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The University of Southern Mississippi

PHILOSOPHER'S STONE: THE FAUSTIAN GEIST OF DEVELOPMENT

by

Salikyu Sangtam

Abstract of a Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate School
of The University of Southern Mississippi
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

August 2015

ABSTRACT

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by Salikyu Sangtam

August 2015

The present study juxtaposes scientific rationality with polyphonic rationality in respect to societal development. This is done to illuminate how scientific rationality provides a narrow and truncated view of development. In order to explicate the exclusion of polyphonic rationalities/knowledges in favor of scientific rationality, several development scholarships are examined along with an episode of developmental scheme and two episodes of development programs. This is done to expound (note: '→' = influences) how *scientific rationality* → *scholarships* → *organizational/institutional schemes*, such as the MDGs → *actual applications of development schemes*, such as transmigration and compulsory villagization. The present inquest, more importantly, propounds for polyphonic knowledges that accord diverse modes of thought a place in social inquests, thus affording a better recourse than scientific rationality that blatantly disregards the contextual particularities of human society.

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A Dissertation
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DEDICATION

This study is a dedication to Ludwig van Beethoven. Even though residing in Elysium, his works no doubt stirred in me a sentience to see the inherent meaning in every human experience and, thus, appreciate humanity *for what it is* and *as it is*.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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CHAPTER I
PROLEGOMENA

The Prolepsis

The title, *Philosopher's Stone: The Faustian Geist of Development*, may give the impression that this study is against every kind of development. This is certainly not the case. Firstly, let us clarify what is meant by the term *development*, for it will often be alluded to in this query. *Development* is a generic term employed to describe developed society's approach to the traditional, developing world. It is a formal, scientific field of study that serves as the principal reference point from which to methodically approach traditional societies for the purposes of book learning, observation, and practical application. It is this idea of development the present study is against, not development in and of itself. Of course, this is not to reason that the edifice of development as a discipline is nothing more than an assortment of fables; besides, it must be more than that, for there must be something formidable behind it that enables particular forms of idea to become a source of pedagogic erudition in universities, books, think-tanks, and so forth. Rather than it being some motley assemblage of fables, it is a body of theories and practices produced to be a system of thought and knowledge that filters developed societies' understanding of the not so developed. What is more, the discipline of development is used, in this inquest, as a paradigm to signify any undertaking claiming to transform human conditions through scientific rationality—engineering human/societal happiness, material riches, civilized lives, etc.

It is imperative to remember that the present inquest is not against development, development in a sense that enables a society to realize its innate possibilities from

within. Development is an essential, fundamental requisite to all living things and environments, including societies. From the smallest of cells to humans to natural environments, development constitutes the nature of things, the splendid manifestation and actualization of the innate entelechy of every organic entity. Development is not something optional; it is a creative dynamism inherent in the organic world; it is a continuous process, process suggesting progress, and progress towards realization of an entity's entelechy. Certainly, for Aristotle, purposive changes, i.e. the realization of an entity's potentiality is the most pervasive fact of nature.¹ The realization of an entity's innate possibilities is *qualitative*, not *quantitative*: it is a progress towards purposive *qualitative* changes for the organic entity, i.e. actualization of its nature—not quantitative growth. What is more, the actualization of an organic entity's inherent potentials do not happen overnight, it is sometimes an excruciatingly slow process—look at, for instance, life on earth, even now, after aeons, some organic entities have still not realized their fullest potential. In other words, development requires realization of itself from within, i.e. subjective, without intrusions from the outside. Besides, disciplines in biology have shown how disruptions from the outside impede the full development of organic entities. In terms of society, it means, every society has its own intrinsic entelechies which are to be actualized in the most harmonious ways possible; it means development in qualitative aspects—harmony, conviviality, communion, coexistence, togetherness, fellowship, etc.—of society, not quantitative aspects—per capita income, number of cars, televisions, laptops, electronics, amount of capital wealth, degrees of industrialization, urbanizations,

¹ Aristotle, "Physics," in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 1 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984), 2.1.

democratizations, capitalizations, globalizations, material comforts, monetization of society, nor economic productions, consumptions, etc.

As organic entities take lengthy periods of time to realize their innate entelechy, likewise, society will take prolong periods of time to realize its potentials. Just as an organic entity's development is impeded through outside interference, similarly, society's development is thwarted when there is interference from the outside. More importantly, regarding human society, and man, in general, development does not mean manipulating nature for the advantage of man. Instead, it is the harmony of human society with the organic nature. In other words, say for instance, the Papuans, Native Indians of the Americas, hunters-gatherer societies of South-East Asia, Africa, so forth—though materially poor from the perspective of today's civilized societies—were perhaps at the peak of their societies' development when they encountered the civilized people. This, however, does not mean that the aforementioned societies were primitive or backward; rather they were in most sense developed to their fullest potential and in their own way rich, civilized. It is only from the material perspective of the civilized world the aforesaid societies seem dreary, clinging to the very base of human existence. It is well to keep in mind *material progress* is neither the *sole* nor the *logical* process towards development of society or of man. Put differently, development does not mean material advancement. In many ways, native cultures were in no sense inferior in their norms, values, beliefs, nor were they less developed or less civilized than the *civilized* people who destroyed their societies. These aforementioned societies remained the way they were for hundreds, if not thousands, of years because they were living in harmony within their natural environments, without banal destructions of their ecological milieu. This point is hardly

understood by developed societies; hence, their fixations with trite material development of every traditional society.

Secondly, this study is not anti-West, or anti-developed society, or anti-science. If this study is read in a lax uninteresting manner, because it goes against and contests one's pre-dispositions, then it will no doubt seem anti-science or anti-developed society. If, however, one reads this inquiry sensibly, one will find that it is not *anti-science*. The study does not say that non-scientific rationality is good, while scientific rationality is bad, or developed society is bad, while traditional society is good; rather what it tries to elucidate is the happenings that occur, and consequences that invariably follow when one accords one mode of thought a higher occasion in respect to social queries: in their comprehension as well as in their method.

The study is not against science, for this would be in contradiction to the very idea of polyphonic rationality. Rather it admires the critical aspects of science, i.e. its *eccentric* nature, the idea that one ought to think and question critically, no matter how absurd one's questioning may be. Certainly, human knowledge as well as scientific advancements—from Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle, Brouwer's Modern Topology, Cantor's Set Theory, to Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem—would be in a sorry state, if one did not question existing canons. However, what this study is against is the lackadaisical idea of science: science = empiricism; or rather anything which is science is measurable; in other words, to assume, understanding is derived solely through measurements. Certainly, little knowledge is required if all one does is to measure, for it is undemanding and uncomplicated. Surely, if this is what science amounts to, then any advancement in human knowledge could not have been possible at all. What is most

important to science, and one that constantly goes amiss is: understanding leads to break through in human knowledge; it is not empiricism (measurement) that burgeons scientific progress. Rather empiricism is predicated on understanding; yet, this essential idea rather goes amiss in today's science.² Just because one can measure, i.e., empiricize, it does not mean it is science, or that which is measured is understood, in the first place. Indeed, the geocentric view of the world was verified by means of empiricism, see Ptolemy's *Almagest*. For Aristarchus of Samos, as well as for Anaxagoras and Philolus prior to him, his idea of heliocentric view was considered to be irrational and absurd. But we now know it is the former view that is absurd. Furthermore, the above example vividly shows that just because one can measure it does not mean it is science; even the most absurd of ideas—as geocentric view—can be empiricized and posited to have scientific validity.

What is more, one must discuss issues that *do not make sense*. Issues—such as, diverse modes of thought—do not make sense precisely because they are viewed from one solitary blinkered perspective; hence, it is hardly surprising when such issues make no sense to parochial minds. Only when viewed from diverse lenses do issues which *do not make sense* finally begin to make sense. Likewise, the present query will hardly make sense when viewed from generic lens of scientific rationality, indeed, when viewed from the aforesaid lens, this study will seem as a crude violation of *en vogue* genre specific categorizations (i.e. sub-divisions of sub-divisions of sub-divisions). Yet, when viewed

² If one looks at scientific advancements, the era of science, in its proper sense, ended in the early to middle periods of the previous century. Much of today's scientific progress is about testing or measuring theories made in previous centuries, not much progress has been made since. The case is even bleaker in 'social sciences,' where the stress is on measurement of every aspect of human society—even to the extent of measuring 'beliefs,' 'values,' etc. by the means of lethargic system of opinion and survey polls.' Vide, Lorenz and Popper.

from polyphonic lens, the same query will make sense and can thus be understood, for what is missed from one lens can be found in another, or what is of secondary importance from one perspective can be of primary importance when viewed from another and in this way afford us new awareness of issues previously not understood. Or what seems outlandishly absurd may provide hidden insights into hitherto overlooked or unnoticed aspects of phenomena. Certainly, what, at first, seems abnormal may only be the proper approach to understand a problem or phenomenon. Indeed, advancements made in science are a path filled with strange, even irrational, approaches.³ Anyone familiar with history and development of science will know breakthroughs in scientific knowledge to never be a logical, systematic, rational process; rather advancements in sciences are a road filled with illogical, heterodox approaches violating the very rational-objective basis of science, as maintained by many of its epigones.

Thirdly, this study should be seen as history of ideas and, hence, theoretical. It is not an endeavor to methodically layout verifiable truths and principles pertaining to societal development. Instead, what it tries to show is the fallacies of systematized dogmatic methods of inquiry in development; this way revealing the richness of *incommensurable* diverse modes of thought. The present study can and will, no doubt, be considered as a *trahison de clerics* by many due to its heterodox nature. This is a fair judgment; what is more, it was intentionally made as such, because—to borrow Foucault—this work is “a theoretical production that does not need a *visa* from some

³ Certainly, there were scholars—especially, Karl Popper, Thomas Kuhn, and Imre Lakatos—who tried to show scientific advancements are rational and systematic processes, yet despite such efforts they were left as baffled as they were when they started their endeavors.

common *regime* to establish its *validity* (italics added).⁴ Because of the theoretical as well as humanistic nature of this query, the importance of *understanding* is highlighted, for we are much less interested in the *how*. Without *understanding*, the *how*—such as: *how* to make development sustainable; *how* to boost economic productivity; *how* to open new markets; *how* to increase trade, entrepreneurship, mass consumerism, technology, capital, material choices, market incentives; *how* to institute property rights, impersonal market systems; *how* to install new institutions; *how* to carry out development projects, etc.—becomes superfluous. Hence, if the readers are waiting for the *how*, then they will have to wait indefinitely. More importantly, the readers will have to conceive their own *how* from their own comprehension of the issues under examination; thence, this study provides an avenue to *understanding*, not the *how*.

Fourthly, the adjectives traditional, developing, developed, modern, poor, civilized, etc. are utilized to describe societies: traditional society or developed society. This is done in order to distinguish the *relative artificial* differences between the *traditional, developing society* and *modern, developed society*. Hence, the term *traditional, developing society* is used in reference to traditional society *relative* to the *developed, modern society*. Certainly, the adjectives are so wont among technical experts and academics that they become the reality itself. However, the adjectives, noted above, to describe societies are an artificial categorization that does not actually exist. In other words, *society is society*, that's that. By categorizing societies, it somehow constructs imaginary differences between materially advanced and poor societies, or among societies following different modes of thought. No society in the past since the earliest of

⁴ Michel Foucault, "*Society Must be Defended*": *Lectures at the College De France, 1975-76*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 6.

human existence thought of themselves as advanced, traditional, or developed than others, rather they saw themselves as *society*. The demarcations arise, even where none exist, only when one society encounters another; and so to delineate one's society from another, a fantasized idea about self as well as the other is conceived. For example, some human societies in the past, say, the Babylonian, Sumerian, Assyrian, Egyptian, Indus, Greeks—saw themselves as more civilized than others, but if we compare those of the past with, say, today's *developed society*, claims made by past societies seem rather strange. Hence, such classification is only fantastically relative, at best.

