopment in the peripheral satellite countries whose economic surplus is expropriated, whilst generating development in the metropolitan centres that appropriate the surplus." (Colman & Nixon 1989: 48) According to him Latin America was incorporated into the capitalist system so early on in colonial history that it does not make sense to speak of feudal elements in its society. This was an attack on the modern dualism of traditional society coexisting with a capitalist sector, thus the stigmatisation of 'tradition' was unmasked as an ideological construct. (See Faschingeder 2001: 77-9).

This classification into a Structuralist and a Marxist branch was endorsed by Frank but it can be claimed that he 'ignores important differences' (Hunt 1989: 1999) between the revolutionary Marxists above and the more reformist writings of Cardoso. The former also defends development as a national project. "Cardoso and his notion of 'dependent development' represent a more sophisticated position." (Pietersee 2001: 44)

In their book 'Dependency and Development in Latin America' Cardoso and Faletto are critical of general theories of dependency. Rather, they aim to analyse the concrete historical situation of underdevelopment. They also incorporate non-economic factors such

internal power relations. In their own words: "[O]ur approach emphasises not just the structural conditioning of social life, but also the historical transformation of structures by conflict, social movements and class struggle." (Cardoso & Faletto 1979 cited in Colman & Nixon 1986: 53) According to them, structural dependence is a complex whole of internal and external forces. Therefore it is not useful to regard domination and socio-cultural relations as analytically distinct and merely economically determined. Cardoso spoke out against sweeping generalizations but without looking closer at cultural relations. (See Faschingeder 2001: 90) The one dependency writer that has to be credited for giving thought to culture is Furtado.

Celso Furtado assigned a key causal role cultural dependence in his explanation of underdevelopment. According to him elites in the periphery copied consumption behaviour from the centre and used up surplus, which prevented broader development. The capital-intensive production of these luxury consumer goods was usually provided by transnational companies, which gave them control over the process of industrialisation in the periphery. Minimum investment in local infrastructure and training perpetuated 'consumption dependence'. The example set by expatriates as well as advertising encouraged those who could afford it to imitate consumption patterns depending on import-intensive consumer goods. (See Hunt 1989: 154, 208-10) In other words, the elite took on a Western life-style that caused the outflow of capital rather than investment in the national economy leading to inequality, marginalisation and tensions. Other

than in Furtado's contribution culture did not feature prominently in the writing of the dependency school.

Verhelst found that a major deficiency of dependency theories is their lack of attention to culture and states "indigenous cultures of the people of the Third World have been largely neglected" and demands that they be studied much more closely. (Verhelst 1987: 22) Otherwise projects "insufficiently rooted in local culture" will only lead to resistance. (Ibid: 16)

This may have to do with the Marxist heritage the school was building on. After all Marx' own treatment of indigenous culture in his writings on India was outright racist. He "regarded Asian society as stagnant, based on a village system described as 'undignified, stagnatory and vegetative." (Colman & Nixon 1989: 46) It may be that this negative legacy is partly to blame for the culture blindness of Dependency Theories. Another reason might be that development always remained the project of the nation state. Many of the young states found themselves entangled in nation building projects, which by definition homogenise different cultural identities. That was also the case in Tanzania.

Self-Reliance as a development strategy came out of dependency theories and was exemplified by the Ujamaa-Socialism of Tanzania. As understood by Self-Reliance culture was not just one of many factors of development but it stood for identity and thus for the central starting point of each development-process. But the very process of nation-building politicised culture and the power to define usually rested with the state, not the grassroots. This was not the bottom-up process it was intended to be. Traditional values and ways of life of the pre-colonial African societies were treated with disregard. (Faschingeder 2001: 95-6) This points to the ambivalent relationship dependency theories have with tradition.

On one hand the dependistas were critical of dualism. They showed that modernization theories' dichotomization of modern and traditional was an ideological construct. 'Backwardness' was brought about by the development of the centre and not internal causes. On the other hand the dependency school produced its own ideological distortion of tradition. By claiming that tradition is free of any capitalist influence they effectively banned autochthon culture to a pre-capitalist cosmos. Culturally difference is thus robbed of substance and lost its existence. Every Latin American native then was a product of capitalist penetration, every African tribe a phantom. The dependistas' understanding of tradition is as mystified as that of modernization theories. (Faschingeder 2001: 83-5). Faschingeder concluded:

> "If socio-economic criteria only are used for the identification of the other, this leads to the homogenisation of all, whether they were previously economically marginalized or displayed cultural difference." (Ibid: 85, own translation)[7]

Neoliberalism, Neue Unuebersichtlichkeit and the Turn to Culture

If it was possible to identify the hegemonic paradigms that informed the major institutions of development cooperation after World War 2, this

was no longer the case for the last two decades of the 20th century. The 1980/90s are characterised by what Habermas called 'neue Unuebersichtlichkeit', referring to the increasingly complex theoretical landscape that was becoming ever harder to overlook. This time saw the germination of a multitude of alternative theoretical approaches struggling to subvert the dominant paradigm of Neoliberalism. The former were mostly silenced or, if backed by strong public concern as in the case of the campaign for accountability of the Bretton Woods institutions, rapidly integrated into mainstream development policy while being robbed of their critical edge. The latter is characterised by the resurgence of Modernization theories and the dualism of modern versus tradition. It essentially reduced development theory back to mere economics and thereby reversed the tentative steps made towards interdisciplinary and inclusivity by the dependistas.

Neoliberalism

According to Pieterse the Chicago version of monetarism, mixing neo-classical equilibrium theory with low wages and minimal government influence in business, became dominant in the seventies. "The wave of general Neoliberalism which ensued rejects the 'limitations of the special case' and argues that poor countries are poor mainly because of mismanagement." (Pieterse 1995:7) What is perceived as mismanagement happens against the background of heavy and steadily increasing debts, initially cheap petro-dollar loans that turned into fiscal disasters. Michael Edwards explains why the eightees are often referred to as the decade of lost development:

> "[T]he deflationary macro-economic policies pursued by the industrialised world during the 1980s triggered a recession of global proportions, accompanied by collapsing commodity prices and rising Third World debt." (Edwards 1999: 40)

The indebtedness of poor countries reached levels where they were forced to allocate a significant percentage of their GNP for the servicing of debts alone. Despite continuous income from aid and solidarity projects the repayments were so high that the cash flow from North to South was effectively reversed. Oswaldo De Rivero, non-aligned activist and former president of the G77 commented cynically:

> "The banks collected their interest through refinancing schemes based on stringent, IMF-supervised adjustments. At the start of the 1990s, the situation was under control. The debtor countries, under strict adjustment and socially devastated, were paying US$50 billion per year." (De Rivero 2001:89)

We now live in a world where the poor countries subsidise the rich ones not only as a result of unequal trade but also with a direct flow of 'hard' cash. (See Hanson 1996: 25) This ridiculous situation was brought about by an economic policy, which is often referred to as the 'Washington Consensus'. The expression is useful because it sheds some light on the construction of the belief in the market. John Williams, the originator of the phrase called it 'a myth driven by a

powerful elite'. De Rivero sums it up concisely:

> "This [the Washington Consensus] comprised of a series of principles of economic policy that emerged from the continuous consultation of the Congress and Government of the United States, the IMF [International Monetary Fund] and the World Bank with bankers, executives, politicians, and finance ministers. The central message of the creed is: The free market should regulate all economic activity; the states should intervene to maintain fiscal discipline, attain a stable rate of exchange, liberalise, deregulate, privatise the economy, as well as to make employment flexible, as the only way to gain access to credit and attract foreign investment." (De Rivero 2001: 57)

The policy of deregulation forced onto countries in the form of Structural Adjustment Programs often destroyed whatever little social security there was. Josef Stiglitz, chief economist and vice president of the World Bank from 1997 to 2000, saw how "these changes provoked a flood of short term capital" in Thailand and "helped to fuel an unsustainable real-estate boom." (Stiglitz 2000: 1) The bubble of which burst plunging East Asian economies into a recession. Gambling on state assets, the investors effectively appropriated the value of decades of Thai people's work, when pulling out of the collapsing market. (See Ibid: 2-3)

Neoliberalism, in the guise of development policy, impoverished millions and widened the gap between North and South. It disregards cultural difference and places everyone on a linear timeline of progressive development just like the modernization theories. And just like modernization theories it legitimises the same hierarchies of societies. In this ethnocentric perspective the other is reduced to what she lacks to be like us. She becomes the denial of the Western ideals of wealth and affluence, a person that is not different but poor, whose development was stunted by a lack of opportunity. In this framework it becomes the obligation of the affluent to provide those missing choices and opportunities. But most likely it is she who curbed those choices in the first place through the structural injustice that is the Western, our, lifestyle. Reaching out from the North to 'help' in this context acquires a bitter taste of cynicism and denial of own responsibility

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1989 and the End of Development

