

## Review Article

# **‘Beneath the Pavement Only Soil’: The Poverty of Post-Development**

**The History of Development: From Western Origins to Global Faith.** By Gilbert Rist. London: Zed Books, 1997. Pp.vi + 276. £42.50/\$65 and £14.95/\$25. ISBN 1 85649 491 8 and 492 6

**Grassroots Post-Modernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures.** By Gustavo Esteva and Madhu Suri Prakash. London: Zed Books, 1998. Pp.223. £45/\$62.50 and £14.95/\$22.50. ISBN 1 85649 545 0 and 546 9

**The Post-Development Reader.** Edited by Majid Rahnema with Victoria Bawtree. London: Zed Books, 1997. £45.00/\$65 and £15.95/\$25. ISBN 1 85649 473 X and 474 8

**International Development and the Social Sciences: Essays on the History and Politics of Knowledge.** Edited by Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997. Pp.xii + 361. £40/\$50 and £14.95/\$20. ISBN 0 520 20956 7

These are strange times in development studies. There are few takers now for a socialist alternative to capitalism, and the Right, suitably encouraged by the impasse in radical development thinking, has pushed ahead with its declarations of a Washington Consensus. Several objections continue to be made to this Consensus, of course, and not least by those mindful of the importance of getting relative prices wrong, but all such appeals to Polanyi or List take shape within a discourse that values capitalist development in one form or another. For those academics or activists who cannot bring themselves to endorse capitalism or ‘progress’ in any shape or form this will not do. Over the past ten years there has been a turn to Foucault or Gandhi to develop a more fundamental critique of the will to power which informs The Development Discourse, or of the dehumanising consequences of a Development Project which fails to accord with common-sense and human-scale understandings of what it is to lead a good life. The label that is being attached to this critique is Post-Development.

What are we to make of this new challenge to development? A generous response to post-developmentalism would accept that development has brought disenchantment to many parts of the world, and that Western accounts of what it is to be normal or civilised or developed have too often ridden roughshod over non-Western understandings of what is true or just or desirable. Any development studies worth its salt should reflect on alternative accounts of the good life, and should not dismiss out of hand the claim that a good life is best lived locally, in contact with the soil, and in

accord with Gandhian notions of beauty, frugality and simplicity. But these nods to power and truth should not be made uncritically. Proponents of post-development too often trade in non-sequiturs (the failure of development project A, B or C condemns development in all its manifestations), in unhelpful binaries (Modernity is bad, anti-modernity is good), in false deductions (the problems of poor countries are always and everywhere the result of a surfeit of capitalism or development and not their relative absence), in wobbly romanticism (only the rich get lonely, only the poor live hospitably and harmoniously), in self-righteousness (only the simple life is a good life), or in implausible politics (we can all live like the Mahatma, or would want to).

In addition, and not disregarding the close links between knowledge, power and desire in the constitution of development studies, most of us would think twice before concluding that *because* the discourse of development originated in the first flush of the cold war, and *because* the age of development has been associated with famine, debt and the ravages of structural adjustment, *so* we must abandon Development *tout court*. There are many ways that power can be resisted or reshaped or even used to advantage. Opting out is not the only option, even assuming it is a plausible option. For its part Development doesn't only come in one size or shape, or with an overbearing capital D. The tricks and turns and dilemmas of development, and development thinking, are more complicated than post-development allows.

Of course, post-developmentalism does not come in one shape either. Until recently I associated post-development with the work of Arturo Escobar, and latterly James Ferguson, as much as I did with the work of Vandana Shiva or Ivan Illich.<sup>1</sup> But while these sets of authors do hold certain assumptions in common – not least that Development is a disabling and archly Western discourse – it is clear that much divides them. Escobar's work takes its lead from Foucault, Gramsci and Said, and concerns itself with the ways in which Western accounts of Development set out to normalise the West's Other in the name of reason or progress, but always for particular political ends. Although the final chapters of Escobar's monograph *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* propose certain alternatives to Development, the cast of the book is recognisably academic, if not always very convincing.<sup>2</sup>

The collection of essays on international development and the social sciences edited by Frederick Cooper and Randali Packard shares Escobar's concern with the ways in which 'development knowledge is produced, circulated, contested and refashioned' (Haugerud, back cover), but the contributors to this volume are more attuned to the diversity of development discourses and experiences than is Escobar. The Cooper-Packard collection is a fine book, though not without certain flaws, and I will return to it at the end of this review.

