

- (women, children, dispersed and nomadic populations, ethnic and cultural minorities);
- evaluations of competing economic, political, and social systems;
- new conceptions of security posed by the militarization of societies, environmental stresses across national boundaries, new patterns of large-scale migratory and refugee flows; and
- issues of economic justice arising from the growing practice of “social dumping,” the unfair trade advantages derived by countries which deny their workers basic rights or treat the environment irresponsibly;
- strategies of economic liberalization and the operation of trans-national corporations;
- the ethics of intervention;
- the merits of democracy or autocracy in promoting development; and
- disputes over the control of bio-genetic resources.²⁴

The New Discipline

Professional ethicists were late arrivals to the stage of development studies. For many years development's value dilemmas were treated only peripherally by a small number of economists. As noted earlier, Gunnar Myrdal's 1968 study Asian Drama centrally defined development as a value-laden operation. And a 1968 textbook on development by the Canadian economist Benjamin Higgins insists that “the philosopher needs to be added to the development team; without a clear concept of the philosophy of development, the team becomes a simple ad hoc

²⁴ One early example of conducting development ethics in this mode is Nigel Dower, World Poverty, Challenge and Response, York, England: The Ebor Press, 1983.

mission.”²⁵ Incidental discussion of development's value questions was likewise conducted by a few post WWII sociologists and anthropologists studying social change – Daniel Lerner, Edward Banfield, George Dalton, Bert Hoselitz, Georges Balandier, Manning Nash, and Clifford Geertz.²⁶ The systematic *ex professo* study of development ethics, however, except by a few philosophers working in isolation,²⁷ had to await the birth in 1987 of IDEA (International Development Ethics Association) in San José, Costa Rica. Three years earlier an “International Development Ethics Group” had been formed by 14 people at a World Futures conference in Costa Rica. This working group created IDEA in 1987 at a conference in Costa Rica attended by some 30 philosophers, social scientists and development workers. A later conference held in Mérida, Mexico in 1989 gathered over a hundred participants who issued the “Declaration of Merida” defining IDEA's mission: [T]o transformation,” this “[I]n the face of the profound inadequacies of modernization development strategies.”²⁸

A Third IDEA International Conference was held in Tegucigalpa, Honduras, June 21-27, 1992 on the theme “The Ethics of Ecodevelopment: Culture, the Environment and Dependency.” IDEA's membership and activities continue to expand rapidly. Until recently IDEA's activities centered in the Americas, but are now diversifying elsewhere (Latin America, North America, UK/Europe, Asia, Africa). At IDEA's founding three streams of ethical theory were represented: Yugoslav praxis

²⁵ Benjamin Higgins, Economic Development, Problems, Principles, & Policies, revised edition, New York: W.W. Norton & Co. 1968, p. 369.

²⁶ See John Brode, The Process of Modernization, An Annotated Bibliography of the Sociocultural Aspects of Development, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1969.

²⁷ Denis Goulet, “L.J. Lebrét: Pioneer of Development Ethics,” Chapter II of a New Moral order, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974.

²⁸ Revista De La Universidad Autónoma De Yucatán, Edición Especial, universidad Autónoma de Yucatán, Mérida, Yucatán, Mexico, 1990, p. 73.

humanists searching for a non-dogmatic brand of Marxism, Central American analytical philosophers applying methods of symbolic logic to issues of technology and social transformation, and US analytical philosophers looking beyond Western theoretical sources to craft applied ethical norms to guide action in spheres of global change and public policy. The three groups shared a common view of ethics' proper mission: to diagnose vital problems facing human societies, to guide public policy choices, and to clarify value dilemmas surrounding these problems and policies. This threefold reflexion they undertook to conduct around value questions posed by development. With the creation of IDEA, development ethics gained formal recognition as an interdisciplinary field in development studies and philosophy.