Although Neoliberalism was and still remains the dominant paradigm there is a variety of discourses challenging it. When the Berlin Wall fell in1989 and Fukuyama was ringing in the 'end of history' the paradigm of the market seemed untouchable. With the Soviet Union the second world disintegrated. "It spelled the 'end of the Third World' and of third worldism." (Pieterse 1995:8) The decline of the hegemonising structure of the two rival camps made it possible for a variety of issues to be discussed. (Faschingeder 2001: 101) 'Women in Development', 'Participatory Development', 'Sustainable Development', 'turn to culture' emphasised gender, representation, ecology, and diversity respectively and all made their contribution to the practice of

development cooperation and broadened the field significantly. Those 'modifications' of development were opposed by a more radical critique of a new school in development thinking that wants to do away with development entirely – Post Development. Here I want to mention only two of those schools. First, very briefly, Sustainable Development because it promised a radical critique of growth - the core belief of economic Neoliberalism. And second, somewhat more detailed, the turn to culture because of the obvious reason that it deals with the issue of difference and therefore deserves closer examination.[8]

Sustainable Development

Mainstream development thinking also took an ecological turn when the Brundtland report called for Sustainable Development. (Brundtland 1987) Ecological stress began to have an impact on economic prospects. Furthermore, " it was the discovery of the poor as agents of the destruction of resources that allowed growth for the sake of 'eliminating poverty' to be presented as a strategy for environmental protection." (Sachs 1990: 25) For this reason the Brundtland report called for the satisfaction of basic needs to conserve resources. It fused environmentalism and growth into sustainable development thus incorporating the critique the institutionalisation of which rendered the initial radical challenge to growth harmless. As *The Ecologist* pointed out: The language of sustainability introduced by the campaigners was utilized by "corporate and mainstream interests to 'capture the debate on environment and development and to frame it in terms that will minimize the changes to the status quo." (The Economist 1993: 91)

Worse still, this very language is turned around to legitimate the politics of mainstream development. The reforestation programs in the wake of the Chipko movement exemplified this. Fast growing species of wood that could not prevent soil and water degradation ultimately caused the indigenous population to move of the land because their livelihoods had become unsustainable. Sachs concluded:

> "An ecology that aimed at the management of scarce natural resources clashed with an ecology that wished to preserve the local commons. In this way, national resource planning can lead to, albeit with novel means, a continuation of the war against subsistence." (Sachs 1995: 27)

This shows how the language of a radical critique on its way through the institutions of development is dispossessed of its language. Its concepts get emptied out and refilled with a new content. What remains is not a challenge anymore but a legitimisation of the institutions and their practices. The contradiction of Sustainable Development "is that the growth policy supposed to reduce poverty and stabilize the eco-system hardly differs at all from the policy which historically opened the gulf between rich and poor and placed the environment in danger." (Rist 1997: 186) Similarly, the novel cultural approach to development looses its edge as UNESCO is trying to accommodate the critique it offers.

The Turn to Culture

The second challenge to Neoliberalism I want to mention here is the 'turn to culture' often also referred to as the 'Culture and Development' (C&D) school. C&D is a genuine response on the behalf of development institutions to engage the critics in light of countless failing projects. To make that clear it is necessary to first say what C&D is not.

In a blurring of the boundaries, so characteristic of the eighties, C&D overlaps with the Post-Development critique of developmentalism. It can be seen as the institutionalised discourse of the turn to culture whereas Post-Development could be referred to as the counter-discourse. Both value difference but the former does not demand quite as radical a change in development practice as the latter; they share a similar critique but differ in their prescriptive outlook.

C&D is also not the crude utilization of culture for the ends of nation building. As was often the case during decolonisation, culture was instrumentalized to subsume multiple cultural identities under one homogenous but artificial national narrative. The replication of the Western nation building projects in the context of decolonisation involved "the marginalisation of aliens, suppression of minorities and of indigenous peoples." (Pieterse 2001: 63) The downside of Fanon's cultural struggle for liberation was the internal homogenisation, construction of minorities and the creation of refugees. Being aware of the dangers of the instrumentalisation of culture C&D surfaced in the early eighties as a response to the challenges posed by globalisation and post-modern soul-searching. Culture was introduced into development discourse because "Western ethnocentrism as the implicit culture of developmentalism is no longer adequate in the age of 'polycentrism in a context of high interaction', or globalisation." (Ibid: 60)

In 1982 the World Conference on Cultural Policy was held in Mexico. There the years 1988-97 were declared the World Decade for Cultural Development. Development agencies observed the continuing failure of projects informed by successive alternative paradigms such as Sustainable, Human, and Social Development. They realised that each of these concepts "keeps as an underlying article of faith, the belief that growth in productivity is the basis of development." (UNESCO 2000: 28) The search for sustainability and justice lead to an awareness of the importance of social structures, which in turn woke the institutions up to the impact of culture on the outcome of development strategies and projects. It was asserted that Projects failed because the cultural dimension had been ignored. At first 'cultural factors' were identified and attempts to integrate culture were made. But it was soon realised that:

> "Culture cannot, as previously hoped, be reduced to a series of discrete elements that can be integrated, when necessary, into existing projects. Rather culture is its own perspective and implies its own values and its own imperatives for action." (UNESCO 2000: 30)

Thus the need to rethink development in all its aspects arose. The ensuing tide of intercultural awareness reunited anthropology and development and introduced new, anthropological tools

that emphasized participation and indigenous self-representation to development: Participatory Action Research (PAR), Rapid Rural Appraisal (RRA), Goal Oriented Project Planning (GOPP), and beneficiary assessment among others. Some refer to this somewhat patched on and shallow practices as "add culture and stir". (See Pieterse 2001: 67-72) But even on an institutional level the critical challenge went deeper and UNESCO addressed this problem in 1995. (De Cuellar 1995)

The 1995 report of the World Commission on Culture and Development titled '*Our Creative Diversity*' recommended to integrate culture and not to treat it as a separate sphere. It states that "[c]ulture, then, is not a means to material progress: it is the end aim of 'development' seen as the flourishing of human existence in all its forms and as a whole." (De Cuéllar, 1995: 24) The report puts forward a global ethics based on human rights and democratic respect for minorities. It also introduces cultural freedom, the collective and individual right to "alternative ways of living." (Ibid: 26) This rhetoric is still dominated by Western concepts but UNESCO continued to radicalise its position prompting several European governments to publish policy recommendations embracing cultural diversity in their development cooperation projects.

That the newly found reflexivity could offer "relief from development steeped in euro centrism" (Pieterse 2001: 72) was promised by '*Change in Continuity*' published in 2000. It claimed that culture should not only be a resource but also the basis from which all development should arise. It states:

"The use of a cultural approach to development [thus] points to a complete reversal of the classical development perspective. Instead of classifying culture into a series of factors, which have then to be integrated as best they can into a development process which is already defined, development agencies need to learn to begin by seeing the culture of the 'target' population as a functioning whole." (UNESCO 2000: 55)

UNESCO wants to ground theory and practice in a cultural approach "to harness the 'power of culture' in its efforts to achieve human and long-term development." (UNESCO 20000: 30) It is admitted that "we may have to be prepared to rethink our approach to development in all its aspects." (Ibid) Here the dilemma begins to emerge as they go on to say:

"It is perhaps for this reason that the cultural approach to development, which is the logical consequence of a new understanding of culture, while more and more widely endorsed in its principles throughout the United Nations system and among the major development institutions, has not yet been fully applied." (UNESCO 2000: 30)

Perhaps this can be seen as the dilemma of a multi-lateral institution trying to integrate a very fundamental critique of itself into its own workings. The need to protect and not fully delegitimise the existing arrangements can be seen more clearly in the following apparent concession to the development industry:

"The aim of these measures is *not* to replace existing models of development, but to allow these models – those of participatory, sustainable, human and social development - to develop in a way that is culturally both sensitive and sustainable." (UNESCO 2000: 58, emphasis added)

The idea to aim at a multiplicity of approaches still sounds good but actually ends up 'adding culture and stirring'. C&D then, for all its radical language actually fails to reconceptualize development. Pieterse points out that the point of C&D is to reproblematize development and the intercultural relations that are implicitly negotiated in development from the point of view of anthropology and cultural critique. This requires a further development of C&D theory. He argues that the failure to reproblematize development is a function of the reification of modernity. In keeping with the dichotomised thinking of modernity the cultural approach, according to Pieterse, romanticizes indigenous cultures. Not unlike the 'noble savage' the other is constructed as the last custodian of purity in an age of Disneyfication and ecological crisis. The danger is that patterns of stratification and internal hierarchies are simply overlooked. (See Pieterse 2001: 69)

Following from that, another, perhaps even more striking critique is that "the crucial weakness of culture and development discourse, at any rate policy-oriented discourse, is that it misses the point that culture is an arena of struggle." (Pieterse 2001: 60). Pieterse warns that it runs the risk of depoliticising culture by adding it to the development repertoire without

necessarily changing the development agenda itself. (Ibid: 68)

Furthermore, analogical to the state or nation, culture tends to be treated as if it is or conforms to a structure. Culture is thus reduced to a resource, utilized to make growth happen. Catching-up remains the central dogma and C&D, despite its critical rhetoric, remains firmly entrapped in a modern economic discourse.