Very different in tone and content are the three remaining books for review: those by Rist, Esteva and Prakash, and Rahnama with Bawtree. These books, and especially the last two, describe a more visceral post-development – a post-developmentalism that resorts to *advocacy* more often than reasoned argument, and which draws on Gandhi and Illich as much as Foucault or Said.

Gilbert Rist's account of *The History of Development* is a gentle introduction to the post-development-as-advocacy literature. Indeed, there is much to admire in Rist's account of the religious qualities of developmentalism as a political and intellectual ideology. Rist contends that the origins of Western thought on development are to be found in the work of Aristotle and more especially Saint Augustine, and that the latter's linear view of history was given fresh impetus in the Enlightenment by Buffon and Condorcet. Social evolutionists in the nineteenth century then provided new forms

of legitimisation for a fresh wave of European colonisation in Africa and Indochina. Comte, Say, Marx, Morgan and Spencer are all mentioned here, and Rist is encouraged to revisit a claim that he first makes in his Introduction – ‘the practices which are today claimed as new [developmentalism] have a long history behind them ... control over the lands of the South has long dressed itself up as high-minded internationalism’ (p.6).

So far, so unexceptional. Rist then shows, more acutely than some other critics of development, that post-1945 developmentalism both continued and broke with the organising assumptions of linearity and evolution that governed Western views of the Non-West. The developmentalism that emerged under US tutelage in the late-1940s was dressed up in a language of universal human rights and capabilities that found little room for the racial and environmental theorising built into social evolutionism or colonialism. The South was now depicted as the equal of the North, at least in terms of potential. To realise this potential, however, certain gaps had to be plugged by foreign aid and a more general imitation of Western development. This leads Rist to a discussion of Rostow’s stages model, and various other ‘great texts’ which define the post-war Age of Development. In the middle part of the *History* the reader is led at a giddy pace through the work of Perroux, Seers, Baran and Sweezy, Frank and Cardoso (dissident voices within a development framework), before being directed to the ujamaa experiments in self-reliance in Tanzania, the emergence of Third Worldism and demands for a New International Economic Order, the anodyne reports of Brandt and Brundtland, and the emergence of a fully-fledged neoliberalism in development policy.

All this is done in less than 200 pages, and if Rist holds the reader’s attention it is because he writes fluently, and because he has been well served by his translator, Patrick Camiller. Rist’s account of the history of development is also worth reading for its French bias. It is pleasing to read a work on development that is less indebted to the Anglo-Saxon mainstream, notwithstanding Rist’s curious emphasis upon the importance of Rostow’s work as a defining moment in developmentalism. Even so, this is pretty basic fare, and many students of development will be puzzled by the organisation of Rist’s narrative. Almost half of this history of post-1945 development thinking is taken up with Rostow, his critics in the *dependencia* camp, and the experiments in Tanzania. The counter-revolution in development studies barely gains a mention, and there are no nods at all to the work of institutionalists like Amsden, Evans or Wade, or to more recent debates on trade theory, state theory, governance, citizenship and democracy, or social capital.