Twenty years before the 1987 conference, the U.S. political scientist David Apter had observed that the study of modernization "bring us back to the search for first principles and rapid-fire developments in social theory and the breakthroughs in the biological sciences, not to speak of the retreat of philosophy into linguistics, have combined to render us philosophically defenseless and muddled."²⁹ The reason for the muddle is clear: in the 16th century Machiavelli³⁰ in politics, and two centuries later Adam Smith³¹ in economics, had stripped ethics of its norm-setting role in society. Thereafter, all philosophies, as Feibleman writes, fell into disrepute as socially irrelevant,³² nowhere more totally so than in economics. Now, however, a growing number

of economists are working to restore value questions to the center of their theoretical, methodological, and thematic concerns.³³

The discipline of development is, in Lebret's word, the study of how to achieve a more human economy.³⁴ The expressions "more human" and "less human" must be understood in the light of vital distinction between *plus avoir* ("to have more") and *plus être* ("to be more"). Societies are more human or more developed, not when men and women "have more" but when they are enabled "to be more." According to the psychologist Erich Fromm, people always choose one of two modes of living.

The alternative of *having* versus *being* does not appeal to common sense. *To have*, so it would seem, is a normal function of our life: in order to live we must have things. Moreover, we must have things in order to enjoy them. In a culture in which the supreme goal is to have – and to have more and more – and in which one can speak of someone as 'being worth a million dollars,' how can there be an alternative between having and being. On the contrary, it would seem that the very essence of being is having; that if one *has nothing*, one *is nothing*.

Yet the great Masters of Living have made the alternative between having and being a central issue of their respective systems. The Buddha teaches that

²⁹ David E. Apter, *The Politics of Modernization*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967, p. 6.

³⁰ Erwin A. Gaede, *Politics and Ethics: Machiavelli to Niebuhr*, Lanham, MD: University of America Press, 1983.

³¹ Kenneth Lux, *Adam Smith's Mistake, How a Moral Philosopher Invented Economics and Ended Morality*, Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications Inc., 1990.

³² James K. Feibleman, *The Institutions of Society*, London: George Allen & Unwin, 1956, p. 61.

³³ Amartya Sen, *On Ethics and Economics*, Great Britain: Basil Blackwell, 1987; Thomas Michael Power, *The Economic Pursuit of Quality*, Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1988; Mark A. Lutz and Kenneth Lux, *Humanistic Economics*, NY: The Bootstrap Press, 1988; Daniel M. Hausman and Michael McPherson, "Taking Ethics Seriously: Economic and contemporary Moral Philosophy," *Journal of Economic Literature*, Vol. XXXI, June 1993, pp. 671-731.

³⁴ L. J. Lebret, *Dynamique Concrète du Développement*, Paris: Les Editions Ouvrières, 1959, p. 40.

in order to arrive at the highest stage of human development, we must not crave possessions. Jesus teaches: 'for whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever will lose his life for my sake, the same shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world, and lose himself, or be cast away?' (Luke 9:24-25) Master Eckhart taught that to have nothing and make oneself open and 'empty,' not to let one's ego stand in one's way, is the condition for achieving spiritual wealth and strength.

For many years I had been deeply impressed by this distinction and was seeking its empirical basis in the concrete study of individuals and groups by the psychoanalytic method. What I say has led me to conclude that this distinction, together with that between love of life and love of the dead, represents the most crucial problem of existence; that empirical anthropological and psychoanalytic data tend to demonstrate that *having and being are two fundamental modes of experience, the respective strengths of which determine the differences between the characters of individuals and various types of social character.*³⁵

The true indicator of development is not increased production or material well-being but qualitative human enrichment. Quantitative increases in goods and services are doubtless needed, but not any kind of increase nor growth obtained at any price.

Development ethicists borrows freely the work of economists, political scientists, planners, agronomists, anthropologists, and specialists in other disciplines. Ethics places

each discipline's concept of development in a broad evaluative framework wherein development means, ultimately, the quality of life and the progress of societies toward values expressed in various cultures. To ethicists it is axiomatic that how development is pursued is no less important than what benefits are gained. Although development can be fruitfully studied as an economic, political, technological, or social phenomenon, its ultimate goals are those of existence itself: to provide all humans with the opportunity to live full human lives.