History Concluded

Here, I only want to offer some brief concluding remarks. A more detailed summary of the section on history of development will be at the beginning of the next section. What could be seen from this short history of some of the major development theories is that there common strands and assumption running right through diverse schools. Culture, as far as it features explicitly, is usually utilized to entrench power-relationships. Edwards said: "From colonialism, we have inherited a basic inequality in power relations that drives the imposition of standard models across the world." (Edwards 1999: 44)

These models built on the European experience of industrialisation, which is held up as the yardstick against which all other cultures are measures. A common belief in progress and the need to 'catch up' are a

"a huge inheritance, which must be confronted if international co-operation is to work. The future of the world depends on wise collective choices, but such choices can never be made on the back of imposed ideas. That implies a willingness to undertake the

search together with those who may disagree with us. Nothing else will secure the collective legitimacy for solutions to hold." (Edwards 1999: 45)

What is missing from development theories is not just an adequate concept of culture but respect for difference. This is not to be taken lightly as Pieterse remarks:

> "The differences at stake are multiple and of diverse kinds, not just between developed and developing zones and countries, but also within them and crosscutting the difference between developing/developed."
> (Pieterse 2001: 71)

I will now turn to difference and how development theory constructed its own, 'underdeveloped' other. The consequences of which could be glimpsed above but will be spelled out in some more detail in the next section. Respecting difference means living with relativity and this will be the concern for the last two sections.

Any race of people that allows itself to be measured on a grade scale designed by European science will appear to be a culture of higher primates. Grading is meaningless. Every attempt to compare cultures with the intention of determining which is the most developed will never be anything other than one more bullshit projection of Wetern culture's hatred of its own shadows. There is one way to understand another culture. *Living* it. Move into it. Ask to be tolerated as a guest. Learn the language. At some point understanding may come. It will always be wordless.

Peter Høeg, *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow*

Valuing Difference

Summing up the findings from the section on the history of development, I now want to make a case for difference. There are three main reasons to value difference: It is intrinsically bound up with how we perceive and treat others. It is the basis of culture and without it there would be no meaning in the world. Because there is difference there is the possibility of learning from others about them and about us. For these reasons it is important to value difference. The implication of this is to accept a radical relativity, that there are no universal values that can be simply asserted. This position is not without difficulties and I will turn to the pitfalls of cultural relativism in the following section.

As could be seen from the history of development above, culture is usually written out of existence, or so it seems. That this is only the case with regard to the culture of the others will be shown

in this section. Western culture was always implicitly embedded in the theory of development. A thread of Western ethnocentrism is running right through the whole of development theory. This leads to the marginalisation of others who are constructed as incapable of helping themselves. Thus Western superiority and the universal validity of Western values are asserted, further entrenching the existing inequalities. The unequal power-relationship between industrialised countries and the Third World is thus perpetuated in spite, or because of, efforts to develop the latter. Difference, in this process, is uprooted, levelled and lost.

During colonialism difference was utilized in the form of racism to justify subjugation. It was a means to secure power and privilege. (See Memmi in Frauenlob 1999: 27) Or, as Homi Bhaba put it: "The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest." (Bhaba 1990: 75. cited in Escobar 1995: 9) The other, in the process, was either destroyed or attempts were made to assimilate her. The Church played a prominent role in attempts to assimilate through missions. Ethnocentrism, then, became a sort of expanded good conscience. From that perspective Africans are no longer seen as raw primitives but children that need protecting. This served the legitimisation of dependency on the colonisers. (See Faschingeder 2001: 42)

Modernisation theory was greatly informed by Rostow's stages of growth and Huntington's traditional/modern dichotomy. The inherent evolutionism of Modernisation Theories denies difference and the other is reduced to

what she lacks in order to be like us; the yardstick always being Western industrialised societies. According to Faschingeder, this lack of recognition for the other throughout modernity unveils the struggle of modernity to incorporate the other into its own universal project. Latest at the point of meeting every emancipatory measure of integration turns into repression through which cultural differences are levelled. (Faschingeder 2001: 145) These assumptions still linger on in development theory today, which conceives of others condescendingly as in need of help.

The same critique holds true for Neoliberalism. It disregards cultural difference and denies that there are special cases that could limit its analysis. By placing all peoples on a linear trajectory of progress it justifies the same hierarchies of societies, as did colonialism. UNESCO is critical of this one-size-fits-all-approach and the methodology that goes with it:

> "The analytical tools employed by experts, the indicators that they use to make their predictions, the criteria they formulate, and the ideas concerning the nature of progress, modernity and development by which they are guided, all tend to leave out the cultural environment in which their objectives are applied. They are frequently ignorant of its workings and underestimate the power and resilience of the social dynamics to which it gives rise." (UNESCO 2000: 7)

This attitude leads to a power-imbalance in the form of expertism. It is heavily criticised by Bureau, who states that those asking for development assistance such as training, technology and diplomas, give the Western 'expert' an image that keeps her in a position of knowledge and power. This is not an assault against a kafkaesque expertocracy but something that often happens without the expert being aware of it. (See Bureau in Vachon 1984: 5) This is what Verhelst refers to as the 'unconscious cultural imperialism of activists'. (Verhelst 1987: 29)

Sachs explained how this problem of ethnocentrism is epistemologically unavoidable. He said that development thinking cannot escape a retroactive teleology because underdevelopment can only be recognized looking back from a state of maturity. Predominance is, thus, the unchallenged starting point and inherent in development theory. (See Sachs 1990: 4) From this perspective, Sachs explained, the other is seen as the negation of own ideals of affluence and wealth. (See Ibid: 8)

Construed as poverty-stricken and unfree, the moral obligation is to help which leads to paternalistic attitudes, justifying any sort of intervention. Esteva points out how most of the world had to define themselves as "having fallen in the undignified condition of underdevelopment" and have to look outside their own cultures for salvation. (Esteva cited in Thomas 2000: 5) This is in tune with and builds to a great deal on Edward Said's work. He showed how Western writers created an image of an incapable other in order to justify their actions and underpin the construction of their own superiority. Thus people where stripped of the right to determine their future. (See Edwards 1999: 30)

That culture is the missing dimension of development theory was also shown with regard to Dependency Theories. Although a view from the South, they largely neglected indigenous cultures. Other than in Furtado's concept of 'cultural dependence', which focused on Westernised elites and the power of transnational companies, culture hardly played a role in the thought of the dependistas. This might have to do with the assumption of development as a state project in Dependista thought. National culture almost always marginalizes indigenous minorities and autochthon traditions. Although Frank was unable to break down the traditional / modern dichotomy and unmasked it as an ideological construct, the dependistas also distorted tradition. Cultural difference was emptied out and denied its presence as it was banned to a realm of purity before capitalism leading, again, to the homogenisation of all. (See Faschingeder 2001: 85)

Even in the C&D school of development that emphasises diversity and acknowledges the failure of development there is no real room for difference. Accepting difference is always connected to a disabling form of cultural relativism that supposedly ends all possibility for critique across cultures. Thus we would have to accept fascism and could not speak out against cultural practices we perceive as or cruel and/or violating human dignity. In the face of this perceived threat, the universality of own values is asserted which leads to the their imposition on other cultures. As Rene Gulet observes:

> "It is true that the policy of international co-operation is to a great extent modelled on the cultural blueprint of the industrialized countries. I

believe all the ambiguity arises from the fact that when we speak of progress, we think solely in economic rather than in cultural terms. What is cultural progress?" (Gulet in INCAD 1984: 11)

Gulet's question goes right to the heart of the critique. C&D fails to reproblematise development in the light of other cultures. The yardstick remains the industrialised consumer society. C&D is aware of the internal heterogeneity of cultures but fails to conceptualise culture as an arena of struggle. This takes much force out of the criticism that modernity imposes itself on traditional cultures. Furthermore, in spite of its efforts, C&D reduces culture to a resource to fashion growth. Kalpana Das made this forceful observation:

> "To me, development is incompatible with integral cultures. I am working in the West because this is the source of the problems, which we have in my country. It's not just the others who need liberation. Alienation is even more serious in the West than India. My efforts have been to demobilize development and to revive the sense of what is a good life, according to the various cultures, including the West." (Das in Vachon 1984: 50)

She, thus, turns development around, asserting that the North is as much in need of help from others as anyone else. It is here in our own crisis that development work has to begin because the South cannot change without the North. If this argument is appreciated in its full depth then there is, I believe, not much left to be said about development. This paper,

however, is about making valid critical statements across cultural boundaries and not about the end of the development industry and, therefore, I will now try to defend difference.

Why Difference Matters

Saying that culture is the missing dimension of development theory is not the same as saying difference was always missing from it. Because culture is missing from development theory it is ethnocentric. This is not a neutral position and it deals with difference in two distinctive ways: difference is either ignored or utilized, sometimes both.

Difference is utilized by Colonization Theories in the form of racism to justify colonisation. Modernisation Theories and Neoliberalism also utilize it, with the help of evolutionism, to justify existing relations of domination and the imposition of own values onto others. As George found:

> "The hegemonic ideology that treats hierarchies as natural serves powerfully to legitimate and reproduce domination through the internalisation of oppression, the silencing of protest and the depoliticisation of exploitative rule and global inequalities." (George1994: 28)

It was claimed that ethnocentrism is epistemologically inherent to development theory. Therefore, the other is always reduced to a negative version of the self.