There is a reason for this. History aside, Rist is keen to make two points: (a) that developmentalism has a long pedigree in Western thought, and is remarkably constant in its normalising assumptions and ambitions (thus all of the thinkers named above subscribe to the view that the South should catch up the North, with the possible exception of ‘delinkers’); and (b) that development has failed to make good on its promises post-war, so much so that the ideology of development may be dismissed as little more than a religious faith that we cling to in the face of worsening crises of food, indebtedness, poverty and environmental degradation. As so often in post-development texts, this second claim is bluntly asserted and not argued for. The association of famine and indebtedness with an Age of Development is deployed as proof that the latter, and only the latter, caused the former, and that nothing positive was created by ‘Development’ at the same time. On the basis of these assertions Rist moves to the strong claims that conclude his book: (a) that development is ‘the problem [not] the solution’ (p.196) – because its economic dream of abundance for

all must result in imminent ecological catastrophe (ibid.); (b) that 'It is time to get out – to move from the realization of failure to an act of rejection [of development]' (p.236), to 'admit that the emperor has no clothes' (ibid.); and (c) to recognise that in the face of 'the negative verdict of history ... only a new paradigm can alter, not the ways things are, but our way of conceiving them' (p.237) – this paradigm being that of 'post-development' (p.248).

Worn out, perhaps, by his run through the history of development, Rist stumbles when it comes to the content of post-development. It seems, first, to be about self-confidence, and to this end Rist quotes an African proverb: 'You are poor because you look at what you do not have. See what you possess, see what you are, and you will discover you are astonishingly rich' (p.244).<sup>3</sup> I can see what Rist is getting at here – a vocabulary of empowerment and self-worth – but the view that poverty is mainly definitional is thumpingly convenient for the rich and powerful, even if it is bang up to date with postmodernist conceits. (It also implies that the rich and powerful might not be rich and powerful if they did not define themselves as such). Secondly, it is about resistance to the supposedly hegemonic ideologies of Westernisation, Modernisation, Development and Economic Growth. Post-development is radical because it calls for 'a new way of looking at the self and the world or, in other words, an epistemological turn' (p.244) that encourages people in the South, and elsewhere, to embrace a way of living – a good life – that is local and sustainable and not in tow to 'the ordinary discourse of economics' or 'the concept of utility' (p.247).

Rist's failure to provide a plausible map of post-development weakens his critique of Development in my view. Rist would disagree, of course, and he might point to the work of Esteva and Prakash (*Grassroots Post-Modernism*) and Rahnama with Bawtree (*The Post-Development Reader*) as more forceful accounts of the post-development agenda. And forceful they certainly are.

The key arguments of Esteva and Prakash are set out in Chapters 1 and 2 of *Grassroots Modernism*, and are signposted in the title of Chapter 1, 'Grassroots Post-Modernism: Beyond the Individual Self, Human Rights and Development'. Esteva and Prakash make five claims, three of which involve tackling the 'sacred cows' of the modern era, and two of which are more constructive.

The sacred cows which so offend Esteva and Prakash are 'the myth of global thinking', the 'universality of human rights' and the 'myth of the individual self' (pp.9-11). The myth of global thinking refers to the Western conceit that economic growth can or should be generalised, and the assumption that 'global thinking is superior to local thinking' (p.10). Universal human rights are condemned as 'the moral justification behind "think global"' (p.10, emphasis in the original), and are decried for their inattentiveness to local conceptions of justice, truth and the good life. In any case, 'The evils and injustices of traditional village governance are miniscule in scale or severity when compared with those of national governments; or their contemporary descendants: the trans-border corporate superstructures constituting the 'Global Project', being legitimized by its gospel of human rights' (p.114). The myth of the individual self refers to the Western propensity to define a person by what he or she does (a world of calling cards – p.76), and the Western predilection for guaranteeing rights to these atomistic agents in the name of global civil rights. Such an account of the I or the non-I is deemed inauthentic by Esteva and Prakash:

In villages and other spaces of the 'social majorities', introductions [and identities] take a completely different course ... At the grassroots, the meeting occurs between persons who define themselves by concrete 'first person

plurals' – those flowers 'born out of the sharing in the good of convivial life'. Their lives at the grassroots are constituted by the living communal soil: memories of shared stories, told and retold in endless mutations; of the births, weddings, funerals, harvests, and all else that punctuate and shape the dailyness of daily life; of rites of passage whose meaning demands and depends upon the participation of the community, centered on ceremonies – not the least of which is the communion of bread broken together (p.77).