The dual nature of development, as an array of competing images of the good life and as a social change process, is best understood by focusing on the value conflicts it poses. These conflicts, which make up the proper subject matter of development ethics, are found in four different arenas:

- debates over goals: economic growth, the provision of basic needs, cultural survival, ecological balance, transfers of power from one class to another;
- divergent notions of power, legitimacy, authority, governance, competing political systems;
- competition over resources and over rules of access to resources, competing economic systems; and
- pervasive conflicts between modern modes of living – with their peculiar rationality, technology, social organization and behavior – and traditional ways of life.

Development ethics functions as a kind of "disciplined eclecticism." Four traits characterize any intellectual discipline: the systematic pursuit of knowledge in ways which are cumulative, communicable, and verifiable. Although development ethics is eclectic in its choice of subject matter, it is disciplined, in this fourfold sense, in its study of it. Behind all its operations lies a clear unifying mission: to diagnose value conflicts, to assess policies (actual and possible), and to justify or to refute valuations placed on development performance.

³⁵ Erich Fromm, *To Have or To Be?*, New York: Harper & Row Publishers, 1976, pp. 15-16.

Conclusion.

Contemporary development thinking is prey to unending and perplexed self-questioning. Books proliferate, asking what are the goals of development;³⁶ what alternative strategies must be adopted, either in pursuing development or in repudiating it;³⁷ how to rethink the Third World,³⁸ its politics,³⁹ and development itself;⁴⁰ what are Third World options and its hopes for "another development";⁴¹ and whether fifty years of World Bank and IMF global financial management is enough.⁴²

Economics itself, the grandfather of development disciplines, is subjected to the same critical interrogations. We are alternatively warned of the end of economics;⁴³ summoned to become thoughtful economists concerned with rationality, moral rules, and benevolence;⁴⁴ to reflect anew on economic rights,⁴⁵ to

³⁶ Goals of Development, Paris: UNESCO, 1988.

³⁷ Keith Griffin, Alternative Strategies for Economic Development, London: OECD Development Centre, 1989; Robert Vachon, Alternatives au Développement, approches interculturelles à la coopération internationale, Montreal: Institut Interculturel de Montréal, 1988.

³⁸ Rosemary, E. Galli, Lars Rudebeck, K. P. Moseley, Frederick Stirton Weaver, Leonard Bloom, eds., Rethinking the Third World, Contributions Toward a New Conceptualization, New York: Taylor and Francis, 1992.

³⁹ James Manor, ed., Rethinking Third World Politics, New York: Longman Inc., 1991.

⁴⁰ David E. Apter, Rethinking Development, Modernization, Dependency

⁴¹ Justinian F. Rweyemamu, Third World Options, Power, Security and the Hope for Another Development, Dar es Salaam, Tanzania: Tanzania Publishing house, 1992.

⁴² Kevin Danaher, ed., 50 Years is Enough, The Case Against the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, Boston, MA: South End Press, 1994.

⁴³ Cristovam Buarque, The End of Economics? Ethics and the Disorder of Progress, London: Zed Books Ltd., 1993.

⁴⁴ Gay Meeks, ed., Thoughtful Economic Man, Essays on rationality Moral Rules and Benevolence, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

⁴⁵ Ellen Frankel Paul, Fred D. Miller, Jr., Jeffrey Paul, eds., Economic Rights, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992.

practice humanistic, real-life, or green economics;⁴⁶ to get beyond our obsession with quantity and conduct the economic pursuit of quality;⁴⁷ and to adopt a new economics around the moral dimension.⁴⁸

A new paradigm of development is clearly in gestation, centering on human development as the end, with economic development as the means.⁴⁹ Development's philosophical questions have now regained center stage: what is the good life or human flourishing, individually and societally, across the divide of multiple cultures and value systems? What are the foundations of life in society, in a polity, what Illich calls conviviality – the joy of living together with others?⁵⁰ And what stance must humans take toward nature so as to render development sustainable?⁵¹

Issues of environment, peace and security, demography and population movements, equity, and meaningful existence constitute a vast agenda offering to development ethicists unlimited materials for diagnosis, analysis, and prescription.