Cultural difference is also denied by Modernisation Theories and Neoliberalism in the belief that all societies will develop like the West.

Difference is ignored also in the case of Dependency Theories. It simply gets levelled and the other is assimilated or at least written out of existence, banned to a time before capitalism.

Saying that culture is the missing dimension of development theory is also only half the truth. As Pieterse points out, culture has been part of development thinking all along but not explicitly so. In the 1960s instilling achievement orientation aimed at building entrepreneurial spirit, free enterprise culture. Structural adjustment programs reflect a culture of economic globalisation. Different shades of ethnocentrism are reflected in these positions. (See Pieterse 2001: 67) In all these processes the other is subjugated, degraded, destroyed or assimilated because difference is not regarded as a value in itself. As Pieterse said:

> "Understanding development as a politics of difference is a step toward making development practice self-conscious with regard to its political and cultural bias, a step toward a practice of reflexive development." (Pieterse 2001: 72)

This is, however, but an appeal to respect difference. Additionally I want to show that there are reasons to value difference on grounds that reality itself imposes on us. Drawing on the conceptualisation of culture above, it can be said that difference provides meaning in a twofold way. In a dialogical sense we "need difference because we can only construct meaning through a dialogue with the other." (Hall 1997: 235) Meaning does not belong to any one speaker and the other is essential to meaning.

Difference is also important in an anthropological sense because "culture depends on giving things meaning by assigning them to different positions within a classificatory system. The marking of difference is thus the basis of that symbolic order which we call culture." (Hall 1997: 236) In other words, without the other, without difference there would be no meaning to our lives, we ourselves would not be. There is no self without the other.

Scaling this insight up to intercultural proportions means that we need other cultures to learn about and from them. As Pannikkar said: "[T]oday no culture is self-sufficient in its ability to solve problems either of the world or of human persons. […] The solution may lie in the cross-fertilization of cultures. (Pannikkar in Vachon 1984: 33) Additionally, because "culture is ordinary" (Williams 1958), we are not aware of it. If we want to learn about ourselves and how to deal with the crisis of our societies we need others. Therefore an '*imparative*' approach is needed: "Ready to *learn from* other cultures / philosophies of the world, without pretending to compare them from an objective neutral, transcendent point of view." (Vachon 1998: 41) For development cooperation to deserve the name it has to be a real two-way process not the imposition of modern values. That means accepting the other in his otherness. Thus we will have to learn to live with real difference, which means living with radical relativity. We, therefore, need to be able to deal with cultural relativism. In the next chapter I will examine cultural relativism and whether there is a way out of the alleged impasse.

Relativism

The dynamic understanding of culture established above is reflected by the World Commission on Culture and Development when it affirms that no culture is an island. The report stated:

> "No culture is a hermetically sealed entity. All cultures are influenced by and in turn influence other cultures. Nor is any culture changeless, invariant or static. All cultures are in a state of flux, driven by both, internal and external forces. These forces may be accommodating, harmonious, benign, and based on voluntary actions, or they may be involuntary, the result of violent conflict, force, domination, and the exercise of illegitimate power." (Perez de Cuéllar 1995: 54)

From this it follows, the report claims, that there is a real need to respect all cultures, or at least those that value tolerance. At the same time it is important that we maintain our ability to condemn repressive, exploitative, cruel, intolerant, and exclusive cultural practices. (See Perez de Cuéllar 1995: 54) This is precisely the dilemma of those that realised the importance of culture – how to accommodate difference without giving in to the nihilism of wholesale relativism. This quest to retain a capacity for judging immoral practices of other cultures, however, is not straightforward.

I am going to argue that the institutional discourse of the C&D school generates a smokescreen of a radical relativism behind which it can justify the re-assertion of its own universalism. The discourse, as shown above, remains ethnocentric despite the terminology of diversity it uses. To allow me to substantiate those claims an argument for a more refined relativism – a "radical relativity" (Vachon 1998: 48) – will have to be made. Furthermore it has to be taken into account that the critical faculty I wish to preserve is not situated in a power-vacuum. Rather the context of this critique is one in which powerful multilateral institutions, like the World Bank, IMF, and the various UN-agencies, which command considerable resources and thus incentive and leverage, exercise judgement over what cultural practices are deemed worthy of support and funding. Their ability to impose conditionalities such as good governance and good human rights records shows the unevenness of the power distribution. The question is not one of universality of human rights but how one goes about promoting them.

Cultural Relativism Criticised

Initially, as Wong explained, cultural relativism emerged in the 1930s. Critical cultural anthropologists reacted against the traditional function of anthropology to legitimate colonization by ways of situating others lower down on the evolutionary ladder. Relativism as a method meant to try and understand a culture from the inside. It wants to generate an emic perspective by suspending value judgements. From this assertion of indigenous dignity against the interests of the imperial powers follows what is called the 'cultural difference argument', which culminated in the normative relativism so often related to postmodern nihilism. (See Wong 1991: 447)

The argument goes as follows: "Different Cultures have different moral codes. Therefore, there is no objective 'truth' in morality. Right and wrong are only matters of opinion, and opinions vary from culture to culture." (Rachels 1986: 16) At its most extreme it claims that no one should ever pass judgement on others with substantially different values, or try and impose their own for the reason that their values are as valid as one's own "Such a definition of normative ethical relativism is usually given by its opponents because it is an indefensible position." (Wong 1991: 447) There are three major problems with this extreme position that can, however be solved by adopting a more sophisticated stance:

The first is that the argument is illogical; the conclusion does not necessarily derive from the premise. It does not follow "from the mere fact that they disagreed, that there is no objective truth in the matter." (Rachels 1986: 16) This critique is entirely true and no sensible relativist would really claim that *everything* is just a matter of opinion. However, jumping to the opposite conclusion, that because one morality can be superior to another it is the universally valid one, is logically incoherent as well. It is not about finding the one truth but accepting that there may be more than one. The cultural difference argument in this simplified form is a polemic hardly worth arguing against.

The argument is also self-defeating in so far as it would lead to a more intolerant world. The tolerance of extreme relativism must also endorse absolutism and dogmatism, thus endorse intolerance. The World Commission on Culture and Development stated:

"Notoriously, there is no room for the assertion of relativism in a world in which relativism is true. Cognitive relativism is nonsense, moral relativism is tragic. Without an assertion of absolute standards, no recommendation of this commission would be possible, indeed no reasoned discourse could be conducted. Let us rejoice in diversity, while maintaining absolute standards of judging what is right, good and true." (Pérez de Cuéllar 1995: 55)

This assertion of absolute standards may come as a surprise so shortly before 'rejoicing in diversity' is recommended by the report and just after relativism was detested because it would lead to absolutism. Rejecting wholesale any kind of relativism while asserting the universality of one's own position is quite typical of the discourse around Culture and Development. Again, the question should not be framed in terms of either universalism or relativism but how to accommodate them both if we are to respect difference in a serious manner.

The third point of critique comes out of a swing in anthropology after the Second World War. The battle against Nazi Germany brought to the forefront the necessity of passing judgement, which would have been incompatible with a strict normative relativism. Thus relativism stands accused of undermining one's ability to exercise judgement. Inevitably, if the doctrine was followed, no one would intervene in atrocities and we all would be bystanders, or worse still, collaborators.

The Imaginary Universal Opposition

George argues that this critique is only valid as long as it is assumed that decisions are made now, in relation to some foundational (non-relativist) realm of truth, rationality and reality. But, he explains, the world is always only known through interpretation and thus there can be no objective truth or knowledge. Judgement cannot rely on an ultimate, neutral source as all perspectives are grounded in a normative context already. All compromise and agreement, according to George, are located in the social, historical, cultural and linguistic realm of political debate and conflict. (See George 1994: 24) In his own words:

> "There can be no ultimate knowledge […] that actually corresponds to reality per se. This does not undermine one's ability to make decisions in the world. On the contrary, it allows for a decision-making regime based on personal and social responsibility and disallows any abrogation of this responsibility to objectified sources out there (e.g. system, government, science, human nature, state…)." (George 1994: 24)

Frauenlob made a similar point when he said that relativity means neither the renunciation of critique nor of the search for common human invariants. Critique, for him, starts precisely with the realization that commonly accepted norms can only be reached by arduous intercultural communication. (See Frauenlob 1999: 23) Ultimately we cannot get out of culture to adopt a god's eye view. The practices of others can only be perceived through interpretation, the construction of which is always mediated by various cultural actors. Geertz finds an elegant middle way:

> "The truth of the doctrine of cultural (or historical – it is the same thing) relativism is that we can never apprehend another people's or another period's imagination neatly, as though it were our own. The falsity of it is that we can therefore never genuinely apprehend it at all." (Geertz 1983: 44)

Realizing that by accepting the dualistic framing of the debate into either universalism or relativism one only helps to disqualify diversity is the first step to an intercultural dialogue. Vachon makes a point of saying that one can no longer pretend to understand those with whom one disagrees. Understanding the other as being in error is condescending, he claims. It would be better to be conscious of the fact that one does not understand but asserts that the other's point of view is respected. This however does not mean that one cannot fight against other perspectives. (See Vachon 1998: 42) He quotes his mentor Panikkar to reinforce this point:

> "Cultural respect requires that we respect those ways of life with which we disagree or even those that we consider pernicious. We may be obliged to go as far as to combat these cultures, but we cannot elevate our own to the rank of universal paradigm in order to judge the other ones." (Pannikkar cited in Vachon 1998: 42)

Wong points out that almost all polemics against moral relativism are directed against its most extreme

version: Those holding that all moralities are equally true. But a substantial relativism does not need not be so egalitarian. (Wong 1991: 446) As Vachon said, arguing for radical relativity:

> "The cultural relativity our intercultural discourse is here proposing, has nothing to do with cultural relativism, which doubts and questions everything. The relativity inherent to interculturalism does not question the discoveries of a culture, but does not absolutize them either, it relativizes them." (Vachon 1998: 48)

Based on the recognition that all positions are embedded in their own context Esteva, who also draws on Pannikkar, suggests political humility as a way of going about preserving diversity. He claims this humility respects the unity and integrity of each people's traditions, it calls for respect for the otherness of the other. Their ways of life and dignity should be embraced and the superiority of any one culture rejected. Political humility "dreams of a world in which everyone can pose and propose their views, and intentions to others, but no one can impose their own on others." (Esteva 1998: 202)

Taking Power into Account

While it is possible to understand his vision, there is also a creeping suspicion that politics does not often conduct itself in a very humble fashion. This utopian view of intercultural harmony lacks a critical faculty. It has nothing to fall back onto when faced with fascism or abusive traditions. Also, even on a basis of goodwill, where all parties concerned are trying to come to a mutual understanding, there is always an issue of power that distorts the outcome of any discursive deliberation. This is particularly visible on the inter-state level.

It is fairly easy for the IMF to withhold loans until certain conditions are met. But it is much harder for Third World countries to get the industrialised North to open their markets to agricultural products from the South. Both instances may be considered examples of exercising criticism in an intercultural arena. In the first a multilateral institution, often accused of representing the interests of the richest industrialised countries, compels a poorer country to adopt a certain style of governance or fiscal policy. In the second example, farmers unions from the South campaign for the EU and the US to deregulate their markets and stop subsidising the products of European and US-American farmers. Which of those two critiques will be acted upon by the criticised is largely an issue of political clout and power. The amount of leverage commanded by the actors or the lack thereof has important consequences for who has to yield to whose critique. It is these issues that are masked in a development discourse that maintains an artificial dichotomy between universal and relative.

The problem with the institutionalised discourse of C&D is that it still relies on universal values, which are simply asserted, not negotiated. The 'global ethics' of the World Commission on Culture and Development is inspired by universal human rights. Linking financial assistance with certain moral standards gives it the power to impose Western standards on others. This is a common critique of the Neoliberal

approach but it also holds true for C&D as shown by the following statement by UNESCO.

> "This emphasis on the importance of respect for human rights is not in contradiction with a cultural approach to development. The cultural approach to development is not a form of moral relativism." (UNESCO 2000: 39)

This facile critique of relativism, as shown above, simply lacks sophistication. That is precisely the crux of the institutionalised Culture and Development discourse, that it has to back away from relativism or else it would unmask its own ethnocentrism. For all the talk about celebrating diversity, UNESCO is still talking about universal values in a simplified way. The artificial opposition of universal and relative unmasks the real tension underlying. The assertion of universal values is also strongly connected to a notion of linear progress incompatible with an intercultural approach. This is best illustrated with the following quote from UNESCO's handbook for a Cultural Approach to Development:

> "[T]he discourse of individual rights should not be conveyed only through the principles of the global free-market consumer society. The question to be asked is: When and through which approach is progress towards the protection of universal rights culturally sustainable? And not: Are human rights, as understood in the developed world, universal rights?" (UNESCO 2000: 39)

Women, Tradition and Relativism

Probably the best argument for a critical capacity and against extreme relativism is the various abuses suffered by women all over the world under the guise of tradition. The cultural difference argument turns on itself when used by men who justify existing relations of domination. In no way should anyone be kept from strongly condemning the appalling practices of female genital mutilation, widow burning, or the mean rollback of women's welfare as happened under the Taliban specifically, as well as the strategic marginalisation of women for the benefit of men all over the world in general. At the same time I do not think that it is necessary to cling to notions of universality to justify working for change on these issues. It is however important to understand those practices in their respective contexts when criticising them. The role of culture is central to the debate around women's liberation.

In the eighties feminists discovered that a universal sisterhood united in common oppression did not necessarily exist because women were divided along the lines of class, ethnicity, race and also religion. Trying to rescue the movement that was threatened with fragmentation the debate turned to difference, multiculturalism and identity politics. (See Bryson 1999)

For the World Commission on Culture and Development, culture, in the context of this debate, is "a double-edged concept mobilized for positive assertion of identity, on the one hand, and invoked to ensure forced compliance to communal norms and to punish deviance, on the other." (Pérez de Cuéllar 1995: 133) While there is no seamless women's culture there

should also be no essentialist depictions of assumed 'cultural identities' devoid of any internal heterogeneity or potential for transformation. The main weakness of difference "designed to assert a cultural identity against a dominant other (white, colonial, or elite)" (Ibid) is that it "can itself become imprisoning, especially for those who have least control over the production of cultural meanings and symbols." (Ibid)

Cultural relativism, then, is often used by men who invoke traditional laws or religious freedom to defend and entrench existing privileges and to further disempower women. Regularly men assume a dominant stance when faced with an unexpected shift in their relationship to women. (Pérez de Cuéllar 1995: 133) The same standard pattern can be observed with regard to Shar'ia Law as well as Multiculturalism in Britain. (Yuval-Davies 1997)

Thus, the commission observes, cultural relativity does not excuse us from exercising judgement about a given practice. Rather, it must be made in terms of the cultural context in which it is embedded. The cultural meaning of certain oppressive practices such as female genital mutilation or widow burning or female infanticide must be understood in depth, although this does not prevent the strongest condemnation. I am in full agreement with the commission when they go on to say that it is necessary to distinguish between living cultures and culture as a means to a political end. The struggle over meaning in the latter empowers some cultural actors and marginalizes others. Thus women are, more often than not, excluded from politics even when they are the direct target of resulting

policies such as compulsory veiling or anti-abortion campaigns. There is a real danger of women becoming the victims of a cultural backlash when cultural relativism is applied indiscriminately. (See Pérez de Cuéllar 1995: 134)

It seems necessary to find a balance between a respect for diversity and the ability to exercise criticism. The latter is burdened with the additional difficulty of being distorted by unbalanced power relations. The challenge is how to combine a critical faculty that does not have to fall back on absolutes and is also able to take into account the power-relations in which it is exercised with a real appreciation of difference. I would like to conclude this section by paraphrasing Faschingeder in his thesis on development and cooperation:

I can only condone development cooperation that improves the lives of people on the basis of their own society, their individual and collective identities and thus on the basis of their own culture if the definition of what constitutes an improvement is also based on the culture in question. Politically and in terms of partisanship it is about gaining a better understanding of the power relationships in a certain context. The aim of this is to establish the possibilities of struggle, resistance and change and furthermore to make it easier for those concerned, to change the concrete context and with it the power relationships within which they find themselves. (See Faschingeder 2001: 24)

In this section I have argued cultural relativism in its most extreme form is often used to create an opposition against which to justify the universality of own values. This is certainly so for

the Culture and Development discourse that sustains an artificial dichotomy to mask its own universalism. Taken to these extremes, the cultural difference argument turns on itself: it is illogical, self-defeating and leads to the complete loss of judgement. However, there are no neutral positions, because all are grounded in their own value context. Thus a degree of relativity has to be accepted. There is a tension, then, between the need to exercise critique and solidarity and the respect for difference. Balancing the two without sacrificing one for the other is the task of Ethnocriticism to which I will turn now.

It's not that your songs
are so much stronger
or yout feet more deeply
rooted, but that
there are
so many of you
    shouting in a single voice
    like a giant chile

        Wendy Rose, Hopi-Miwok

Ethnocriticism

As could be seen from the above,
diversity is a fact of life. Neither
should it be denied nor utilized for
other ends as it is of value in itself. At
the same time, not all cultural practices
are equally valid and tradition often
serves to justify exploitative relations.
This is particularly true for the position
of women in many traditional societies
and it is important to keep possible
roads of solidarity open. The problem,
then, is how to introduce dialogue to
international cooperation and to
reproblematize development theory in
a spirit of pluralism. International
development cooperation should be
based on genuine two-way processes.
However, this is possible only, as
Verhelst observed,

> "where there is genuine
> interaction and not merely
> unilateral imposition. The
> balance of power, particularly
> economic, currently works in
> favours of cultural domination
> by one partner, not in favour of
> mutual fertilization based on
> relative equality." (Verhelst
> 1987: 55)

Genuine dialogue across cultures is
needed as well as the ability to criticise
cultural practices of others. Arnold
Krupat designed Ethnocriticism for
just that. It should be stressed from the
beginning that it is not a means to
build consensus by deliberation. It is
merely about critique. Muller explains
that Ehnocriticism is concerned with
how a person from a powerful position
in society or culture can analyse and
criticise cultural products of people in
a less powerful position in society or
culture. Krupat's cultural critique is an
approach to literary criticism that
values heterogeneity and
multiculturalism. Ethnocriticism
balances difference and commonality
and is sensitive to power differences.
(See Muller 1995a: 16) It seems fitting
to adopt it to development theory.