Lastly, the study is not trying to romanticize traditional societies. Indeed, there are lots of societal values, norms, beliefs, etc., in traditional societies which differ from one's own, but one ought to see these differences as actualities of human society. It makes very little sense to pry and criticize or pass judgment on the values, norms, or beliefs that differ from one's own. There are numerous obvious practices, values, and norms in traditional societies, which are seen to be primitive from developed societies' perspective; nevertheless, the differences should not justify the idea that there are universal standards on how to judge diverse belief systems. Rather what the differences in values of diverse societies show are the realities of the human world, it cannot be otherwise; besides it is the differences that make our world an interesting place, a place filled with wisdom and mysteries that provide each society the opportunity to learn, appreciate, and accept each other's differences, and thus live in harmony even with those differences.⁵ Obviously, none of us, i.e. no one in the world is in any position, nor occupy

⁵ This is the splendid majesty of our world as intended by nature (if one is a believer in science), and the purpose of any religion (if one is a believer in religion), at least those which the author is aware of.

the moral high ground to judge the other's belief systems. Every society is the product of organic environment that necessarily defines its belief systems; besides, numerous anthropological studies have given us enough evidences that such is the case.⁶ Of course, this does not mean values, norms, or belief systems are *relative*; rather these are neither *absolute* nor *relative*, they are what they are. To put it in simpler terms: values, beliefs, or practices—as the Stoic's (such as: Seneca, Marcus Aurelius, or Epictetus) believed—are not right or wrong, good or evil, correct or incorrect in and of themselves, rather it is the meaning assigned to them by people that makes them either good or evil, right or wrong. Indeed, one will find, since long ago, there have been thinkers—from Lao Tzu, Herodotus, Epicurus, Lucretius, Ovid, to Stendhal, Dostoevsky, Freud, Nietzsche—who urged against reckless applications of moral judgment on norms and values. Every society decides for itself what is *good*, what is *bad*; besides, human society is not possible if all of society's beliefs are wholly good or wholly bad. In any society, there are (and *must* be) good *and* bad norms and beliefs, after all, it is the inherent presence of good *and* bad that sustains any society; this was the significance behind Bernard de Mandeville's *Fable*. Hence, it is extremely imprudent to pass moral, value judgments on belief system of societies other than one's own, as if the values of one's society are the paragon of everything good and right. Let us end the caveats with the following: the moral judgment one passes on belief systems of other societies is just *one* out of *infinite* other perspectives and interpretations, as Nietzsche once verily pointed out.⁷

⁶ At the same time, it would be a gross misunderstanding for one to suppose that the author is advocating evolutionary theory.

⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974), "*We Fearless ones*" 374.

This inquiry is humanistic—i.e. highlights centrality of human society—and philosophical—i.e. examinations of the source of modes of thought or knowledge—in nature highlighting the *lived* actualities of society. Furthermore, it is neither a political nor an economic study because they necessarily involve probing into societal issues through predisposed blinkered ideology, or narrowing of lens jettisoning many essential elements of society by labelling them as subjective, unscientific, unempirical, irrational. Of course, this does not mean that the present inquiry is unbiased; it is biased, biased in the sense that no inquiry carried out in the realm of social sciences⁸—which development is itself a part of—can be completely impartial. The examination of issues is, itself, framed by one’s life experiences; it colors one’s sense of inquiry and requires one to probe into problems through knowledge one has accumulated through one’s existential realities. Certainly, this is the beauty of what it means to carry out social analyses. It is the subjective feelings, emotions that provide the best possible tool for one to probe into issues where scientific reasoning becomes murky or tentative at best, viz. we enter a realm where, ironically, scientific rationality no longer seems *reasonable*. The humanistic approach of this inquiry means we inquest into the topic as a human being, even the reader would be best helped if he or she delves into this present study as a person and not as an academic or an expert, etc., viz. to take off the hat of one’s profession (whatever one is) and put on the hat of a human being. In doing so, one is opened and connected to

⁸ The term ‘*social study*’ is much more appropriate than ‘*social science*’ because this discipline—composed of political studies, economics, psychology, sociology, anthropology, etc.—is not ‘science’ and is never meant to be ‘science.’ Indeed, one could venture a postulate as to why social studies are obsessed with and desperate to become science. The answer is simple: social sciences suffer from—to borrow Adler’s term—inferiority complex, or, to put it differently, ‘*physics envy*’; it is no wonder, the more appropriate noun ‘*study*’ is replaced by an ill-suited noun ‘*science*.’

ideas and wisdoms which only a *person* can experience as well as appreciate without the distraction of whether what one learns and experiences are real, rational, or can be proven by science.

One could, at this point, certainly denounce this study as subjective, hence, unscientific. Such claims are rather premature because subjectivity (or feelings and emotions) is an essential part of scientific reasoning. Without (subjective) feelings and emotions, rationality becomes impossible, viz. emotions and feelings are notable expressions of rationality, this is substantiated by works in neurology.⁹ Damasio, a neurobiologist, shows—from his clinical studies—how “...feeling [is] an integral component of the machinery of reason...” and that “...the process of emotion and feeling are indispensable for rationality.”¹⁰ In other words, feeling and emotion—which are influenced by one’s lived experiences—are essential parts of rationality, none of these are independent of one another; rather emotion and feeling, on the one hand, and rationality, on the other, are in synthesis with one another, the isolation, which is adamantly proselytized in the social sciences, negates their working together. The rational-empirical academics, technical experts, and specialists fail to realize that reduction in a person’s emotions is an important source of irrational behaviors.¹¹ No wonder, social scientists, mostly unaware, uninformed, or through *conscious* purgation of how rationality is contingent on feeling and emotion, espouse the primacy of scientific rationality within their disciplines, while at the same time ridicule feelings and emotions by stigmatizing these as subjective, normative, unscientific. They, thereby, disregard the essentiality of

⁹ Antonio Damasio, *Descartes’ Errors* (New York, NY: Avon Books, 1994), xii, 44-45.

¹⁰ Damasio, *Descartes’ Errors*, xii, xiii.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 53.

how rationality is, ultimately, dependent on the very elements they contempt. Put differently, subjective elements, i.e. emotion and feeling, of a person make rationality possible in the first place.

Feelings and emotions are some of the most essential features of rationality. However, this does not necessarily mean feelings and emotions are always good all the time, but rather, the point here is, one cannot and should not neglect human aspects while engaging in social inquests. One cannot simply ignore these aspects because they can't be quantified or measured. This is important to recognize because human beings and human society cannot be understood in a piecemeal manner; one cannot pick and choose certain human aspects by designating them as *good* just because they are quantifiable, while assigning the rest as *bad* because they are unquantifiable. It is the totality—i.e. rationality, feelings, emotions, etc.—that makes us human beings and human societies. As such, in order to properly cognize society, one must embrace and accept the rational along with the *arrational* aspects of human society. As Goethe rightly noted, “Thus every one thing exists for the sake of all things and all for the sake of one; for the one is of course the all as well. Nature, despite her seeming diversity, is always a unity, a whole; and thus, when she manifests herself in any part of that whole, the rest must serve as a basis for that particular manifestation, and the latter must have a relationship to the rest of the system.”¹² The point here being, since rationality, feeling, and emotion constitutes a person, even the most rational person would not be rational without emotions and feelings for they all are in concatenation with one another.

¹² Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Goethe on Science: A Selection of Goethe's Writings*, ed. Jeremy Naydler (Edinburgh, UK: Floris Books, 1997), 60.

Newton and Einstein contributed to the advancement in natural sciences because of their subjective emotions and feelings. Even the most important, ground breaking scientific advancements are made out of subjectivity of scientists, not objectivity.¹³ Examples of which are Galileo's motion, Einstein's general relativity, Copernicus heliocentric, Neils Bohr's atomic structure and quantum physics, among many others. All of these achievements, when first advanced, were seen by their contemporaries as a subjective theory (of Galileo, Einstein, Copernicus, Bohr). Their contemporaries did not see these theories as scientific. Kuhn even goes as far as to argue that the greatest scientific achievements are possible because of the subjectivity of the inquirer.¹⁴ Even determining which scientific theory (or paradigm), during periods of scientific revolution, will dominate the academic world is established and dependent upon the subjectivity of the scientists, for it is, ultimately, they who will have to convince their fellow members. Thus, Kuhn maintains, "theory must be chosen for reasons that are ultimately personal and subjective."¹⁵ And this subjectivity—feeling and emotion—goes back as far as the manner in which the prober collects data to the manner in which observations are made. Thence, rationality is built on personal subjectivity. This is painfully obvious in the core of natural sciences, physics, especially concerning one of the foundations upon which it is based: quantum physics. Here, the principle issue concerns the measurement or the *observer effect*. The issue is that the very act of measuring or observing affects the measurement. This is fundamental: on one hand, it shows the subjectivity in science, on another, it undermines the very *stable* scientific concepts such as time, space, speed of

¹³ Paul Feyerabend, *Against Method* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 2010).

¹⁴ Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996).

¹⁵ Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolution*, 199.

light, etc. This is to say, it undermines the rational, objective, stable, fixed concepts on which the whole of natural science is based. Even the observational statements, which are interpretation or meaning of empirical investigations, are theory-laden. In other words, interpretation of observational statements—which are deemed objective, unbiased, and neutral—is *determined* by the theory one utilizes to explain what one observes, as such, the meaning of the observational statement depends on the theory or theoretical lens from which the observation is made.¹⁶ Subjectivity, i.e. the observer, therefore, enters the realm of natural science. The subjective aspects of knowledge are always present, no matter the objectivity of a discipline; it ultimately guides the prober to make sense of phenomena. As such, subjectivity and objectivity are coterminous or symbiotic. They are inseparable from one another. To remove subjectivity is to remove the very feature that makes objective science possible.

The philosophical-humanistic nature of the present inquiry also means, it incorporates works from diverse disciplines, from social studies—cultural studies, sociology, anthropology, political studies, economics—to humanities—philosophy, literature. This *eo ipso* makes it non-quantitative or non-empirical. In other words, social analyses cannot be limited to one mode of methodology—i.e. scientific rationality—

¹⁶ Norwood Russell Hanson, *Patterns of Discovery: An Inquiry into the Conceptual Foundations of Science* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1958); Paul K. Feyerabend, *Philosophical Papers: Realism, Rationalism and Scientific Method*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985a). For instance, a neo-classical theory observes the large economies of scales or the large enterprises as lowering production costs. Thus, these are seen to be better for consumers. Yet, the same observation from, say, Marxian perspective is interpreted as exploitations, on one hand, and accumulation of wealth, on the other. Or, for instance, human beings, plants, other living things are, from evolutionary theory, the results of a long process of evolution; while the same observation, from theistic view, is interpreted as signs of divine being, deity.

because it is imprudent to reason that studies carried out in *one* particular method are worth discussing or inquiring into, while all other manners of inquiries (such as, humanistic) are useless. One can, at this point, argue why bring in disciplines of humanities, especially literature, to an *empirical* object of study, i.e. development, and since this study is carried out in a non-quantifiable or non-empirical manner, it is unscientific. These are some of the arguments made against the mode of inquiry employed in the present study; however, one must be careful, especially in social sciences, about the word *empirical*.

Empirical, at least in its strict sense, means to verify a phenomenon or an object of study through experience. In its proper scientific sense, *empirical* means that which can be verified through experiences which are, in turn, predicated on observable facts *in nature* (*not* man-made facts like the ones in social sciences); this means, the *numerical* aspects derived from nature are *a priori* constant and *not* manipulatable by the subject (or the individual) carrying out the observation. In other words, numbers which are, ironically, used in social sciences are not the ones one finds in nature (or used in the natural sciences); for instance, the speed of light or the force of gravity are values as found in and given by nature, these are not arbitrary values (procured through opinion or survey polls) assigned by the examiner.¹⁷ Numbers in hard sciences are *atemporal* that

¹⁷ Certainly, this does not mean scientific (and/or mathematical) methods or numbers, in their strict sense, are the ultimate truth. In fact, scientific truths, facts, and numbers are themselves dubious in many ways. On scientific-mathematical methods, manipulations, manufacture of scientific (and mathematical) truths and facts, vide: Paul Feyerabend, *Philosophical Papers: Problems of Empiricism*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985b); Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (New York, NY: Routledge Classics, 2006); Imre Lakatos, *Proofs and Refutations* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Imre Lakatos, *The Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes, Philosophical Papers*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Cambridge

remain undisturbed by the senses of the temporal object, but the same cannot be applied to social sciences. The *numbers* in social sciences—be they sociology, political studies, psychological, or economic—are *temporal*, i.e. these numbers are not given by nature; they are not constant in nature; they are manipulatable by the prober; and these numbers are exclusively dependent upon the prober, i.e. these are *artificially constructed*; thus, the word *empirical* is, in its proper sense, inappropriate apropos to social sciences.