Set against these sacred cows, these consuming and terrorising myths (pp.4-5), these monsters of Modernity (Mexico City and New Delhi are described as monsters at pages 66 and 92 respectively), there are two guides to a better and more authentic life: just say 'No', and people's rule. Just say 'No' is a political strategy that takes its cue from Gramsci and Gandhi, as well as from Illich and Wendell Berry. The downtrodden 'social majorities' of the South are invited to stand firm against the disciplinary regimes of the Global Project. Instead of buying into the myth of development, they are asked to resist 'the plague of economic thinking', 'the certainty of economic rationality', and the insidious AIDS-like spread of consumerism and cultural genocide (p.10 and throughout). Just saying 'No' means stepping outside the project. Having stepped outside the diseased circles of Modernity, Science, Reason, Technology, Westernisation, Consumption, the Nation-State, Globalisation and Development, the peoples of the social majority can then make and rule their own lives at the grassroots. The key to a good life would seem to reside in simplicity, frugality, meeting basic needs from local soils, and shitting together in the commons (see the discussion of the last item on pages 94-9).

I doubt that I need go on. To be fair to Esteva and Prakash, they are consistent in some of these hair-shirted arguments. They recognise that defecating together in urban areas of the South is not the pleasure that it is for some in the countryside ('It would be criminal to idealize misery' – p.195), and they refuse to commend their 'stories of dry latrines or *comida* as catechisms for global conversion ... The lessons we are learning from "the people" at the grassroots reveal that their successes remain the results of their practices, devoid of any attempt to preach, promote or advertise "the best way" to live for the whole globe' (p.98). But these caveats are unconvincing. If Esteva and Prakash are reluctant to commend just one way to live a life, they are less humble when it comes to fingering the Bad Life. The Bad Life is to the fore in Western icons of pleasure (Coca-Cola, TV, cars and so on), either because these are intrinsically bad or because they can never be consumed by a majority of the world's population. Hedonism is not on the agenda – there is no beach beneath the paving stones.<sup>4</sup> (Whilst I am on this point, it is worth noting that many post-development critiques of the Global Project are propped up by an implicit resource pessimism, a sort of neo-Malthusianism which sees people as burdens rather than blessings despite all the hype about people's power. This bias is informed by a general mistrust of urbanism and technology, and it surfaces in Esteva and Prakash's casually misleading reference to the 'Five billion present, and the 10 billion waiting around the corner of the new century' (p.1). It may suit the authors to write of a global population that is as yet only one-third formed, but more widely accepted estimates of current and stationary world populations lean towards six and 11 billion respectively.<sup>5</sup>

I will come back to the intolerance that can attach itself to post-development. For the moment let me wrap up this part of the review article by noting that *The Post-Development Reader* (PDR) features chapters by most of the gurus of post-development thought, and may be worth buying on that account. Esteva's chapter

deals with the Chiapas uprising in Mexico, and rehearses some of the empirical sections that make up Chapters 3–5 of *Grassroots Postmodernism*. Esteva celebrates the Mexican Indian slogan of Basta! or Enough! He also commends the Zapatistas' vision of a good life. As for the rest of PDR – the remaining 36 chapters and the Afterword by Rahnema – it must suffice to list the titles of ten key chapters: 'The Original Affluent Society' (Sahlins), 'Development as Planned Poverty' (Illich), 'Development and the People's Immune System: The Story of Another Variety of AIDS' (Rahnema), 'The Agony of the Modern State' (Kothari), 'Education as an Instrument of Cultural Defoliation' (Ki-Zerbo and colleagues), 'Western Science and Its Destruction of Local Knowledge' (Shiva), 'The One and Only Way of Thinking' (Ramonet), 'The Searchers After the Simple Life' (Shi), 'Protecting the Space Within' (Lehman), and 'Birth of the Inclusion Society' (Snow). There are intriguing and less obviously committed chapters by Marshall Berman, James Petras, Susan George and James Ferguson, to name just four contributors, but the above mentioned chapter titles give a fair sense of the book's content and perspective.