In keeping with the methodology
adopted above I think there is
something to be gained from
establishing what the problem was,
Ethnocriticism responded to. In 1946
the US Congress created the Indian
Claims Commission (ICC) to
determine whether specific tribes
received fair compensation for land
they formerly occupied. (See Krupat
1992: 3) The ICC called upon
anthropologists to deal with demands
of Native American communities for
sovereignty and to assess the First
Nation peoples' assertion of continuity
in terms of cultural integrity, political
identity and land rights. In a situation
where the stakes were no less than the
cultural, religious, political, and
economic survival of each of the
Native American nations, the rules to
judge the minority culture's needs and
identity were those of the majority
culture. (See Muller 1995a: 2-3)

The power distortion is obvious and
nobody thinks the resulting deals were
made on an equal footing as evidenced
by the struggle that is still taking place
in US courts today. Adding to the
difficulties was the fact that the
language of the commission was not

accessible for many Native Americans. Often they simply did not speak English, the ICC's working language, or the technical language used, prevented understanding. The analogy to development work, invoking World Bank fact finding missions to establish credit worthiness for example, should become clear by now. The aim of this paper is, however, not to suggest an ethical business strategy for the World Bank but rather to find a way to exercise solidarity with those suffering oppression in other cultures while respecting their cultural difference. These aims are compatible with the values of Ethnocriticism.

Ethnocriticism asks: "How can a privileged, powerful culture perform valid critical acts regarding the cultural products of an underprivileged, disempowered culture?" (Muller 1995a: 2) Answering this question, for Krupat, means performing a balancing act between difference and commonality. He is critical of postmodernism and cites Hartsock who said it is intolerable to:

> "be imprisoned by the alternatives posed by Enlightenment thought and postmodernism: either one must adopt the perspective of the transcendental and disembodied voice of Reason, or one must abandon the goal of accurate and systematic judgement." (Hartsock cited in Krupat 1992: 24)

The values he wants to promote are those of Rabinow's 'critical cosmopolitanism', that is "opposed to monoculturalists as well as liberal cosmopolitans". It is "respectful of difference, but also wary of the tendency to essentialize difference" (Rabinow cited in Krupat 1992: 243)

and it sees "how the local is already global, the ethnic and regional already shot through with other and distant perspectives." (Ibid: 245)

For Krupat the mere production of dissident narratives can never suffice and he is sceptical whether "they have had any social effectivity whatsoever." (Krupat 1992: 11) He clearly wants to go beyond critique and said unless "we engage in something more than catachrestic narrative politics, it is all just a 'language game' for the privileged." (Ibid: 13) On a socio-political level the practice of Ethnocriticism could help to establish a "polyvocal polity, the materialization of dialogic values in institutions other than carnival." (Ibid: 247) The concepts poly-vocal polity and carnival are borrowed from Bakhtin whose dialogism is central to Krupat's work.[9]

Polyvocal Polity

Polyvocal polity, the first of three pillars of Ethnocriticism, refers to the "polyphonic nature of social life." (Swingewood 1998: 115) At the heart of the concept lies a concern with participatory procedures and the belief that those who are concerned by a decision should participate in its making. Muller explains that

> "Ethnocriticism encourages a polyvocal polity in which diverse voices come together to make shared decisions. […] It provides strong conceptual linkages between the need for diverse perspectives on problems, and the need for diverse voices in decisions. " (Muller 1995a: 8)

By enfranchising diverse interested parties and encouraging all of the

knowledgeable people to take part, it is expected that a more complete understanding can be reached because various perspectives on a problem will appear. Krupat's democratic epistemology emphasises the competence of all involved to interpret their own culture as well as the life-worlds of others, thus aiming to undermine the privileged status of experts. (See Muller 1995a: 13) There is an issue of translation here that deserves to be given some attention.

As this dialogue works across cultural boundaries it is likely that translation between different languages is involved. In that case it cannot be assumed that the concepts in one language occupy the same semiotic space in another. Adequate translation will involve the search for homeomorphic equivalents - as in Vachon's question: "What does it mean to live the good life in other cultures?" (Vachon 1998: 33) Concept to concept mapping of meanings from one distinct discourse community to another is based on the recognition of difference as well as the discovery of a relationship across difference. (Muller 1995b: 2) There are many stakeholder oriented procedural models devised already and it is questionable if adding one more constitutes a big improvement. However, Krupat's Multiculturalism with its respect for difference sets Ethnocriticism apart from other models.

Multiculturalism and border learning

As opposed to Parekh's Multiculturalism that tries to reinterpret universally applicable values to make them fit particular contexts (see Parekh 2000: 293), Krupat's leans more towards interculturalism, emphasising difference. As the pedagogics of Ethnocriticism, Multiculturalism opens up the possibility of learning about others as much as about the self. Krupat, again, is indebted to Bakhtin.

"According to the dialogism of Bakhtin there is no authoritative source of meaning. Rather meaning is co-created by conversational partners." (Muller 1995a: 10) Therefore, depending on who is included in the conversation, meaning can change. This is particularly interesting in an intercultural context where learning can take place across cultural boundaries. This is Krupat's pedagogy of Multiculturalism and the second pillar of Ethnocriticism. Central to Multiculturalism is the concept of the frontier or border.[10]

In James Clifton's formulation, a frontier is not fixed or mappable but "a culturally defined place where peoples with different culturally expressed identities meet and deal with each other." (Clifton cited in Krupat 1992: 5) For Krupat frontiers are meeting places where two cultures come together but "at the various frontiers noted by Western history were almost never two cultures of equal material power." (Ibid) Frontiers are an opportunity for mutual learning and the discovery of commonalities – what Linda Alcoff has called 'border epistemologies'. (See Ibid: 9)

"Ethnocriticism advocates putting oneself at the frontier, so as to maximize learning and to understand the cultural differences and commonalities that surround the exchange of perspectives." (Muller 1995a: 9) This is in tune with the notion of culture as established above.

Like language, for Bakhtin, "lies on the borderline between oneself and the other" (Bakhtin cited in Krupat 1992: 237) so is culture also a 'border-phenomenon'; is always half someone else's. Like speech it cannot be pure and relies for its meaning on the other. (Ibid) This point was made above and is related to Homi Bhaba's statement that all cultures are hybrids. (Ashcrost1998: 118) Muller explains that Ethnocriticism takes cultural contact as a given. It would be impossible to insulate the less powerful culture from possible intrusion by the more dominant one. (Muller 1995a: 2) Contact, and with it intrusion, have already taken place.

Contact between cultures, if out of necessity, is viewed as a good thing by Krupat, an attitude that is shared by Helena Norberg Hodge. In her strenuous efforts to save the traditional Ladakhi culture in Northern India / Kashmir from destruction through trekking tourism she finds that the demystification of the West is most effectively achieved in meeting. She said: "We actually encourage contact between Ladakhis and Westerners […] since real communication […] helps them gain a more balanced impression of the West." (Norberg Hodge 1991:177) Ladakhis, in this way, become aware of the downside of consumer-lifestyles, while Westerners learn about sustainable living. The advantages of intercultural learning were also well understood by the World Commission on Culture and Development when they said:

> "Any culture can benefit by comparison with other cultures, as it discovers its own idiosyncrasies and peculiarities. This does not imply cultural relativism: it is entirely consistent with an assertion of

the validity of absolute standards." (Pérez de Cuéllar 1995: 54)

What this means for intercultural cooperation is that it has to be a two-way process. One cannot criticise the cultural practices of others without "allowing one's own language or culture to be powerfully affected by the language or culture of the foreigner, by values and attitudes 'we' had defined as other."(Pundits in Krupat 1992: 237) Meaning emerges at the frontier and unless the inside as well as the outside perspectives are taken into account, the picture will not be complete. (Swingewood 1998: 117) This means that criticising, speaking to, is not enough in itself. It must be coupled with listening to and the willingness to accept critique.

Ethics of heterogeneity

The third pillar of Ethnocriticism is an ethics of heterogeneity. In, what Krupat refers to as, cognitive ethics, "the ethnocritical perspective is consistent with a recognition and legitimation of heterogeneity (rather than homogeneity) as the social and cultural norm." (Krupat 1992: 3) The purpose of this ethics is to inform a conceptual step before entering dialogue. In the planning phase, so to speak, it points to the importance of heterogeneous sources of knowledge. It prefers collaboration to the mere extraction of knowledge and aims to establish the radical cosmopolitanism mentioned above. (Muller 1995a: 6) The statement by Terenna below illustrates how little appreciated vernacular knowledges usually are.