Furthermore, *empiricism* in natural science is a *tool to falsify*, not verify hypotheses. Popper made it clear about this issue when he reasoned, “what characterizes the empirical method is its manner of exposing to falsification.”¹⁸ However, in the social sciences empiricism is mostly taken to mean to *verify*, rather than to falsify proposed postulates. This is abundantly shown in numerous leading journals or books in social sciences where almost all hypotheses proposed are *verified*: support what authors set out to prove or disprove. In examination of most journals and books in social sciences, one will find numerous hypotheses being *verified*—which is preternatural considering almost all hypotheses proposed in natural sciences (which are more empirical than in social sciences) are falsified. Given the numerous postulates verified and published in social sciences, any astute, informed person will find this troubling and unnatural for two reasons: first, there can be no social laws like the ones one finds in natural sciences; second, when a hypothesis is verified, it becomes a theory, i.e. a (natural) fact. For instance, Copernicus’ heliocentric world, Einstein’s General Relativity, and Newton’s

University Press, 1978); George Berkeley, *The Analyst*, ed. David R. Wilkins (Dublin, 2002); George Berkeley, *Principles of Human Knowledge and Three Dialogues*, ed. Howard Robinson (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1999); and Friedrich Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1974).

¹⁸ Karl Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery* (New York, NY: Routledge Classic, 2002), 20.

gravity, were postulates *failed to be falsified*, thus they became theories, natural facts. One cannot say the earth does not revolve around the sun, because it is a fact that it does; however, no social hypothesis can adhere to the proper criteria of (scientific) empiricism. The verification of hypotheses in social sciences only shows how the very idea of verification and falsification are rampantly abused to give an *air of science* to this impoverished discipline which stems from *physic envy*. What this shows is, *empiricism* is unsuitable for social sciences as it lacks the *atemporal* aspects—which is one of the essential features of empiricism; the lack of atemporality leads to the usage of *verification* rather than *falsification* as means for empiricism. Expressed differently: social science is methodologically dogmatic. The aforesaid field is able or willing to acknowledge something as truth, knowledge, or fact only if it conforms to the dominant methodologies of the day. The *accepted* knowledge or truth is defended with chauvinistic zeal; yet, “The truth they have protected,” writes Deloria, “has nearly always been obsolete, framed in outmoded concepts, and defended zealously against heresy. Truth, under these conditions, has become a matter of authority rather than inquiry.”¹⁹ Indeed, what is more dangerous to human advancement is not superstition or religion, but unqualified adherence to dogmas, which scientific rationality seems to have become.

Now to the criticism as to why resort to the humanities, especially literature? The answer is quite commonsensical, or to use Gramsci’s term, *good sense*. Social inquiry always necessarily involves the whole human aspects of society, not some murky trite quantitative representations of phantasmagoric society. Social inquiry involves persons, their feelings, emotions, beliefs, myths, memories, histories, socio-cultural realities,

¹⁹ Vine Deloria Jr., *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2012), 231.

festivities, gods, etc. One cannot simply ignore these subjective aspects of persons in society; to be more precise, to dwell and focus narrowly only on facile, exterior aspects of society only lead to an impoverished, unrealistic comprehensions of that which is inquired. No *understanding* is involved if all one does is to quantify society, just as the protagonists in Flaubert's *Bouvard et Pécuchet*, where Bouvard and Pécuchet, in their failed attempt to reconcile scientific knowledge with confronting realities of human society, decide in the end to merrily *transcript* their most beloved scientific ideas devotedly from one text onto another.

Vilfredo Pareto, a philosopher, sociologist, political scholar, and economist,²⁰ will be quite disappointed with the manner in which his name is evoked to defend hidebound empirical methods in social sciences. Indeed, Pareto was clearly against strict dogmatic empiricism (i.e. quantification) when it came to social inquiries, he reasoned thusly: "One should *not deem any method as good* or any *theorem* derived from it as *true only because it carries the 'quantitative' label* (italics added)."²¹ Pareto did not adhere to, nor prescribed that social queries should be carried out empirically and mathematically, i.e. quantitatively, he was against such strict dogmatic methods. For him, "all arguments regarding the method that should be adopted in a particular science are somewhat useless... Employ *whatever* reasoning method you prefer, seek the support of history,

²⁰ Pareto is a highly misunderstood *philosopher*, especially by many social scientists who like to evoke his name to defend their blinkered rational-empirical methods. The same is applicable to Max Weber, Georg Simmel, Émile Durkheim, Imre Lakatos, and Sir Karl Popper, who among many others are highly misunderstood. They are evoked by social scientists to defend today's pervasive call for scientific methods in 'social sciences.'

²¹ Vilfredo Pareto, *Considerations on the Fundamental Principles of Pure Political Economy*, eds. Roberto Marchionatti and Fiorenzo Moranti (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 1.

physics, accept or reject the evolutionary theories... *all is allowed, all is fair*, provided you can discover...[and] shed new light on old ones, and rectify errors (italics added).”²² Pareto clearly saw the need to allow any modes of thought that would enhance our knowledge of the examined phenomenon. He, being a free thinking scholar (unlike his narrow, over-specialized acolyte), saw the essentiality of polysemous ideas for the proper comprehension of the object of inquiry; after all, being open to diverse modes of thought enables one to view old problems in a new way.²³

An astute reader would have noticed the extreme disconnect between what Pareto espoused and what his followers, i.e. contemporary social scientists, think he advocated. Thus, it will not be of any surprise for epigones of Pareto to criticize this study for according *literature* a place in social query. However, for Pareto, it makes little difference as to what kinds of methods one uses as long as they lead to a better understanding of social phenomena, viz. in regard to methods of analysis “We are interested in the end, and much less or not at all interested in the means by which we attain it [i.e. understanding].”²⁴ As such, one can only hope that the above reasonings have served well as prolepsis for arguments against the present study’s view on non-empiricism and by bringing in disciplines from humanities.

²² Pareto, *Considerations on the Fundamental Principles of Pure Political Economy*, 1.

²³ This, in essence, is the key to scientific advancement; or to put it in another way, most scientific advancements were made by examining old problems in a new way, or through a new lens.

²⁴ Vilfredo Pareto, *The Mind and Society, Vol. I: Non-Logical Conduct*, trans. Andrew Bongiorno and Arthur Livingston (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1935), 3.

Why Polyphony?

Now delving deeper into the concerned subject:²⁵ The present query explores issues of rationality and development: how the dominant rationality or—to use Gramsci’s terms—the *hegemonic*²⁶ rationality colors the discourse in societal development by ostracizing other modes of thought, which are collectively represented here by the term, *polyphonic knowledge*. This study dichotomizes the dominant rationality, *scientific rationality*, from the excluded or neglected rationality, *polyphonic knowledge*.

So, why this topic or why is this topic important? This topic is important because no scholarships exist exploring, in a juxtapose manner, issues of rationality and development. Differently put, there are no scholarships examining excluded knowledges, and how they relate to development. This study is perhaps paving the way for future research, not just in societal development but social sciences, in general—at least, on issues concerning the polysemous interpretation of ideas, norms, values, knowledges, etc., all of which are crucial for any social inquiry. This topic is possible, thanks to today’s extreme over-specialization and narrowness of philosophers and social scientists. It is to them and their disregard for diverse modes of rationality to which this study perhaps owes its pioneering aspects. No doubt, the pioneering aspects may be viewed with suspicion by the reader, and such attitude is not surprising either. Because social sciences view themselves to be science, they confined themselves to canonical dogmas, this is to say, new ideas or knowledges should be built on existing studies. In other

²⁵ Certainly, the proper term here is ‘*object*’ not ‘*subject*’; however, since this is a humanistic study, the term ‘*subject*’ rather than ‘*object*’ is preferred, because the former term, ‘subject,’ is more human evincing feelings, emotions, and seems natural, while the latter term, ‘object,’ is more detached, cold, unsympathetic, and mechanical.

²⁶ Vide, Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 2010).

words, adding to the existing stock of knowledge by building upon what is already known. Certainly, this is essential for natural sciences, but such dogmas are more than thoughtless in respect to social sciences. As much as social scientists may desire laws congruent to those in natural sciences, they can never procure for themselves *accontextual laws of society*; hence, additions of new knowledge by building upon existing studies is reasonable in hard sciences, but are more than unwise in social examinations.

Because of this dogmatic need to accord new ideas only when based on existing knowledge, one will find social scientists slavishly proselytizing *uniformity, conformity* in the utilization of scientific methods in social examinations. Thus, new ideas, not based on existing stocks of knowledge, are discouraged. In other words, it suits obsequious social science practitioners who, to borrow Bertrand Russell's words, "would rather die than think."²⁷ No wonder, one natural sciences' epigone, in justifying uniformity and scientific study of society, asserts: "Self-orientating in the scientific world would tend to be seriously dysfunctional."²⁸ Parsons was no doubt invoking natural sciences to justify conformity in social sciences, but Parsons failed to recognize that most scientific advancements were possible because scientists who made the breakthroughs did not slavishly adhere, nor conform to the canonical dogmas of scientific method, in fact they unreservedly violated every methods, rules, and principles of scientific investigation—look at the development of quantum theory, Einstein's theory of general relativity, string theory, etc. Even cultural progress requires break from conventional doctrines: for instance, Claude Debussy, one of the most original composers of modern times, broke

²⁷ Bertrand Russell quoted in Stanislaw Andreski, *Social Science as Sorcery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973), 16.

²⁸ Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1951), 343.

every textbook rule in music to find a new musical language; or Beethoven, one of the most influential composers, broke every possible formal musical rules; thus, shaking the musical establishments. Goethe, himself, in his literary and scientific works as well as in his poetries, shows an overwhelming disregard for the established etiquettes and canons. Einstein, was considered heretic, when in 1905 he argued that lights, in his explanation of photoelectric effect, are not waves but a stream of tiny particles: *quanta/quantum*. This argument of his considered heretical, sacrilegious, even by the established scientific community, at a single stroke solved all problems concerning light that occupied the minds of many great scientists like Max Planck, James Maxwell, Heinrich Hertz, J. J. Thomson. Surely, the soothing of human soul (socio-cultural), or the progress of human mind (scientific) requires a break from platitudinous blinkered doctrines. Yet, present academics, technical experts, etc. hopelessly fear to break away from orthodox canons precisely because to do so would undermine their narrow understanding of the world, just like the contemporaries of Galileo who refused to gaze at Jupiter's moons through the telescope as they were afraid that peeking through the piece of cylindrical tube would undermine their stable geo-centric, Ptolemaic world system.

Furthermore, *implicit* in any orthodox doctrine is its assumption about the infallibility not only of the professed dogmas, but also of its adherers; therefore, stigmatizing, silencing anyone who questions or deviates from the propriety procrustean creed, becomes ubiquitous. This way human progress, be it cultural, social, or scientific, is stifled. And indeed, progress in social sciences is already stifled because, as Andreski puts it, "What is particularly dismaying is that not only does the flood of publications reveal an abundance of pompous bluff and a paucity of new ideas, but even the old and

valuable insights which we [social sciences] have inherited from our illustrious ancestors are being drowned in a torrent of meaningless verbiage and useless technicalities.

Pretentious and nebulous verbosity, interminable repetition of platitudes and disguised propaganda are the order of the day, while at least 95 % of research is indeed re-search for things that have been found long ago and many times since.”²⁹ This way advancement is stifled in the name of (and social sciences’ quest to become) exact science.

This inquiry is not the first to propose new forms of knowledge, since there exist studies already advocating such views: Foucault’s *subjugated knowledges*, Haraway’s *situated knowledges*, and Spivak’s *subaltern*.³⁰ However, the aforementioned forms of knowledge, firstly and most importantly, have helpless passive undertones such as, “subjugated,” “situated,” or “subaltern.” These terms, utilized by aforesaid authors, give a docile languorous air about other modes of knowledge as if they are inferior to the dominant rationality. Hence, polyphony rationalities, as proposed in this query, are not passive modes of thought; they are not inferior to scientific knowledge. Secondly, knowledges proposed by aforesaid authors have nothing whatever to do with development; thirdly, they do not succinctly represent nor accommodate polysemous knowledges *as they are*; fourthly, there is an ideological—be they political, economic, or both—penchant inherent in the aforesaid knowledges; fifthly, even if they do advocate for the need to take into account different forms of knowledge, they nevertheless do

²⁹ Stanislaw Andreski, *Social Science as Sorcery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1973), 11.