And so the question remains: what are we to make of this type of post-developmentalism? My remarks thus far will suggest a certain scepticism about post-development-as-advocacy and I will be adding to these remarks shortly. Before doing so, however, I want to acknowledge the strengths of post-development. Not the least of these strengths is that post-development keeps 'the raw nerve of outrage alive', to borrow a felicitous phrase from E.P. Thompson. Post-development thinkers force us to confront our own prejudices about the agendas of development and the shocking failures of some aspects of The Development Project.<sup>6</sup> They also provide a human touch that is too often missing in development studies.

I do not mean this in a trivial way. Post-developmentalists bemoan the ways in which mainstream students of development set themselves up as technicians, or as detached observers of distant events. Their own writing strategies refuse this degree of abstraction. At its best the prose of post-developmentalism puts us in touch with the victims of development (and the authors of alternatives to development) in a way that escapes the under-socialised accounts of human action that find favour in development economics. And this matters. It would be absurd to reduce development studies to a sort of generalised moral indignation (and such an absurdity is present in post-development thinking), but it is no less absurd to reduce development issues to a positive social science which obsesses about means and only rarely considers the ends of 'development'. If for no other reason, it is worth commending post-development for the kick up the backside it delivers to the cosy and complacent worlds of the Washington Consensus.

But kicks at Washington's ample rump are not enough. Post-development fails to convince because it too often trades in dogma and assertion, and too rarely resorts to proper argumentation. To say this, of course, is akin to waving a red rag at a bull. Post-developmentalists like Esteva and Prakash have no time for Western Reason and they would dispute attempts to privilege logic over empathy. Their book, indeed, opens with some stinging remarks about 'ordinary men and women [who] we know personally; who share our daily predicaments and experiences at the grassroots; who refuse to uncritically believe what is manufactured for the consumption of TV-set owners, or of what is considered "publishable" by the editorial boards, constituted by "experts", of the "top journals"' (p.7). But we should not be intimidated by these remarks, or by appeals to the goodness of a simple life (fair enough), or the possibility that I or you or we might admire Esteva's life and career as an intellectual and activist in Latin America. If recent history has taught us anything, it is that poor people are not

empowered by appeals to 'all that Capitalism or Reason or The West is not'. Indeed, I would put this more strongly: 'ordinary men or women' are very often protected by pragmatism, and are very often victimised when careful reason is dispensed with in favour of shouted slogans or hazy Utopias.

My specific objections to post-development (as advocacy) take shape in the lee of these more general remarks:

(1) Post-development makes its case for change with reference to unhelpful and essentialised accounts of the West and the Rest, the social minorities and the social majorities. The West is coded as inauthentic, urban, consumerist, monstrous, utilitarian and more, and its men and women are pitied as lonely, anxious, greedy and shallow. In contrast, the social majorities of the Non-West are depicted as authentic, rural, productive, content, in tune with Nature and so on. Post-development accounts of the emptiness of some modern/Western lives are not without merit, and much has been written on this.<sup>7</sup> But these binary distinctions are too neat and too partial. Esteva and Prakash have no sense of the pleasure as well as the pain that defines 'a Western life' (or any other life), and they fail to acknowledge how people in the social majorities are already (and sometimes pleasurably) buying into parts of 'the Western lifestyle'. I have yet to meet a man or a woman in the village where I have long worked in (tribal) central India who does not want a fan in summer or the electricity that powers it. The lives and aspirations of the people I know in Nehalu are more varied than some post-development thinkers make out.

(2) Post-development equates 'Western' science and reason with Technology, and bad technology at that. The same goes for Modernity, which becomes a synonym for certainty, bureaucracy and even oppression. Rostow and the stages-of-growth model have a lot to answer for here, and post-developmentalists are right to rage against some of the more damning embodiments of science as technology such as the Tehri or Narmada dams in India. But science and the cunning of reason are also liberating, and for two reasons. Science as technology can be liberating where it is labour-saving or life-saving, a point I will come back to. In addition, science as method can be liberating where it is lit up by a healthy scepticism or a bias for falsificationism. At its best, the scientific method, or Enlightenment's reason, forces us to think that we might be wrong (Einstein's stated reason for doing science), and so encourages an attitude of humility, a willingness to tolerate provisional truths, that is the very opposite of the arrogant certainties that post-development associates with Western science.