> "For 500 years colonialism has been trying to offer us something different, and yet for

500 years the world has still not recognized our traditional knowledge. You must respect our culture, our social culture, and our way of living before you can offer us anything different." (Terenna cited in UNESCO 2000: 54)

It might be worthwhile, at this point, to add another dimension to Krupat's ethics. Keeping in mind our own crisis, that of Western society, could be a powerful reminder that we also need help from others and thus guarding against overly self-righteous criticism. Admitting what Kalpana Das calls "the needs and miseries of the developed countries," (Das 1983a: 11) and that our society is not the pinnacle of evolution, that it has its own severe problems and thus cannot save as the yardstick for others, is the first step for a genuine exchange. Ultimately, an ethics of heterogeneity means embracing a "challenge to what we take as familiar." (Muller 1995a: 7)

Krupat's Ethnocriticism, then, is not a tool to achieve procedural consensus. Rather it is an attempt to preserve a critical faculty in the light of radical relativity. It is concerned with how one can perform valid acts of critique across cultures, when the critic is part of the dominant one. Three pillars, polyvocal polity, Multiculturalism and ethics of heterogeneity mitigate the unevenness of the power-relationship. Polyvocal polity reflects Ethnocriticism's concern with participation and builds on Bakhtin's dialogism, which believes that including diverse voices will lead to a more detailed understanding. Multiculturalism stresses frontier learning and the possibility of mutual enrichment between cultures. As difference is a constitutive element of cultures, meaning about the self can be discovered in dialogue. The third pillar of Ethnocriticsm is its cognitive ethics. It values heterogeneity as a social and cultural norm against the background of radical cosmopolitanism. It should be said that the goal is not to establish a liberal pan-global cultural unity or any other great vision. As Krupat said:

"[P]articularims of whatever kind cannot in practice be transcended as they are the pervasive and inevitable codes of culture in its situated and concrete social practice. There is, then, no moving beyond them." (Krupat 1992: 241)

Conclusion

This paper is situated within the intercultural tradition of the Post-Development school. As such it builds on the understanding that Development Theory is seriously flawed. This claim is substantiated by a genealogical reading of the history of Development Theory and its utilization of culture and difference. An inter-disciplinary approach informs the analysis and I was trying to incorporate various readings in an effort to merge Development Theory with Anthropology, Discourse Analysis, Interculturalism, Cultural Studies, Literary Criticism, and Ethics. In no way do I claim to have mastered the literature of any one of those disciplines but I feel I was able to gain some overview of the field constituted by their intersection.

The central question I was trying to answer is: Can respect for diversity and critique across cultures be combined? In other words: Is it possible to accept radical relativity while retaining a critical faculty? I clearly believe that it is possible and with Ethnocriticism I have appropriated a tool from Literary Criticism to Development Theory that enables me to combine both. The argument hinges on an understanding of culture and a concept of difference informed by Bakhtin's dialogism – culture is relational and dependent on the different other for its meaning. This existential dimension of difference demands that it be respected as a value in itself. This does, however, not mean that one has to endorse each cultural practice just because it is different. On the contrary, by reclaiming the practice of criticism I hope to make a first step toward reproblematising development theory. Respecting difference is a precondition for solidarity with those suffering oppression and for intercultural cooperation. To arrive at this conclusion I first had to conceptualise culture.

The notion of culture used in this text relies on four main elements. Firstly, as Stuart Hall's work shows, culture provides meaning by forging 'systems of representation' between the conceptual and the physical world. (See Hall 1997) Secondly, because this process of representation is continually renegotiated it is open-ended. Therefore, meaning must remain fluid and cultures change. The non-essentialism of this notion is captured by Bhaba's hybridity that refers to the internal heterogeneity of cultures as well as the constant mutual influence they exert on each other. Thus, no culture is pure. (See Ashcroft 1998 and Pieterse 1995b) Thirdly, interaction between cultures is situated in a power-relationship and it cannot be assumed that mutual influence is even. Sabbarwal's concept of indigenised modernities, contrasted with simplified cultural imperialism, illustrates how traditional cultures can incorporate modernity while at the same time they are marginalized by it. This leads to the uprooting of tradition, the loss of local knowledges embedded within them and the destruction of ways of life. (See Sabbarwal 1995) Lastly, as Vachon emphasised, cultures are irreducible wholes and have their own economic, juridical and spiritual systems that cannot be treated out of context. (Vachon 1998) How culture is understood shapes how difference is dealt with and the reality of the consequences of theory is felt everyday by those subject to the development industry.

To trace how development theory conceptualised culture and dealt with difference is the aim of the second section. Choosing a genealogical approach it is shown that culture is 'the missing dimension' (See Pieterse 2001) of the major paradigms within Development Theory. Treating Colonial Theories, Modernization Theories, Dependency Theories, Neoliberalism, Sustainable Development, and Culture and Development in turn, it is shown that Development Theory is ethnocentric. A set of common assumptions, such as a belief in linear progress and growth, is present in all of them. The European experience of industrialisation is held up as the universal yardstick against which the standard of other cultures is measured. (See Rist 1997) The evolutionism inherent in this idea dates back to Rostow's stages of growth (See Rostow 1960) and manifests itself in the current belief that poor countries have to 'catch up'. Another important legacy that still informs theory today is Huntington's dichotomization of the world into modern and traditional. Even when there is a radical challenge to the dominant discourse the critique is incorporated into the mainstream and thus looses its edge. Or worse still, the newly adopted language is used to justify the old growth projects as in the case of Sustainable Development. (See The Ecologist 1993) In a similar vein, Culture and Development reasserts the universality of its own values in the face of a perceived threat of cultural relativism. (See UNESCO 2000)

In the light of the epistemological ethnocentrism of Development Theory it was shown that difference is treated in two ways, as summed up in section three: It is either denied or utilized, or both. Difference is utilized by Colonization theories in the form of

racism to justify colonisation. Similarly, evolutionism in Modernisation Theories and Neoliberalism justifies existing hierarchical relations and the imposition of own values onto others. But Modernisation Theories and Neoliberalism in the belief that all societies will develop like the West also deny cultural difference. Dependency Theories mostly ignore difference where it is banned to a pre-capitalist traditional innocence. The other is always subjugated, degraded, destroyed or assimilated because difference is not regarded as a value in itself. (See Escobar 1995, Faschingeder 2001, Pieterse 1995a, b, 2001, UNESCO 2000, Rist 1997)

For these reasons difference demands respect. Additionally difference is of existential importance as there would be no meaning to the world without it. (Hall 1997) Furthermore, to learn about our own cultures and how to deal with the crisis of our own societies we need the other. Because cultures are hybrids that mutually constitute each other there would be no self without the other. (See Bakhtin 1968 and Krupat 1992) This may sound trivial but needs to be appreciated deeply. Reality is plural and imposes interculturalism on us. Therefore we need to learn to live with radical relativity. (See Vachon 1997, 1998, 2000)

In section four I have argued that cultural relativism in its most extreme form is often used to create an artificial dichotomy with which the universality of the own position is asserted. The cultural difference argument attacked by its opponents is illogical, self-defeating and leads to the complete loss of judgement, threatening to make us all collaborators of oppression and exploitation. (See Rachels 1986) This

facile critique of normative ethical relativism, however, is a smokescreen and a more sophisticated position is available. Since all perspectives are grounded in their own value context already, there is no reason why one should not argue from that position albeit without recourse to universality. (George 1994) A degree of relativity has to be accepted but without sacrificing the ability to exercise critique and solidarity. (See Wong 1991) Additionally, it cannot be assumed that each position carries the same force as different cultures command different material resources. Any criticism exercised across cultural boundaries that wants to be respectful of difference, has to take power into account. (See Krupat 1992) For this reason I introduced Ethnocriticism.

Arnold Krupat designed Ethnocriticism to answer the following question: "How can a privileged, powerful culture perform valid critical acts regarding the cultural products of an underprivileged, disempowered culture?" (Muller 1995a: 2) Originally conceived to criticise the literature of Native Americans, I believe it can be useful for Development Theory. Here, it may be necessary to emphasise that Ethnocriticism is not a tool to reach a procedural consensus but merely a means of making valid critical statements. It can be seen as an ethics for opinion forming, a technique of the self for speaking about others or a research agenda for planning solidarity action. In any case it is dialogic and polyvocal which means it cannot be done from a desk in an office but only with real people in the real world.

With all its respect for difference Ethnocriticism does not believe it is possible to re-establish traditions of pre-colonial purity. It takes cultural contact as a given. In an ethnocritical context, there is no possibility of insulating the less powerful culture from possible intrusion and directions imposed by the powerful culture, because those intrusions have already taken place. It is in this context, one culture being at risk from another, that the critic has to situate herself. It carefully balances difference and commonality and rests on three pillars. Polyvocal polity, a concept borrowed from Bakhtin, is the democratic epistemology that aims to include diverse voices in order to gain a more complete understanding. It also embodies the participatory socio-political values Ethnocriticism aspires to. On a pedagogical level, Multiculturalism emphasises border learning and the possibility of mutual enrichment between cultures. Understanding about the self can only be complemented by the outside perspective of the other in an intercultural dialogue. The third pillar of Ethnocriticism is its ethics of heterogeneity. Krupat's cognitive ethics values heterogeneity as a social and cultural norm. Acts of cultural criticism are performed in the light of the knowledge that they can contribute positively to *both* cultures. (See Krupat 1992 and Muller 1995a) Taken together these three pillars form a firm basis from which, once it has been established, critical statements can be made.