³⁰ Foucault, “*Society Must be Defended*”; Donna Haraway, “Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective,” *Feminist Studies* 14, no. 3 (1988): 575-99; and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*, ed. Rosalind C. Morris (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010).

implicitly assume (and their knowledges', no doubt, stems from) the dominant form of rationality (i.e. scientific rationality); lastly, in all of these proposed knowledges, the authors implicitly call for change not only in the dominant ways of thinking, but also in the manner in which other forms of knowledge are to be accommodated.

Polyphonic rationality, on the other hand, not only differs from scientific rationality, but also differs from those proposed by Foucault, Haraway, and Spivak. What makes polyphonic knowledge different from ones mentioned above is its unsystematic nature. It does not fall under any systematized theorization on how social analyses should be carried out; it does not try to dress itself as a new alternative *theory* in an already theory infested discipline. The knowledges espoused by aforesaid authors are presented to be (new) theories, but polyphonic rationality does not. To be a theory is to negate the very meaning of *polyphony*. The polyphonic knowledge, proposed here, accommodates, appreciates, and, more importantly, accepts polysemous thoughts, ideas, rationalities on their own terms, and *as they are*. Polyphonic knowledge does not call for *exclusion* of any modes of thought, not even scientific rationality; every form of knowledge is accommodated and given equal occasion. There is no nitpicking or privileging one particular mode over others, equal occasion is given to all modes of thought, for it is in this openness to diverse modes that redeems the term *polyphony*; it is this openness that provides a better means through which to *understand* society or any social phenomenon. In other words, social inquiry becomes more meaningful. Hence, polyphonic knowledge best embodies the diversity of thoughts than the existing alternative forms as proposed by Foucault, Haraway, and Spivak.

This study, in the larger realm of, what Dilthey calls, *Geisteswissenschaften* (or, roughly translated as, human studies/science), is not the first to question the standing acme of thoughts. Indeed, this study sincerely owes to numerous eccentric thinkers/scholars of the yesteryears from every field of *Geisteswissenschaften*, from ancient to contemporary periods. One could call numerous thinkers—Epicurus, Confucius, Lao-tzu, Marcus Aurelius, Al-Ghazali, Ibn Tufayl, Ibn Khaldun, Al-Arabi, Vico, Cervantes, Montaigne, Nietzsche, Marcel, Stendhal, Dostoevsky, Conrad, Spengler, Toynbee, Jung, Adorno, Fromm, Feynman, Gödel, Schrödinger, Heisenberg, Franz Boas, just to name a few—that certainly influenced this study. An astute reader would have noticed the numerous fields in human studies (even from natural sciences) occupied by the above mentioned scholars coming from equally diverse societies; yet, what unifies them is their proclivity to question the vogue ideas and thus provide a better understanding not only of one’s society, but also of the human world. What is more, the diverse thinkers from diverse societies occupying equally diverse fields in human studies (and even including natural sciences) reflect and vindicate the humanistic nature of this study as well as the importance of *polyphonic* knowledge in social inquiries. As such, the present query kindles with the footsteps of those earlier works in the field of human studies that questioned existing dogmas.

The Essentiality of an Eccentric

The initial interest on this topic began with one of the most ubiquitous features in development scholarship: constant derision against eccentric modes of thought, i.e.

polyphonic knowledges, other than scientific rationality.³¹ By *eccentric modes of thought*, one has in mind here those rationalities which are “disqualified as nonconceptual knowledges, as insufficiently elaborated knowledges: naïve knowledges, hierarchically inferior knowledges, knowledges that are below the required level of erudition or scientificity.”³² Through disparagement of other modes of thought by stigmatizing them as subjective, unscientific, or irrational, social inquiries have become dogmatic. Development studies and social sciences, in general, have been quite adamant in espousing the importance of scientific rationality in their fields of study. This is justified by how *only* science (and its rationalities), in its unbiased objective manner, guides human reasoning. Implicit, in such kinds of argument, is the utter contempt for other modes of thought.

When the majority of the academic community and developed societies disdain other modes of thought, then surely scientific rationality, as a *tool*, must have enormously contributed to our knowledge of traditional societies?³³ Yet, this is hardly the case.

³¹ Just to name a few: Lucien Lévy-Bruhl, *Primitive Mentality* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1966); *The Soul of the Primitive* (Regnery Publishing, 1971); *How Natives Think* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985); Parsons, *The Social System*; Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernity, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Douglas C. North, and Robert Paul Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1973); W. Arthur Lewis, “Economic Development with Unlimited Supply of Labour,” *The Manchester School* 22 (May 1954): 139-91; Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2006); Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1999); Daron Acemoglu, and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail* (London: Profile Books, 2013).

³² Foucault, “*Society Must be Defended*,” 7. Indeed, Foucault termed these “buried” forms of knowledges as “subjugated knowledges.”

³³ The terms, ‘traditional,’ ‘native,’ ‘developing’ societies are used interchangeably in this study, since most of developing societies in the world are traditional and/or native.

Rather what we have is the facile knowledge that is interested only in the *surface* or in the *empirically quantifiable*. The episodes of mockery and revilement in development scholarships would have been of no interest if traditional societies were properly understood, and if the *mission civilisatrice* (which development is) was making traditional societies better-off than they were before: culturally, socially, spiritually, viz. not destroying the foundation of these societies. But one can hardly claim such to be the case. Surely, one cannot claim, nor should one be satisfied by the hackneyed arguments about how modern scientific rationality has increased the longevity of life, eradicated many diseases, introduced mass consumerisms, material goods, etc. These kinds of argument should not satisfy those who properly want to understand the *other* society. One must, instead, question why should one consider proliferation in consumer/material things as the emblem of *human good*? One must also ask: was it always the case that prior to development (which is predicated on scientific rationality), traditional societies did not live a healthy disease free life? Because in asking such questions, one will find the saintly, moral image of development along with scientific rationality to be nothing but a poor façade aimed at destroying anything different. And by *different*, it means any and every cultural-social norm, value, knowledge, idea, myth, mores, etc. that differs from the one championed by the developed world, who ultimately dictates what *human good* is and which mode of thoughts is deemed acceptable for humanity at large.

The ethical, saintly image of development vanishes as one questions the platitudinous validations used to justify the alteration of traditional societies—such as, material things, longevity, eradication of diseases, modern institutions (such as: democracy, capitalism, etc.) are good, modernity and development are good, and so on.

However, numerous studies have instead shown the blatant destruction, decimation, and atrophy of traditional societies, from peoples' health to societal degeneration (detail analyses of which are given in chapters Three).³⁴

It is, thus, the irony of these episodes that caught one's interest. This led one to ruminate as to why there is much disdain toward non-scientific modes of thought. Is it because of dogmatic disposition which becomes fashionable as any discipline of knowledge becomes too specialized and thus begins to experience an epoch of jejune derivative works? At this point, a postulate can be proposed: the limitation in current development scholarships (and practices) stems from (a) its neurotic attachment to scientific rationality, and (b) exclusion of polyphonic knowledges. This means: if the existing development scholarships are highly dependent on scientific rationality, the discourses have become dogmatic. Such dogmatic inclinations will lead to highly perilous circumstances where no new, diverse ideas or forms of thought will be accepted nor appreciated. In the long run, these kinds of condition will invariably lead to defense of status quo or existing ideas with an air of religious fervent. The adamant rigidity and inflexibility to change, or be open to new ideas will ultimately lead to intellectual (academic) impoverishment of society, even in the most developed of societies. This is to say, developed societies' disregard for new thoughts and their stubborn reliance on one mode of thought will be detrimental for themselves as well as for traditional societies.

³⁴ Also vide: Weston A. Price, *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* (Le Mesa, CA: Price-Pottenger Nutrition Foundation, 2004); John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress* (Lanham, MD: AltraMira Press, 2008); Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993); Colin M. Turnbull, *The Forest People: A Study of the Pygmies of the Congo* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1962); James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), and *The Art of Not Being Governed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009); Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree, eds., *The Post-Development Reader* (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997).

When any kind of inquiry excludes certain modes of thought, that encompasses the vast majority of the world's society, there is bound to be an unrealistic understanding of social phenomena. Moreover, the exclusion encourages specialization and narrowing of discourses. No wonder, today, most academics prefer to call themselves experts, rather than scholars or thinkers. This is augmented by the surge of technical experts/specialists which has led societies to place their fate on *experts*: telling society what cloths to buy/wear, what foods to eat, what books/articles to read/to buy, how to manage economic and political problems, how to manage poverty, how to manage societal development, how to manage environment, and so on. This increase in specialization along with the *expertizing* of academics is an inevitable outcome of dominance of one mode of thought. In such an environment, social analyses become meaningless because the aim is no longer the *understanding* of social phenomena, but a *cul-de-sac* endless sophistication of and emphasis on *demonstration*. Thereby, *understanding*, which is the ultimate aim of any social as well as scientific examination, is relegated to oblivion. However, if social inquiries (and social sciences, in general) are to be truly meaningful, one ought not to shy away from incorporating diverse modes of thought that, in many ways, will only advance human knowledge.

Because this study focuses on the acme of scientific rationality pertinent to development, it becomes essential to tackle the *fons et origo*, i.e. *roots*, in which numerous development schemes are rooted. This is an important point to highlight, since, without this in mind, the reader is bound to misunderstand not only what is to follow, but also the intention behind the query. Inquiry into the primacy of scientific rationality in social analyses (which development is) requires one to examine the very roots, i.e. the

scholarships. This means, it would be a colossal *error* for one to inquire into *how* development policies are *implemented*, rather than the *rationality* underpinning such schemes, and one hopes that the reader keeps this point in mind so as to avoid unnecessary confusions. This is because: first, this study is a theoretico-philosophical inquiry, not empirical; second, the applications (and policies), i.e. empiricisms, only *follow* the philosophical and theoretical inquiry, not the vice-versa. This is the most pervasive blunder made in the social sciences. Social scientists *erroneously* assume *any* social analysis *can* and *must* be carried out empirically from the outset. Epictetus was among one of the first to warn us against such a lackadaisical approach to understanding. For him, understanding is: *First*, and most importantly, a percept, an awareness to understand, say for instance, “one must not lie.” The *Second* part, he reasons, is the *explanation* of “one must not lie.” The *Third* part is the *demonstration* of “one must not lie.” Here, the third part is essential or important only on the account of the second, and the second on the account of the first; the third is not necessarily on its own or by itself. So, for Epictetus, “the most necessary and that on which we ought to rest is the first. But we do the contrary. For we spend our time on the third topic, and all our earnestness is about it: but we neglect the first. Therefore, we lie.”³⁵ Epictetus points out an essential point: one erroneously places too much importance on *demonstration*, which is ultimately dependent on the second and the second (explanation) being dependent on the first (understanding). Therefore, for Epictetus, by accentuating *demonstration*, which is of lowest importance, we neglect the most essential aspect of inquest: understanding. Error

³⁵ Epictetus, *The Enchiridion*, trans. George Long (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 2004), LI. Also, vide *Chapter Three* of the present query for further elucidation on this topic.

of this kind is vividly exposed and criticized by Popper, Lakatos, and Lorenz, among many others. Therefore, it would be best for this study not to fall for and make the same commonplace errors made by most social scientists.

Development schemes are rooted in the scholarly works; therefore, it becomes essential to examine the *source*, rather than the branches. When development schemes are set up, they are assumed to be practical; however, beneath their *practical-ness* lay the scholarly works that undergird such schemes. It, thus, becomes *essential* to question the *reasoning*, i.e. the *germ-root*, of such scholarships in order to illuminate the various elements at play that lead to the privileging of scientific rationality.

Therefore, “Let us... restrict ourselves to... the views of their [leader], who is [their] “first teacher.” For [it is the first teacher who has] organized and refined their sciences, removed the redundant in their views, and selected what is closest to the principles of their capricious beliefs.”³⁶ Al-Ghazali is here referring to the importance of inquiring into the roots of an idea because disregarding the source only leads one to a facile comprehension of that which is claimed to be examined. To tackle development *schemes*, and how they are *implemented*, rather than the *rationality* behind scholarships would mean one is only making the same pervasive errors, disregarding the *very roots* of the problem.