The essential task of development ethics is to render development decisions and actions humane. Stated differently, it is to assure that the painful changes launched under the banner of

⁴⁶ Mark A. Lutz, Kenneth Lux, Humanistic Economics, The New Challenge, New York: The Bootstrap Press, 1988; Paul Ekins, Manfred Max-Neef, eds., Real-life Economics, Understanding Wealth Creation, London: Routledge, 1992; Paul Ekins, Mayer Hillman and Robert Hutchison, Green Economics, New York: Anchor Books, 1992.

⁴⁷ Thomas Michael, Power, The Economic Pursuit of Quality, New York, M. E. Sharpe, Inc., 1988.

⁴⁸ Amitai Etzioni, The Moral Dimension, Toward a New Economics, New York: The Free Press, 1988.

⁴⁹ On this see UNDP, Human Development Report 1994, New York: Oxford University Press, 1994, pp. 17ff.

⁵⁰ Ivan D. Illich, Tools for Conviviality, New York: Harper and Row, 1973.

⁵¹ Anil Markandya and Julie Richardson, eds., Environmental Economics: A Reader, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992.

development not result in antidevelopment, which destroys cultures and individuals and exacts undue sacrifices in suffering and societal well-being – all in the name of profit, some absolutized ideology, or a supposed efficiency imperative. Development ethics as a discipline is the conceptual cement which binds together multiple diagnoses of problems with their policy implications, this through an explicit phenomenological study which lays bare the value costs of various courses of action.

More fundamentally, however, the primary mission of development ethics is to keep hope alive.⁵² By any purely rational calculus of future probabilities, the development enterprise of most countries is doomed to fail. Poor classes, nations, and individuals can never catch up with the rich as long as these continue to consume wastefully and to devise ideological justifications for not practicing solidarity with the less-developed. In all probability, technological and resource gaps will continue to widen and vast resources will continue to be devoted to destructive armaments. Catastrophes generated by environmental folly or demographic tunnel vision, to say nothing of nuclear or radiation poisoning, are likely scenarios of despair. Exacerbated feelings of national sovereignty will, in all likelihood, continue to co-exist alongside an ever more urgent need to institute new forms of global governance and problem-solving: by any reasonable scenario projectable over the next fifty years, development will remain the privilege of a relative few, while underdevelopment will continue to be the lot of the vast majority. Only some trans-rational calculus of hope, situated beyond apparent realms of possibility, can elicit the creative energies and vision which authentic development for all requires. This calculus of hope must be ratified by development ethics, which

summons human persons and societies to become their best selves, to create structures of justice to replace exploitation and aggressive competition. The present dismal scenario is not ineluctable. The basis for hope is provided by René Dubos's and other sociobiologists, who remind us that only a tiny fragment of human brain-power has been utilized up till the present.⁵³ This means that Africans, Asians, and Latin Americans are capable of inventing new, more authentic models of development. In The Coming Dark Age Robert Vacca⁵⁴ gloomily forecasts a world with no future. Development ethics offers a corrective view by reminding us that futures, like the past, are not foreordained. Indeed the most important banner development ethics must raise high is that of hope, hope in the possibility of creating new possibilities.

Development ethics pleads normatively for a certain reading of history, one in which human agents are makers of history even as they bear witness to values of transcendence.⁵⁵ There is profound truth, even as there is literal exaggeration, in Marx's notion that till the present we have only witnessed pre-history. The beginning of authentic developmental human history comes indeed with the abolition of alienation. Development's true task is precisely this: to abolish all alienation – economic, social, political, and technological.

This long view of history and of development as a historical adventure is the only guarantee that development processes will ensure a future. Solidarity with the planet of which we human agents are the responsible stewards, and with future generations, is the ethical key to achieving a development which is at once human and sustainable.

⁵³ René Dubos, Man Adapting, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1978.

⁵⁴ Robert Vacca, The Coming Dark Age, Garden City, NY: Doubleday & co., 1973.

⁵⁵ Denis Goulet, "Markers of History and Witnesses to Transcendence," in A New Moral Order, Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1974, pp. 109-142.

⁵² It is the view of some that there can be a "science of hope." Cf. Lamar Carter, Ann Mische, David R. Schwarz, eds., Aspects of Hope, The Proceedings of a Seminar on Hope, New York: ICIS Center for a Science of Hope, 1993.