To come back to the research question posed at the beginning: Can respect for diversity and critique across cultures be combined? I think they can as long as there is awareness that the self and the other are fundamentally related as well as fundamentally different. Attempting to change the practices of one culture will open up new horizons for both but it cannot happen without a change at home. As

Muller said: "[T]he meaning discovered at the intercultural frontier contains insights that are unavailable within each culture." (Muller 1995a: 5)

Hiding Behind Tradition – Toward an Application of Ethnocriticism

The problem with emphasising diversity to such an extent is that it might lead to the reification of difference and the glorification of tradition. To be sure, there is an urgent need to revive vernacular knowledges and to work for the survival and revalorisation of the traditions in which those knowledges are situated. Modernization indeed marginalizes other sciences and ways of knowing and thus the world is impoverished. The West – we – would have much to learn from other cultures. Vachon said:

> "Our evolutionist historical and linear view of reality makes us see all traditionalisation, or re-activation of tradition as a 'step backwards', as regressive. This robs a certain tradition of its contemporaneity." (Vachon 1984: 26)

However, preserving traditions, with their "own inherent creative dynamism" (Das 1984: 3) is of cardinal importance. But there is also a down side to the insistence on difference: "The notion of tradition […] is sometimes used to justify inequalities and exploitation." (Perot in Vachon 1984: 46)

One way of applying Ethnocriticism, then, would be to criticise practices that are justified in the name of tradition but serve the oppression of women. Parekh lists, among others,

female genital mutilation, polygamy, arranged marriages, and the denial of opportunities for personal development. Intuitively, for me at least, it seems obvious that those practices are cruel in varying degrees and generally hideous. So being against them does not seem to demand any special procedure to establish a critical argument, or does it? Before rushing to condemn those practices it is necessary to consider the notion of tradition. The World Commission on Culture and Development reminds us that it is not a matter of merely clashing attitudes but also a question of power and thus cultural domination which:

> "is often based on the exclusion of subordinate groups. The distinction between 'us' and 'them' and the significance attached to such distinctions is socially determined and the distinctions are frequently drawn on pseudo-scientific lines so that one group can exercise power over another and justify to itself the exercise of that power." (Pérez de Cuéllar 1995: 25)

In other words, there is a very modern dichotomy at work here: that of tradition and modernity, so central to the ethnocentric theoretical outlook of modernity. (See Faschingeder 2001: 73) It is the very basis of modernisation theory and the supposed start and end-point of development. Through development traditional values, patterns of thought and behaviour as well as social structures should become dynamised and thus modernised (See Ibid: 70) But the dichotomisation of the world into modern and traditional is an ideological construct. The manichean bipolarity promises salvation in the form of liberating modernisation and

phenomena of osmosis between the two are not perceived (See Ibid: 84) Rist made this angry remark:

> "To consider modern society as different from others, on the pretext that it is secular and rational, is actually a result of Western arrogance. As there is no society that is not based upon tradition and beliefs, nothing indicates that Western society is lacking them either – even if they are different from those of other societies. It is necessary to reject the 'great divide' between 'tradition' and 'modernity', for modernity itself lies within a tradition."
> (Rist 1997:21)

Many writers that respect difference share this general mood. "A multicultural commitment," Krupat said, urges "the deconstruction of all dichotomised paradigms of the us/them, West/Rest type, and so to undo manichean allegories at every level." (Krupat 1992: 238)

This means that modernity and tradition, however much in competition with each other are not necessarily mutually exclusive but are rather two sides of the same coin. Neither of both can be essentialised or should be imposed on the other. Vachon said that it is important to "accept that cultures are constitutive dimensions of one another." (Vachon 1984: 25) Having realised the interrelatedness of both, it is possible to overcome the dichotomy of modernity and tradition. Furthermore, Pannikkar stated that neither modernity nor traditions have the answer to all human questions, hence cooperation between both is needed. Listening to others, then, is at least as important as speaking to or about them for a real

dialogue between cultures. (Pannikkar in Vachon 1984: 33) It is in this spirit of existential mutuality and the possibility of intercultural learning that critique should be voiced.

[1]Multiculturalism aims to integrate diversity but is notoriously weak on discursive procedures. Parekh illustrates this clearly when he is trying to find a set of common values for Britain but lacks a sophisticated concept of dialogue that would facilitate the discursive deliberation of such a value base. (See Parekh 2000a, especially the chapter on 'Intercultural Evaluation') Without a proper framework within which to exercise cross-cultural critique he is especially struggling to deal with issues such as polygamy and female genital mutilation. (See the last chapter of Parekh 2000b)

[2] 'Hybridity' comes out of literary studies where it was used by Bakhtin to refer to the blurring of boundaries between performers and observers, villagers and townsmen, exotic and familiar, especially in connection with carnival. (See Bakhtin 1986 in Pieterse 1995: 56) But in post-colonial studies the notion is used to conceptualise a potential for resistance to and a challenge of the colonial power. It deprives the imperial culture not only of its claims to authority but even of its own claims to authenticity. The model of resistance suggested is located in the subversive counter-discursive practices implicit in the colonial ambivalence. It, thus undermines the very basis on which the superiority of colonialism and imperialism is built. (See Ashcroft 1998: 121)

[3] I am using the terms genealogy and archaeology interchangeably ignoring their differing connotations for the sake of brevity. Both terms, for this purpose, are meant to refer to uncovering of ruptures and discontinuities in the becoming

('entstehen') as well as identifying long-running unquestioned assumptions of a certain concept or idea by means of 'excavating' its semantic history and the layers of meaning it acquired over time. (See Foucault, 1997: 145 for genealogy, Enstehung, Herkunft and Foucault, 1996: 57 for archaeology)

[4] From the original: Eine Geschichte der Entwicklungstheorien ist immer auch eine Geschichte der Entwicklungsidee selbst, ist damit auch eine Geschichte der Konstruktion des Anderen, der als entwicklungsbeduerftig konstruiert wird. Dessen Marginalisierung hat stets aber eine Funktion fuer die Konstruktion des Eigenen und gibt mittels der dadurch geschaffenen Grenze jenes an, wo das Innere aufhoert und das Aeussere beginnt. (Faschingeder, 2001: 27)

[5] In strict chronological order imperialism theories would have to follow. Arising out of the realization that the revolution did not happen the classics, Lenin and Luxemburg tried to explain the ever-increasing reach of capitalism. They, however, paid no attention to culture, a doomed expression of bourgeois consciousness according to them. It was practitioners like Fanon who conceptualised culture as a tool of domination. At the same time he saw it as an arena of struggle harbouring the possibility of self-definition through violent liberation from colonial rule. Neo-imperialism should make a comeback later on in the form of cultural imperialism (Said). The Imperialism Theorists are not included here because they largely neglect culture.

[6] Rist (1997) and Pieterse (1995) trace the history of progress back to ancient

Greece and Aristotle via Augustine. The continuity in the conception of change is that it is seen as natural and necessary and that this can be applied to society. The discontinuity is the changing of the concept from cyclical to linear change in the 17th century when the notion of decline or change is abandoned for an upward movement toward a metaphysical goal. (See Rist 1997: 43-4)

[7] From the original: "Der Einsatz fuer den Anderen, der nur sozio-oekonomische Kriterien zu dessen Identifizierung anwendet, fuehrt zu einer Homogenisierung aller, ob sie nun vormals oekonomisch Marginaliserte waren oder kulturelle Differenz and den Tag felegt haben." (Faschingeder 2001: 85)

[8] This is not to say that I think that the issues of empowerment or inclusivity are any less important. I do not include them here for two reasons. First because I feel constricted by space and would not be able to do them justice, even less than the schools that are included here. Second, a similar argument can be used to criticise them as they still share a lot of fundamental assumptions with the other alternative approaches especially the idea of catching up. Poor people are generally characterised as miserable leading to condescending attitudes and messianic attempts to 'help'.

[9] Balkhtin's carnival has its origin in pre-industrial folk-culture and embodies an alternative reality in opposition to official culture. It functioned to liberate humanity from established order; it represented the suspension of all hierarchical rank, privilege, norms, and prohibitions, hostile to all that was immortalised and completed. (See Swingewood 1998: 127) Carnival is ambivalent and subversive and focuses attention on the people as the arena of participation. (See Lechte 1994: 9) Krupat uses it here because it is the one institution where a polyphony of voices can find expression. The concept is interesting especially as it is related to hybridity and possibilities of resistance. For this paper, it is of no further concern and I shall not follow it up.

[10] Krupat had to take some criticism for his choice of word here. The 'frontier', in the context of his writing (Native American literary criticism), has a more than ambiguous past. It is central to "settler American self-perception" (Ashcroft: 108) and thus connected to genocide.

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