When the *source* of problems is disregarded because it does not fit the ideological prejudice of those who are to judge, it becomes a mockery not only of human society, but also of scientific knowledge as well, viz. trying to tackle problems by disregarding their

³⁶ Al-Ghazali, *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*, trans. Michael E. Marmura (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 2000), 4.

source is like “distributing aspirin pills to dying people whom nothing can save.”³⁷ An analogy might perhaps convey the point: If one is trying to grow vegetables in one’s garden, it requires the soil be fertile and contain enough nutrients that will enable seeds to bear healthy vegetables. However, if the soil is not fertile and lacks essential nutrients, the seeds will bear paltry vegetables. Here, if one is to address the problem, one would be in error if one decides to buy scientifically enhanced high quality and high yielding seeds, rather than plant the seeds in a fertile soil with abundant nutrients. Buying high yielding seeds will do no good (for it ignores the *root* problem, the soil) if those seeds are planted in the same impoverished soil; but if one is wise, one need not buy expensive high-yielding scientifically enhanced seeds; one can use the same kind of seeds and plant them in a better fecund soil. This way one addresses the very *root cause* of one’s bad vegetable yields and so corrects the problem. Much in the same way, by tackling the scientific rationality, we are *eo ipso* tackling the *source* that necessarily goes on to guide development schemes. Hence, it would be imprudent to examine the countless development policies, and how they are implemented, rather than examine the source of the schemes.

The reader may also be critical of the textual analysis approach utilized for this present study, but one must remember the practical policies and their applications do not suddenly spring up like *Minerva*.³⁸ Rather the practical, pragmatic schemes and applications are based on scholarships or ideas of philosophers and thinkers that

³⁷ Majid Rahnema, “Towards Post-Development: Searching for Signpost, A new Language and New Paradigms,” in *The Post-Development Reader*, eds. Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree, (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), 393.

³⁸ *Minerva*, a roman goddess of wisdom and handicraft, was born full grown from the head of *Jupiter*.

necessarily go on to influence future generations of scholars. This relation is succinctly put by Keynes, when he noted: “the ideas of economists and political philosophers, both when they are right and when they are wrong are more powerful than is commonly understood. Indeed, the world is ruled by little else. Practical men, who believe themselves to be quite exempt from any intellectual influences, are usually the slaves of some defunct economist.”³⁹ Keynes is here alluding to the *source* of modern ideas; he saw the enduring aspects of idea that, be they good or bad, transcend the temporality of time and, thereby, influence future generations of scholars and practical men alike. As a result, it becomes essential to probe into scholarships to illuminate the source as well as the primacy of scientific rationality, and how they go on to influence the schemes that necessarily get implemented in traditional societies in the name of development.

To Critique

The question now becomes, which scholarships are to be examined? The works selected are: Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*; Talcott Parson, *The Social System*; Seymour Martin Lipset, *Some Social Requisites of Democracy*; Walt W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*; Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel, *Modernization, Cultural Change, and Democracy*; Douglass North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*; Jeffrey D. Sachs, *The End of Poverty*; Paul Collier, *The*

³⁹ John Maynard Keynes, *The General Theory of Employment, Interest, and Money* (New York, NY: Harvest Book, 1964), 383. And, certainly, the ideas of the “defunct economist” are rooted in scientific rationality, otherwise why would they name their field ‘economic science.’

Bottom Billion; William Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, and *The White Man's Burden*.⁴⁰

At this point, it is essential to make a quick note. As one might have already noticed, the number of works selected for this study is ten. The number of works has nothing to do with some superstition, viz. there is no mysticism behind the number. Most scholars when deciding scholarships or problems to be examined tend to have a specific number in mind that more or less falls under their preexisting superstition about certain numbers, or limit themselves to numbers that have a mystifying charm. However, the number of books chosen here are based on the consideration to include, as much as possible, scholarships from diverse disciplines in social sciences, and, in doing so, also to limit oneself to certain number to avoid the *extremes: too many*—in which case, the examination becomes repetitive—or *too few*—in which case, the inquiry provides not enough variety and information to make it meaningful. In regard to this, Aristotle was quite veracious when he urged one to avoid the two extremes, too much or too little, and maintain the *golden mean*. So, here at least, his idea certainly did play a role in determining the number of *oeuvres* for analysis.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Easterly's, *The Tyranny of Experts* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2014), and Sachs', *The Age of Sustainable Development* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2015), recent works were respectively released during the latter part and after this study had been concluded. Hence, one did not critique these works for the present study. Nevertheless, they have been incorporated into the study. Furthermore, the reader would be please to find that Sachs and Easterly continue to utilize the same line of reasoning, scientific rationality, even in their recent works. This in a way substantiates how scientific rationality remains primary in development discourses.

⁴¹ This perhaps only vindicates Keynes' remark about how we are all influenced by some ideas of past philosophers.

The works here selected for examination neither define nor exclusively compose the *chef d'oeuvre* of development studies.⁴² One may certainly disagree with the selected works and argue that one has selected the obvious scholarships that only substantiate the point of this inquiry. However, it must be noted that here the matter of concern is not about which works have or haven't been selected, rather the principal concern is to explore the prominence of scientific rationality; and the works selected provide the best means to do so. It would be most helpful for the reader to know that there are numerous other scholarships in development discourse which, more or less, follow the same line of thought or rationality. Thus, the reader can take comfort in the fact that anyone, if one wishes, can select any number of scholarships and carry out the same analysis done in this study, for anyone familiar with development discourse will know most scholarships in this discipline—implicitly or explicitly—positions, above all else, the priority of scientific rationality.

An astute reader would have noticed that the works selected are gathered from various disciplines in social sciences—anthropology, sociology, political studies, economics. What this shows is: development discourse cannot be limited to one discipline or sub-discipline. The specialization (and today's sub-specialization even within one discipline) only muddles and narrows the lens needed to properly fathom and carry out social inquiries. In other words, proper understanding of any society requires a holistic approach that digresses from the current specialization (and sub-specialization) of academic disciplines in the human (social) studies.

⁴² Additional works are brought in during the examination to show the enduring influences of scientific rationality through ideas and scholarships: preeminence of scientific rationality, persistent call for change (in societal institutions), and primacy of economy (regardless of its relevance)—the latter two being predicated on the former.

Broadening of one's lens becomes essential if one is to properly cognize the *other*. The complexity of human society requires one to equip oneself with as many tools or lenses as possible, only then will one be able to appreciate the diversity in thoughts. To limit oneself to *one* lens is to narrow one's views of the world. By narrowing the focus solely on rationally explicable or measurable aspects, it *eo ipso* jettisons many other essential facets which, even though they may seem as dreg from scientific lens, are nonetheless essential to one's *understanding*. The narrowing of lens leads not only to a complete miscomprehension of societies, but also to a turbid idea about science. Because when only one mode of rationality is emphasized, it ultimately leads to gallimaufry idea of development and socio-analyses. Would this, then, not be a peril to societies that may have to endure the policies concocted in such lethargic manner? Thus, the *idée mère* of this study is to perhaps show how such errors can be circumvented by accommodating diverse forms of polyphonic thought. Polyphonic thoughts, unlike scientific rationality, do not necessarily follow rigid methods or guidelines. They are essential in making sure that scientific rationality recognizes its limitations, and this way circumvent its perversions. More importantly, polyphonic thoughts provide diverse avenues in understanding issues where scientific inquiry is perhaps not possible or even inappropriate.

The purpose of examining the scholarships is to *critique* their *reasoning*; in doing so, it shows how exclusion of polyphonic knowledge hampers and even goes against the very pith of scientific inquiry. We are neither interested in the criticism of, nor in criticizing the suggestions of the examined scholarships, for they are superfluous to the main subject of interest. Notice that what is of interest is not the *criticism* (nor in

criticizing), but the *critique* of the scholarships. Here the word *critique* is to be understood in its original: in mid-17th Century Enlightenment, the word meant the assessment of an idea and its validity to everyday lived experiences. Here, *experience* means *lived experiences* in a non-quantitative sense. Meaning, when one *critiques*, it becomes essential for one to examine whether one's knowledge accords with one's lived experiences; and one's life experiences are, of course, the germ-roots shaping one's ideas, knowledge, beliefs.

Critiquing the scholarships and, thus, examining their roots, also means ushering forth the unconscious (as well as conscious) elements that invariably undergird the principal mode of thought in social analyses. This is important to note because scientific rationality is so dominating that it becomes second nature, i.e. falls into the realm of *unconscious*, for those who adhere to it. Yet, even if it is relegated into the unconscious realm, it is always present, invariably determining the way one views and examines the world, even without one's conscious sentience of it.⁴³ As Gramsci once reasoned, "In every personality there is one dominant and pre-dominant activity: it is here that his thought must be looked for, in a form that is more often than not implicit and at times even in contradiction with what is professedly expressed."⁴⁴ The authors examined may not categorically state that they are adhering to scientific rationality, yet their motives, their works are nevertheless predicated on it; it unconsciously goes on to influence their dominant patterns of thought, motive, emotion, behavior. Hence, by critiquing the

⁴³ If this sounds a bit like psycho-analysis, then one is right. One needs to explore beneath what is visibly obvious, for without such recourse one can hardly begin to address or even grasp the issues of rationality, which are so entrenched in one's very being.

⁴⁴ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 403.

scholarships, one brings forth that which lies in the realm of unconscious and, which, one is necessarily unaware of its sways.

Another methodological issue that needs to be addressed is *temporality*, i.e. periods of analysis. With regard to the issues of temporality, one can very well regress back into the earliest of civilizations to show the evolution of development from outright domination to today's idea of universal moral principles to help spread the *sameness* throughout every corner of the world. For this study, however, we will limit ourselves to those periods when scientific rationality became the edifice of development (either for cultural, political, or economic purposes) and was (and still is) pursued under the banners of humanity: from the end of colonialism (mid-late twentieth century) to this century, 1944 to 2007.⁴⁵

Any keen reader would also have noticed that the scholarships to be examined fall under the purview of the periods of interest. The period from the end of colonialism, i.e. late twentieth century, to this century is of interest because scientific rationality during this period began to play an important role, thereby, replacing or providing a scientific gown to the previous basis of utter need to dominate the unfortunate societies. Of course, this does not mean scientific rationality did not exist in the world prior to the end of colonialism (or, for that matter, middle-late colonialism), for one can indeed trace rationality back to the earliest of human societies, even prior to the Greeks. The point being, we are more interested in the periods when *scientific rationality* blatantly became the basis for development to spread progress, thereby, relegating the utter primacy of

⁴⁵ Perhaps one could also venture to postulate that underpinning the scientific rationality is the element of power or neo-imperialism.

imperialism, power, and subjugation.⁴⁶ What is more, the periods of late colonialism “have often been site of extensive experiments in social engineering,”⁴⁷ and this engineering meant carrying out experiments in colonized societies who had very little or no say on how such man-made vicissitudes were to be carried-out, or, more importantly, if they ever wanted such changes in the first place. As such, for our purpose, this period provides an appropriate starting point.

Development is invariably undergirded by scientific rationality, for they undoubtedly entail beliefs in improvement of those largely backward subsistence-oriented societies because anything traditional is seen to be a sign of underdevelopment and savagery. How can the posterity of Bacon, Locke, Descartes, Kant, Comte, or Marx, see old traditional edifices and ways of life as something appropriate for humans? The descendants of such minds, like the progenitors themselves, are adamant to transform every society deviating from, what these enlightened people sees as, the right and proper way to human progress guided by science. Indeed, for such persons, every traditional society is an anathema, an eyesore, to the beautiful, rational minds of enlightened societies. Hence, a “merciless war was waged against the age-old traditions of communal solidarity. The virtues of simplicity and conviviality, of noble forms of poverty, of the wisdom of relying on each other, and of the arts of suffering were derided as signs of ‘underdevelopment.’”⁴⁸ In this way, foundations of society are undermined, creating a state of rootlessness or, to borrow Durkheim’s term, *anomie*.

⁴⁶ Yet, these elements even though relegated, nevertheless, still underpin or lurk behind development, which is now dressed in scientific gown.

⁴⁷ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 97.

⁴⁸ Majid Rahnema, introduction to *The Post-Development Reader*, eds. Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree, (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), x.