(3) Post-development activists fail to acknowledge that critical thinking and open political systems might be preconditions for the 'pluriverses' they wish to celebrate at the grassroots. Again, this is a double-edged sword. Not a few 'open societies' are touched by a strain of bureaucratic authoritarianism. India and the UK are cases in point: the promotion of plural societies is never easy. But it is not clear that anti-modern societies will fare better; nor is it clear to me that women in the global South will benefit from attacks on a discourse of universal human rights which protects all female bodies regardless of local customs (and just whose customs are these?).

On this issue, Esteva and Prakash write as follows:

At the risk of being accused of parochialism, cultural relativism or, worse yet, inhumane indifference to dowry deaths, clitorectomies, gay bashing and to the million other ways in which people torment and torture each other, we want to

explicitly reject all contemporary attempts to globalize human rights. Their moral and philosophical foundations are increasingly suspect to us (pp.137–8).

Frankly, this will not do. The accusation *is* in danger of sticking, and the frequent resort to a 'plague of AIDS, plague of development' simile by post-development thinkers only encourages an impression of unconcern on some key political issues.

(4) Post-development romanticises the 'soil cultures' of the social majorities and provides poor empirical documentation of its claims. This romanticism is linked to an untenable resource pessimism that finds no role for (urban) invention in the production of 'resources'. Some post-development thought may even be misanthropic: resources are out there and men and women simply consume them.

(5) Post-development fails to consider the opportunity costs of the spatial closure strategies it commends on behalf of the 'social majorities'. For those men or women who want to live like Gandhi (see Chapter 30 of PDR) this is not an issue. For everyone else 'knowledge is power' and the failure to make clear the costs of post-development or anti-modernism does not reflect well on the moral landscapes of post-development. Post-development also depends, wittingly or otherwise, on the model of North–South economic relationships that Gunder Frank sketched out in the 1960s, and which was resoundingly critiqued through the 1970s.<sup>8</sup> (Indeed, there is not much that is new about post-development thought. For all its protestations of radical difference, there is little in post-development that moves beyond Gandhi or Schumacher, Illich or Fanon).

(6) Post-development fails to address the downside of delinking because it associates the ills of the world with The Global Project [of Development]. Debt, famine and imminent ecological catastrophe are all mentioned in this regard. Post-development thinkers too rarely acknowledge that these pathologies may be the result of an absence of development (not least in war-ravaged societies), or of a mal-development that should provoke political actions for a more empowering and sustainable development. Post-development is unwilling to recognise that men and women can be empowered at different spatial scales, or that empowerment at the local level will be difficult to effect in the absence of coherent macro-economic and political policies. Post-development threatens to lock people out of the debates that matter (on fiscal and trade policies, for example, or on the provision of infrastructure), preferring instead to extend the gaudy promise of a life free of contradictions at the local level (wherever that might be).

(7) Post-development gives no hint of the extraordinary accomplishments that have defined the Age of Development, or of the historically unprecedented increases in life expectancies for men and women that have been achieved since 1950. (In India, life expectancies at birth increased for men from 46 to 60 years between 1965 and 1990, and for women from 44 to 58 years.) This oversight is disgraceful and it cannot be justified by reference to the darker side of development. Development is about dilemmas, and the shortcomings of development should not be read as the Failure of Development. The so-called discourse of development is more critical and reflexive than its critics allow, and it is not fully determined by the powerful interest groups which figure in its production and dissemination. It is ludicrous to imply that Walt Rostow and Robert Wade are cut of the same cloth (except in the most trivial sense),



or that development thinking in the 1990s is in tow to the modernising orthodoxies of the 1950s.