When roots of society are challenged or demoralized, society begins to degenerate internally, i.e. morally, socially, culturally, spiritually, mentally, physically. But to the posterity of the enlightened minds, all such miseries and destitutions of societies are indeed a very small price to pay, for much wealth and prosperity awaits just around the phantasmagoric valley of progress and development promising the *same* kind of living standards, *same* kind of material benefits, *same* kind of mentality (thinking), *same* kind of comfort and ease of life as the enlightened societies. Put differently, every society will and must imbibe on the fortunes of modernity, thereby, eradicating the dizzying diverse traditional societies under the *uniformity* of development. There is no choice or no, to borrow Kierkegaard's term, *either/or*. This is to say, "The conquerors of our days, peoples or princes, want their empire to possess a unified surface over which the superb eye of power can wander without encountering any inequality which hurts or limits its view. The same code of law, the same measures, the same rules, and if we could gradually get there, the same language; that is what is proclaimed as the perfection of the social organization... The great slogan of the day is *uniformity* (italics in the original)."⁴⁹ Thus, development, having thrown away the barefaced primacy of power as its basis, has now—consciously or unconsciously—acquired a perverted humanistic foundation (which goes back to the acme of scientific rationality in development discourses); the idea that since man today enjoys enormous wealth and prosperity, it is only proper, i.e. a moral *duty*, for one to spread this *sameness* throughout the world by eliminating diversity and imposing *uniformity*.

⁴⁹ Benjamin Constant, *De l'esprit de Conquête*, quoted in Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 30.

In addition to the critique of the scholarships, the study also examines an episode of developmental scheme, Millennium Development Goals (MDGs); and two episodes of development programs, Transmigration in Indonesia and Villagization in Tanzania. This is done in order to expound (note: ‘→’ = influence) how scientific rationalities → scholarships → organizational/institutional schemes, such as the MDGs → actual applications of development schemes, such as transmigration and compulsory villagization. The three episodes are brought in to illustrate the narrow lens through which global development is viewed and understood. The scholarships and episodes serve as prime examples of how indiscriminant amount of deference is given to a single perspective—the principal of theoretical and empirical quantifications to understand diverse societal processes and problems—and how such a narrow approach brings about adverse human consequences, vividly illuminated by the events of transmigration and villagization, destructions of existing social systems, ethnocide, mass resettlements, increased poverty, deprivation of lands and homes, environmental destruction, and so forth.

As such, the works selected, and the episodes of inquiry provide fecund ground from which to illustrate the primacy of scientific rationality and, concomitantly, juxtapose it against polyphonic knowledge.⁵⁰ So, hopefully the reader will appreciate the rationale behind the approach of this study.

⁵⁰ And to analyze scholarships, from pre-late colonial period, which deal rarely, if at all, with scientific rationality, in propinquity to development, serves no purpose to the issue at hand.

The Definitions

Now, how does one define scientific rationality appertaining to this study?

Scientific rationality can be understood as an act in which one bases one's actions on reason and logic. Rationality follows a linear progression of thoughts and actions, which is to say, for instance, if x then y , if z then y , therefore, x then z . In other words, there are certain rules, methods, or standards one must adhere to if one is to think and carry one's thought rationally. Or, to be more precise, scientific rationality can be defined as an act of inquiry through "principles" and "experiments," where the experiments are "in accordance with these principles."⁵¹ Kant was full of adulation for such a doctrine that he dedicated one of his masterpieces (*Critique of Pure Reason*) to this, where one of the quiddities of the work was to show the inherent and logical progression from a to b .⁵² Inherent also in this organon of logical progression is the contingency of b on a ; this postulates the inexorable presences of *cause* and *effect* that invariably dictate any events. *Cause* and *effect* are important aspects of rationality, for they assume general progression of human mind⁵³ capable of discerning a logical reasoned thought from simple irrational beliefs based on feelings, myths, intuitions. This is why Spinoza remarked that man acts in so far as man is guided by *reason*,⁵⁴ which for Spinoza was the principal cause.

A rational way of carrying oneself, for instance, is to act in a certain way by differentiating one's thought processes from the ones that are antipode (such as: feelings,

⁵¹ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009), Bxiii.

⁵² Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*.

⁵³ Auguste Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*, trans. Frederick Ferré (Indianapolis, Indiana: Hackett Publishing Company, 1988).

⁵⁴ Benedict Spinoza, *Ethics*, trans. W. H. White (London: Wordsworth Classics, 2001).

intuitions, etc.) to the standards of rationality. A rational person is, therefore, apt to follow the attitude: “I will investigate phenomenon *M* in a manner independent from any traditions, biasness, feelings, or emotions. And I do this in a scientific manner: by testing general hypotheses, which are open to falsifications, and depending on their confirmation or falsification, they will further my knowledge on phenomenon *M*.” Indeed, Descartes, from whom modern scientific rationality advents, designated *rationality* as the “certain seed of truth which are innate in the human mind.”⁵⁵ This “human mind” which Descartes refers to is the *rationality*, which he sees being “naturally equal in all human being.”⁵⁶ A rational person will, therefore, judge the world according to his or her *reason* which can be verified by (scientific) empirical experiences; so that upon examination of any event one can discover the rules and principles “that would later serve to discover other truths,” and “since there is *only one* truth about each thing, whoever discovers it knows as much as it is possible to know about it (*italics added*).”⁵⁷

In this way, rules validating one’s reasoning are derived from the fundamental laws. The fundamental laws are themselves derived from empirical observations of facts⁵⁸ validating or falsifying potential hypotheses, i.e. various causes and effects, that explain the examined phenomenon. This is to say, one can know the world by *observing* events and facts which are then used to infer *causes* and *effects* that go on to serve as *proofs*. This constitutes the pith of scientific rationality. The empirical observations are

⁵⁵ Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Related Writings*, trans. Desmond M. Clarke (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1999), 128. Indeed, one must not underestimate the enormous influence Descartes had (and still does) on the scientific methods of research.

⁵⁶ Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 5.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 19.

⁵⁸ Comte, *Introduction to Positive Philosophy*.

used to deduce hypotheses and form theories under the guidance of reason in collaboration with experiences that are either confirmed or falsified.⁵⁹ Here, one is obliged to follow *particular* methodology by adhering to the established doctrines in order for what one does to be considered rational. All these methods culminate, after verifying the general hypothesis through empirical observations, to construct a *theory*.

A theory, assumed to be simplifications of reality, contains within itself numerous facts about the phenomenon. This means, theory is a collection of facts: facts explaining the phenomenon; and the more facts a given theory contains, the more it represents the reality of things examined, hence a better theory. In other words, without some kind of empirical measurements of the phenomenon, the theory will not be seriously considered, regardless of the cogency of its arguments. This is to say, the principles of rationality advise that one should avoid *illogical*, *vague*, or *untestable* ideas; this underlines the importance of *falsifiability* of phenomena. Thus, rationality stresses a person to *demonstrate* or prove why one believes in certain things and not in others; this forms the basis of rationality because, for Newton, to be rational is to be able to proceed by *demonstrating* whatever phenomenon one is trying to *describe*,⁶⁰ i.e. anything which is rational is demonstrable, or as Hegel puts it, “What is rational is actual: / and what is actual is rational.”⁶¹

⁵⁹ Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding*, trans. Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁶⁰ Isaac Newton, *The Principia*, trans. Andrew Motte (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995).

⁶¹ Georg W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 20. Of course, for Hegel, ‘rational’ means something *subjective* (very different from today’s meaning of *rational*). For Hegel, it meant *knowing of oneself* or *becoming aware of oneself by coming back to*

Indeed, for Popper, this method is the only way through which every new idea must be received, if they are to be entertained at all.⁶² For him, there invariably is a need for certain rigid methods to serve as *cordon sanitaire* by demarcating what is considered to be rational, empirical, scientific from the irrational, unscientific, mythical. Hence, Popper demanded any rational examination to adhere to strict scientific methods. The suggestion that any new scientific ideas must be subjected to and follow a strict set of methodologies became the foundation for all scientific endeavors, especially for the meager sciences: social sciences. In maintaining strict methodologies, it was argued, many logico-philosophical problems hampering the advancement of scientific knowledge are thus eliminated.⁶³

Regardless, what elevates scientific rationality and the ones that mostly go amiss are the *critical*, yet *eccentric*, discussions and the issue of *doubt* questioning the pre-existing conceptions of the world, be they scientific or otherwise. This is, indeed, one of the most admirable and also the *least* adhered to aspects of science. Popper was veracious to argue that it is *critical discussions* that discerned older myths from rational “science.”⁶⁴ In this regard, Popper was veracious because human knowledge, not based on *critical* reasoning, cannot advance our understanding of the world, since without doubting the existing doctrines, one can hardly discern between a myth and rationality.

We now turn to the term *polyphony*. It is a term designating traditional shibboleths—cultural beliefs, values, norms, myths, memories, languages, etc.—that the

oneself. Thus, what is rational, i.e. subjectively *becoming* aware of oneself, is actual. See, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977).

⁶² Popper, *The Logic of Scientific Discovery*, 16.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶⁴ Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations*, 170.

present query wants to shield against scientific measurements and manipulations. Polyphony (and its adjective polyphonic) is borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin's treatment of Dostoevsky's literature. Bakhtin uses the term to highlight the independence of characters in Dostoevsky's works, where each character is an "autonomous carrier of his own individual word."⁶⁵ The characters in Dostoevsky's literature are given their own conscious, their own thoughts, independent from the author's own predilections. Every character is given a voice; a voice different from the author's own worldly or philosophical dispositions. The characters are allowed to disagree with, rebel against, and even object to the views of the author. The author does not sway the characters' voices; each character is treated as an independent *subject*, an end rather than an object or means to an end. All the voices are heard, all are allowed to speak their own minds—with all their strengths, limits, irrationalities, caprices, absurdities—without any outside force to silence those with whom the author disagrees or dislikes; or give preferences or long monologues to those who buttress the author's own ideological inclinations. Therefore, what Dostoevsky unfolds in his "work is not a multitude of characters and fates in a single objective world, illuminated by a single authorial consciousness; rather a *plurality of consciousness, with equal rights and each with its own world*, combined but are not merged in the unity of the event (italics in the original)."⁶⁶ Certainly, what Dostoevsky does in his works is vastly *different* from conventional *methods* in literature, this way he creates a new genre, the polyphonic.

⁶⁵ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984), 5.

⁶⁶ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 6.

Therefore, pertaining to this study, polyphonic rationality accords and accepts diverse modes of thought, *as they are*. It directs one's attention to the existential realities of the human world: there is a world with diverse people, histories, cultures, memories that exists beyond the rationalized world of the developed societies, and they ought to be acknowledged in their own terms. Polyphonic rationality is where diverse forms of knowledge are accepted *as they are*. Various societies have their own ways of ruminating about their world. Their diverse *lived experiences* shape and determine their understanding of *their* (not universal) world in their own unique ways.⁶⁷ *Lived* experiences vary from society to society, culture to culture, because "What is most necessary for man, and what is given him in great abundance, are experiences, especially experiences of the forces within him. This is his most essential food, his most essential wealth. If man consciously receives all this abundance, the universe will pour into him, what is called *life* in Judaism, *spirit* in Christianity, *light* in Islam, *power* in Taoism (italics in the original)."⁶⁸ So, it becomes essential in any social analysis to take into account the knowledge which each society accumulates through its *lived* experiences for hundreds, if not, thousands of years.

Polyphonic knowledges emphasize the impetus of feelings, emotions, intuitions, as well as belief in myths, histories, supernatural, ancient gods, transfiguration of festivals, and a dialectic symbiosis with the outside environment where nature is still seen in an organic manner: everything human. It also means that one's apprehension of the

⁶⁷ It is quite unwise for anyone to instantaneously assume every society, no matter how diverse, has *only one universal* mode of thought, scientific rationality; and those who deviate from such mode of thought are uncivilized, undeveloped, and lingering in barbarism.

⁶⁸ Ismail Al-Faruqi, "On the Ethics of the Brethren of Purity," *Muslim World* 50 (July 1960): 196.

world very much depends on the manner in which one probes into the irrational (by *irrational*, it mean, what seems rational to one may be seen as irrational to the other and vice versa), where the world is organic, and society in which one is placed invariably provides meaning and purpose. Furthermore, for one, one's reasoning or probing into myths or supernatural is *not* irrational because it is only commonsensical, rational *even*, that one should probe into the nature or supernatural to find one's place among the cosmos.