None of this means that we should be complacent about the failures of development, or about the power relations that inform particular constructions of 'the development project'. That way lies the Washington Consensus. But we do need to interrogate the political and intellectual assumptions built into particular accounts of development with care, and with due regard for changes in development thinking. Arturo Escobar has taken a lead in this regard, although not to everyone's satisfaction.<sup>9</sup> Rather better, I think, and certainly more precise, is the collection of essays on international development and the social sciences published recently by Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard.

Cooper and Packard's volume of essays will be required reading for anyone who wants to understand 'development' in terms of the history and politics of knowledge. The editors state that: 'Our goal [in the workshops from which the volume derives] was neither to bury development nor to praise it' (p.4), and for the most part this rings true. The editors provide a fine introduction to the history and heterodoxy of development thinking in the last half century, and they provide useful pointers to attempts to provide (and contest) hegemonic readings of the development project. Their efforts set the scene for a collection of eleven essays in four Parts: The End of Empire and the Development Framework (essays by Bose, Cooper, and Packard); Intellectual Communities and Connections (Carter, Ferguson, and Sharpless); Ideas and Development Institutions (Finnemore, and Sikkink); and Development Language and its Appropriations (Pigg, Diouf, and Gupta).

There are some fine essays here and most of the chapters are worth reading. The three essays I would single out for acclaim are those by Sugata Bose on the contested nature of development planning in India either side of Independence, by Michael Carter on fresh challenges to the neo-classical and neo-liberal mainstreams in development economics, and by Stacey Leigh Pigg on the hybrid meanings of medicine in Nepal (hybrid meanings which make it difficult to sustain binary oppositions between tradition and modernity, or scientific and indigenous knowledge systems).

If the volume has a weakness it is that it has little to say about the sorts of debates on development that readers of this Journal might consider mainstream. The book is long on the concerns of anthropologists and modern historians, but is curiously silent on development economics (Carter excepted) or the key geographical battleground of contemporary development thought (East Asia versus sub-Saharan Africa). This might come to matter.

Development studies needs to open itself up to critical intellectual enquiry, and this collection adds to the more substantial history of development thinking published recently by Cowen and Shenton.<sup>10</sup> At the same time, this sort of intellectual probing will not be enough if it fails to give a sense of the achievements of 'development', or if it gives the impression that development thinking today is defined exactly and exclusively by the knowledge-power relations that shaped it at the end of empire. For the most part, Cooper and Packard's collection resists such easy pickings. Post-development thought most certainly does not.

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## NOTES

1. Escobar [1984, 1995], Ferguson [1990], Shiva [1991, 1993], Illich [1977, 1992].
2. See the critiques by Lehmann [1997] and Little and Painter [1995].
3. After Ndione [1994].
4. 'Under the paving stones, the beach'. Situationist slogan, Paris, May 1968.
5. Esteva and Prakash are less in tow to demographic determinism or resource pessimism than some other post-development thinkers (including Rist and the ecocentric populists). Although Esteva and Prakash subscribe to a natural resources hypothesis (which rules out resource creation), they are properly aware of the dangers of proposing 'population control' as a solution for the resource problems of the social majorities: see p.108 (note 8).
6. We *should* be outraged by the way that the debt crisis, for example, has been policed since 1982: as a debt crisis only and not as a banking crisis or trade crisis or crisis of development. But outrage can lead in several directions. Post-development favours a complete break with Capitalism and Development. I would prefer to campaign for more regulated – and ethical – forms of capitalism and international relations, which is a very different (and no less difficult) political agenda. On questions of plausibility and development ethics, see Corbridge [1998] and Nussbaum [1997].
7. Not least by Weberians: see Sayer [1991]. See also Kundera [1988], Bauman [1990], Giddens [1991], and Lehmann [1990].
8. Frank (1967, 1969). See the critiques by Brenner [1977] and Phillips [1977].
9. See also the collection of essays edited 25 years ago by Talal Asad [1973].
10. Cowen and Shenton [1996].

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