It is important to recognize that *polyphonic knowledges* cannot be reduced to a systematic theory, nor can it be reduced to specified parameters, like we usually encounter in social sciences, rather the essences of polyphony is in its unsystematic, unmethodical approach to phenomena. This may be quite disconcerting as well as perplexing for the reader, for sure, but this is what polyphonic means. It means many things not just one; it cannot be defined nor put in orderly methodical manner; it cannot and can never be a theory. There is no methodological canon on how it should be done. There is no system. One cannot pin point and say "this is it, this is polyphonic rationality" because it changes from society to society, from *questioner to questioner*.

Just because *specific* explanation works for one society, it does not necessarily mean it is proper to apply the same interpretation to the next: there are, as Nietzsche once pointed out, infinite perceptions and interpretations.⁶⁹ Besides a prober's perception and interpretation are just one out of infinite others. One's views on development along with the interpretation one assigns to it is just one out of an infinite number of other interpretations. The role of the questioner is essential to polyphony rationality. An

⁶⁹ Nietzsche, *Gay Science*, "We Fearless ones" 374.

analogy used by Gabriel Marcel to differentiate between *problem* and *mystery* might be helpful in fathoming the distinctiveness of the questioner in polyphonic knowledges. Marcel writes: “A problem is something which I meet, which I find completely before me, but which I can therefore lay siege to and reduce. But a mystery is something in which I am myself involved, and it can therefore only be thought of as a sphere where the distinction between what is in me and what is before me loses its meaning and initial validity.”⁷⁰ Put differently, it means, when one is dealing with a *mystery*, the nature of the questioner is itself intricately tied to the question one is probing; it makes every bit of a difference as to who is asking the question. To change the questioner is to alter the very nature of the question itself; as such, the questioner is not substitutable; the questioner becomes exclusively and irreplaceably *sui generis*.

In facing a *problem*, the part of the questioner matters less because anyone who encounters it can solve it: say, for instance, $2 - 1 = 1$. Here the questioner is replaceable; however, when it comes to mystery, the very identity of the prober is tied to the question. Likewise, when it comes to social query, our understanding of the phenomenon as well as the questions we ask are enmeshed to who we are, which is shaped by our lived experiences—feelings, emotions, beliefs, etc. The way one encounters the issues of social query or development, will differ from person to person, even the meaning of *social query* and *development* will vary.

The notion of the significance of the questioner in a query is not new; one can trace it back to the ideas of Aristotle. For Aristotle, individuals are inextricably immersed in *matter* (*hulê*), hence for human reasoning to grasp the understanding of things or

⁷⁰ Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, trans. Katharine Farrer (Westminster, UK: Dacre Press, 1949), 117.

phenomena, it becomes essential for one to act on or rely on the corporeal organs of *senses*. Without relying on the organs of sentience, the power of reasoning cannot function.⁷¹ What is more, these senses—that Aristotle alludes to—are but one’s lived experiences; how one experiences emotions and feelings: touch, smell, sight, taste, hears, etc.; are very much predicated on actualities of one’s societal milieu. Therefore, the way one fathoms as well as queries into a phenomenon, ultimately, is contingent on the one asking the question. Simply put: the question is tied to the individuality of the questioner. Centuries later, importance of the inquirer’s distinctiveness to what is inquired is also vividly positioned in Hegel’s idea. His idea of *rational* is very much dependent on the subjectivity, *for itself*, of the one probing into the phenomenon. It is the returning of *oneself to oneself* that completes the process of understanding of the probed phenomenon, and, hence, the course of rationality.⁷²

Let us add the following to remove the horror which the readers, no doubt, find themselves in from what has been just mentioned: One’s understanding of social phenomena, such as development, depends on the prober, where the very identity—lived experiences (feelings, emotions, beliefs, etc.)—of the questioner is tied to the question that is being probed. Thence, the very question as well as its meaning and significance one queries into will differ from prober to prober. This succinctly encompasses the meaning of *polyphonic*, for the word means many diverse voices, not just one. Mathematical science provides an example of the essentiality of the identity of the prober in fathoming

⁷¹ Aristotle’s, “Physics,” in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); “Metaphysics,” in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); and *De anima*, trans. by Hugh Lawson-Tancred (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1987).

⁷² Vide, Hegel *Phenomenology of Spirit*.

any natural phenomenon. Perhaps one could say that it is *nature's* way of asserting its majestic brilliance, and that it is neither *boring* nor *one-dimensional* as most social scientists as well as some natural scientists picture it to be. In mathematics, for instance, in order to find the value of ω , we do the following (Note: any letters can be used to signify the following expression):

$$\omega = v$$

$$\omega (\psi_a) = v (\psi_a)$$

$$\omega (\psi_a) \pm (\psi_b) = v (\psi_a) \pm (\psi_b) \dots\dots\dots (1)$$

Where, 'ω' is variable; 'v' is the coefficient; 'ψ_a' and 'ψ_b' are any integers.

What the above equation elucidates, and what concerns us regarding polyphonic knowledge is this: It signifies the way one arrives at or solves the equation depends on the specific prober, viz. the question of what solves for ω will invariably vary according to the particular prober; the prober is intimately tied to the question. The way one questioner comprehends and solves the equation will differ. The value for ω will vary from inquirer to inquirer, for there are many ways to get to the value; the value itself will be diverse; and that there is no one universal value of ω , all values, as conceived by various inquirers, are all equally valid. Perhaps, this shows that even nature is polyphonic in its *description* of phenomena. What one learns from the above example is the following: there are many ways to attain the understanding which one seeks. This, concomitantly, shows the errors of most academic disciplines that assume there is *only* one way to attain that which one seeks to understand. Understanding of phenomena (be it natural or social) is not restricted to one specific method. Furthermore, an astute reader

would have noticed understanding or knowledge can be ascertained in many diverse, multifaceted ways.

One could only hope the above explication has clarified for the reader what is meant by polyphonic rationality. Perhaps there is an element of truth in what Pareto opined: one should employ “whatever” method one prefers, “all is allowed, all is fair,” provided one can discover and “shed new light on old ones, and rectify errors.”⁷³ Hence, this is what we have tried to do, at least, to elucidate and thus clarify to the reader what polyphonic knowledge is, in respect to this query, for, indeed, polyphonic rationality cannot be understood or fathomed otherwise.

One may certainly think: the tone of this study is polemical or, even, hyperbolic.⁷⁴ Yet, it may comfort the reader to know that for a very long time one has been an ardent supporter of that which one is going against in this present query. The over-specialization of social sciences along with their narrow understanding led one astray into dogmatic thinking, which is so prevalent today. Hence, this study is one’s way of shedding much of the narrowness of one’s understandings which one had accumulated

⁷³ Pareto, *Considerations on the Fundamental Principles of Pure Political Economy*, 1.

⁷⁴ It is essential to remember that the reader should not reduce the *passion* of this query to simple hyperbole. Indeed, one’s passionate reasoning about topics or issues become hyperbolic even without one’s intentions. What this means is, the passion makes the study lively and animated, it gives a sense of *aliveness*. Contrast this with queries done by persons who are not passionate about their topic, one will find such persons’ to write and speak about their topic as if everything is dead, lifeless, inert, motionless. Thus, an astute reader will regard this paper to be inspired by or be imbued with the author’s passion, not the author’s hyperbolic polemics.

throughout one's prolonged anesthetic exposure to this parochial academic discipline.⁷⁵

So, with these pointers in mind, let us now turn to the critique of development literature.

⁷⁵ Additionally, one wouldn't want the astute reader to concur with what is reasoned in this inquiry, because if anyone is to be in concurrence, then it might be because something about the ideas reasoned here has not been properly understood. In this regard, Epictetus quite rightly notes: "if you shall seem to some to be a person of importance, distrust yourself." See, Epictetus, *The Enchiridion*, XIII. The point being: the fallibility of human knowledge as well as the ignorance of the majority. Thus, one would very much hope for the reader to *understand* the arguments put forward, rather than to be in agreement.

CHAPTER II
RITUALS OF DEVELOPMENT

Overture

The examination of scholarships is done to illustrate the *roots* of scientific rationality. This is done to ascertain how scientific rationality, implicitly and/ or explicitly, influences development discourse. By examining, we simultaneously illuminate the *root* as well as its *predominance*. In illuminating the primacy of scientific rationality, we illuminate also the primacy of its two predicates: acme of institution and economy.¹ It is important to remember that substantiating the root of an *abstract idea*, which *scientific rationality* is, is only possible through indirect means, never direct. The *abstract* nature is what gives it its staying power, its formidable defense against critique, its utopic optimism about progress, and its superiority through predictions. Hence, the root *source* is substantiated through the *primacy* of scientific rationality, institution, and economy.

The following section (section II) examines the root that privileges scientific rationality and its attempt to transmute social analyses into *science*. Section III discusses

¹ The reader should not take the present critique as a review of the works themselves; instead they are critiqued in so far as they are relevant to our subject of inquiry by exploring the common leitmotif arising from the examination. Because it would be rather redundant to allude every parallel idea of the works critiqued, it is prudent to concentrate only on those concepts which are of most urgent relevance to the present matter of inquest. It would also be helpful for the reader to note the following qualification: The present critique is not so much interested in the applied plans or proposals expressed in the examined works; rather it is interested in the roots, i.e. rationale, behind their views. In other words, the validity of their, say for instance, economic, political strategies: such as, measures regarding trade, aid, domestic markets, investments, sustainable development, consumptions, economic productivity, democracy, etc.; are of little interest, since these are based on societal institutional changes and primacy of economy, which are themselves predicated on scientific rationality.

how pursuit for scientificity leads to espousing of *institution*, which is predicated on *scientific rationality*. Section IV discusses how the logical progression from *scientific rationality* to *institution* invariably requires *economy* as the basic lens from which to cognize the whole of social inquiry.

Before we begin the critique, let us digress very briefly to make an essential note. Since terms such as predominance, acme, privilege, primacy, dominance are utilized constantly, it would be useful for the reader to understand this terms in congruence with Gramsci's idea of hegemony. This way unnecessary confusion can be avoided about the aforesaid terms. Gramsci's idea of "hegemony" is helpful here in illuminating the root as well as in elucidating the predominance of scientific rationality along with its two consequent predicates. In any society, influence of certain ideas, institutions, and values dominate over others; however, it does so not through "domination," but through, what Gramsci identifies as, "consent." This is to say, the word *domination* undergoes semantic transformation to "consent" in order to conceal the coercive force of the state apparatus, which is but the domination of certain groups. The two levels, civil society (under which culture functions) and political society, correspond with one another to maintain groups' hegemony in the society, while also, at the same instance, sustaining dominance through state and judicial apparatus. Thus, in any society, certain forms of cultural beliefs and institutions predominate over others; and these forms of cultural dominance are what Gramsci identifies as "hegemony."² Pertaining to the present study, it is this cultural hegemony that sustains the predominance of certain forms of rationality; it then burgeons the need to foist modern societal institutions and with it its accompanying

² Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, eds. and trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith (New York: International Publishers, 2010).

importance of economy. Implicit here is the need to create “consent” for the general mass, which is in turn based on “the prestige... which the dominant group enjoys because of its position and function in the world of production.”³ Certainly, as it will become evident throughout this chapter, it is developed societies’ domination in the world of material production—wealth, economic production, technology, mass consumerism—that justifies their prying into traditional societies by dictating what is good or how they should develop.

The Root: Primacy of Scientific Rationality

In order to reveal the root as well as the acme of scientific rationality, one must also first grasp the role of ideas. By directing our attention to the role of *ideas*, we are not digressing from the topic; instead, it provides context to an otherwise *context-less abstract* rationality. And the *context* here is the human realm. Bringing the aforementioned rationality within the context of the human realm enables one to critique as well as explicate the root which cannot be otherwise substantiated directly, by showing the vast chasm between the actualities of society, and what scientific rationality proselytizes.

Scientific rationality is *not concrete*; it is an *abstract idea* continuously reproduced through texts or scholarships. This is, of course, why we are critiquing the scholarships of development; after all, this is what *critiquing* means: (as described in Chapter One) assessment of an *idea* and its validity to *everyday lived* reality. It would indeed be improper to disregard the role of *idea* when critiquing scientific rationality, which is itself an *abstract idea*. Through *text*, the abstract rational idea is made less

³ Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 12.

abstract and, at the same instance, made more concrete (of course, the idea still remains abstract; but, this time a *form* is given to the rational idea). Moreover, this reproduction continuously sustains its staying power or its longevity. Thus, *ideas*, especially *scientific ideas or rationality*, have an influential aura that sustains them in the minds of thinkers. They outlive the lives of those who bore them, and the coming generation breathes new life by interpreting or misinterpreting the ideas of the past.⁴

One could, indeed, trace the longevity of rational ideas to, what Edward Said identifies as, *textual attitude*. The term is of course referring to the tendency “to apply what one learns out of a book literally to reality,” and in turn “risk folly or ruin.”⁵ Likewise, scientific rationality, which is itself an abstract entity, is written down or made into scholarships for pedagogic learning. This erroneously leads academics, experts, and professionals to literally apply what they have learned in scholarships to reality, hence, the contemporary vogue to scientificity: measure. The *root* of scientific rationality is thus illuminated. Just as seeds are planted into soil from which roots germinate, similarly, the abstract scientific idea is the seed and scholarships or texts are its roots, viz. by the virtue of being written down or textualized, the abstract idea forms its roots.

⁴ Certainly, men are quick to shut off any criticism against ‘rationality.’ Or, rather, rationalists will not tolerate any kind of normative human judgment—be they spiritual, moral, or ethical—being passed on what they do. The expressions of normative judgment are the highest forms of human freedom; yet by shutting off criticisms against rationality, one is robbed of one’s highest freedom. It matters not what one says to rationalists, for it will not deter nor make them stop what they are doing because they are *conditioned* by the very nature of their training to perform the objectives set for them. They are *not* free, however. Rather they are *determined* to execute tasks rationality demands, even if it means having an overspecialized narrow lens. Thence, most people tend to ignore the permeating presence of diverse forms of rationality; and in doing so, one takes for granted the heterogeneity of ideas that necessarily goes on to create the varied human societies. By glossing over such aspects of rationality, we begin to confine our thought process by probing into every issue through our narrow lens.

⁵ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 93.

Ideas about scientific rationality linger because of people's erroneous tendencies to rely on authoritative, systematic scholarships to understand the chaotic, uncertain human society. This way human relations and contacts which are most important in understanding are neglected by preferring the text of some authoritative authors. Works on scientific rationality are indeed useful, for they serve as *one of the many tools* available to understand societies; however, it becomes erroneous when these texts are literally applied to reality, forgetting it is merely a *tool*, not a *reality*. This is what actually has become in development discipline as well as in the social sciences, in general. When faced with the disorganized, disordered chaos of human society, social scientists adamantly prefer texts rather than face the chaotic disorientations of the actuality. This kind of sloppy attitude was (and still is) ubiquitous in the field of *Orientalism*, vividly elucidated by Said, as he writes:

because of this human tendency to fall back on a text when the uncertainties of travel in strange parts seem to threaten one's equanimity... [m]any travelers find themselves saying of an experience in a new country that it wasn't what they expected, meaning that it wasn't what a book said it would be. And of course many writers of travel books... compose them in order to say that a country *is* like this, or better, that it *is* colorful, expensive, interesting, and so forth. The idea in either case is that people, places, and experiences can always be described by a book, so much so that the book (or text) acquires a greater authority, and use, even than the actuality it describes (italics in original).⁶

Said's description of *Orientalism* as a discipline riddled with dogmatic stereotypings, thereby creating realities about the Orient, which became the *idées reçues* of the field, is no different from social sciences' portrayal of the *traditional*. Scientific scholarships on development, likewise, tell professional experts and academics that traditional societies have no sense of reasoning or science; that they are backward,

⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 93.

primitive, believe in myths, superstitions, etc. In such circumstances, the actuality of peoples' lives is relegated in favor of scholarships, hence giving rise to, what Michel Foucault identifies as, a *discourse*;⁷ a discourse outlining, even detailing, what to discuss, how to carry out studies, and who to listen to. The *discourse*, to experts and academics, thus, becomes the reality, where life in these societies must be as they are described in texts of scholarships one reads, so much so the texts “*create...the very reality they appear to describe (italics in original).*”⁸

Such an outlook reminds one of Stendhal's *crystallization*,⁹ where one allocates fantasized, idealized attributes to a person who, in reality, possesses none of those characteristics. Reliance on scholarships rather than lived experiences is much like Stendhal's *crystallization*, attributing perceived, fantasized qualities to societies. The textual attitude replaces actualities of society, viz. turning actualities into fantasies and fantasies into actualities. The transposition of abstract ideas into reality is made even more acute by the languid attitude of experts, academics to place an indiscriminant amount of conviction in the ideas purported in texts: how development should be approached, how it is to be studied, what is to be expected from the examined society, how the discipline is to be made into a science, etc. In sum, a new *discourse* is conceived. A whole new set of texts is manufactured to support the discourse's monopolistic claims to understand the subject of development, thereby establishing “a discursive practice that sets the rules of the game, who can speak, from what points of view, with what authority,

⁷ See, Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1972); and *Discipline & Punishment: The Birth of Prison* (New York: Vintage Books, 1995).

⁸ Said, *Orientalism*, 94.

⁹ Stendhal, *Love* (New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 1975).

and according to what criteria of expertise; it sets the rules that must be followed for this or that problem, theory or object to emerge and be named, analysed, and eventually transformed into a policy or a plan.”¹⁰ Certainly, the world of academics, experts, policymakers is ruled by little else, for without such preplanned dogmas their systematic, methodical world usually breaks down. This is why, they insist, “...on standard arguments against standard violations of standard standards. Exclamations such as ‘inconsistent!’, ‘*ad hoc!*’, ‘irrational!’, ‘degenerating!’, ‘cognitive meaningless!’ recur with tiring regularity. Illiteracy, however, not only does not matter, it is a sign of professional excellence. It is *required*, not just tolerated. All the distinctions of the discipline (context of discovery/context of justification; logical/psychological; internal/external, and so on) have but one aim: to turn incompetence (ignorance of relevant material and lack of imagination) into expertise (happy assurance that the things not known and unimaginable are not relevant and that it would be professionally incompetence to use them) (italics in original).”¹¹ In such an environment, understanding is relegated to the realm of *metaphysics*.

One must recognize the big differences between understanding something *intellectually* or *textually*, as wonted among academics, experts and something through *lived experiences*. Society cannot be understood in its fullness through *intellectual* contemplation on scholarships. To understand something *intellectually* is to detach oneself from the human realm and dawdle aimlessly in the cold, impersonal abstract realm. Hence, one must immerse into societies’ manners of life; one not only needs to

¹⁰ Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 41.

¹¹ Paul K. Feyerabend, *Philosophical Papers: Problems of Empiricism*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1985b), 85.

experience, even feel, the emotions, sympathies, mysteries, lore of the natives, but also appreciate the meaningful significance the natives' modes of thought provide to persons within. If one assumes that one can systematically bring to order the disorienting chaos of society, not through human exchange but through scholarships, then one can never understand the issues one is probing. The books, articles, intellectual contemplations are *tools* through which to reach understanding; they are neither *reality* nor *understanding*; besides, they are superfluous; they are impersonal; most importantly, they neglect society's lived experiences.

Furthermore, what is of interest when examining the *root* is not the importance of the works to be critiqued, but rather the particular leitmotif, i.e. scientific rationality, continuously reproduced in the form of texts or scholarships. This interminable reproduction can perhaps be best conveyed by Burke's parable of endless conversation. He writes:

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone on before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the conversation still in progress.¹²

Here, the conversation which began even prior to one's interlocution is rooted in some topic **SR**. The conversation, however, ceaselessly continues based on **SR**; then one joins in the ongoing discussion. Even when one decides to leave, the discussion goes on,

¹² Kenneth Burke, *The Philosophy of Literary Form* (New York, NY: Vintage Books, 1957), 95-96.

while new comers to the parlor join the ongoing conversation. Yet, the source from which the conversation began goes on, or is reproduced in each new stage or with each new comer into the discussion. Thus, pertinent to this study, it becomes essential to examine the *root*, not join in the ongoing conversation. To simply join in the conversation for its own sake is to aimlessly prattle in a heated discussion, not knowing whether it is even proper to put in one's oar. But in examining the roots, one is in better position to judge if the ceaseless conversation based on one leitmotif is worth one's valuable breath and energy, i.e. to join in the conversation. This is to say, by understanding the roots, one is in better position to discern whether the endless conversation has veered off topic, has been misconstrued, or the present conversation has nothing whatever to do with the initial topic, etc. This way one better understands the conversation.

Recapitulating what has been said thus far (so as to refresh the reader's mind, thereby, avoid confusions), scientific rationality exists in the abstract world (of the mind) brought into concreted existence through scholarships. Herein lies the *root* of scientific rationality, i.e. the scholarships; after all, just as the root germinates from the seed, likewise, the abstract scientific rationality sprouts its roots in the form of scholarships. And just as the root absorbs nutrients from the soil in order to sustain the plants (in other words, nutrients from soil are absorbed by the root which then passes the nutrients to different parts of the plant), so similarly, once scientific rationality is given a *form*, i.e. textualized, all future scholarships materialize from the initial root. As a result, scientific rationality is constantly reproduced. This perennial reproduction also means the prevalence of "textual attitude"; hence, numerous academics may discuss different issues,

yet the root from which they approach their examined issues nevertheless invariably remains the same—scientific rationality.

This attitude, with regard to development, leads one to easily justify the *prominence* of scientific rationality because it affords one to assume away all the untidy, uncertain, unordered aspects of society, and concentrate only on its facile aspects: the methodologically neat, systematic measurable features of society. When academics or experts come face to face with the puzzling uncertainties of development because nothing is said in influential texts about issues one is faced with, they heedlessly gloss over those experiences as something frivolous or insignificant.¹³ Instead, they concentrate on the scientifically *definable* terms, since, by virtue of being *scientifically defined*, the term is devoid of any perplexing reservation about its objectivity. As Malinowski reasons, the definitions “in reality...are condensed formulae which contain extensive recipes for the organization of perspective in field-work. And this really is the hallmark of scientific

¹³ One vivid example of such nescience is Jared Diamond’s, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997). In it he begins by trying to answer a native New Guinean’s, one Yali, question: “Why is it that you white people developed so much cargo and brought it to New Guinea, but we black people had little cargo of our own?” (Diamond 1997, 14). The answer to which Diamond proffers is: environmental variables, such as: continental differences influencing the availability of wild plants and animals for domestication, migration and diffusion affecting crops, livestock; climate and latitude of the geographic regions; ecological barriers; differences in the size of the population and area (Diamond 1997). No doubt, being an evolutionary biologist did induce Diamond to conceive of a scientific answer. Yet, what Diamond is unaware of is the nature of Yali’s question. Yali is not asking a scientific, materialistic question, but a cultural and human query. The fault lies in Diamond’s narrow lens because it is rare for a scientific researcher to be asked such a subjective cultural question, since nothing is talked about on questions of such nature in the influential scientific texts. Yali’s question is not about the material poverty of his society, instead his is about his bafflement on “white people” fixation with material goods. So, the 25 years and 547 pages it took Diamond to answer Yali’s question is irrelevant to the nature of the question asked.

definition.”¹⁴ The neat systematized definitions forming concepts resemble the objective inquiries of exact sciences, where, according to Douglas North, the explanations “are logically consistent and in principle subject to empirical verification.”¹⁵ While others insist, one ought to “discard adventitious and fortuitous happenings”¹⁶ in scientific studies of culture because they are unscientific, non-empirical events and are “beyond the reach of the methodology of empirical science.”¹⁷

The exigency for certainty in human society can be, North argues, increased by “the accretion of knowledge,” and through generalization that “makes us good not only at modeling “reality,” but also constructing theories in the face of real uncertainty.”¹⁸ Yet, generalization is only possible by discarding non-empirical happenings or even rejecting the existence of such experiences. This is what Foucault identified as the *mechanisms of exclusion*, where certain kinds of experience or knowledge are buried and/or disqualified as inadmissible to hierarchy of eruditions and scientific inquiries.¹⁹ Furthermore, to disregard the essential aspects of culture by labelling them as non-empirical, “adventitious and fortuitous happenings” means writing off that which gives meaning and significance to the term *society*.

¹⁴ Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1944), 115.

¹⁵ Douglas North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005), 16 and 4n.

¹⁶ Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, 5.

¹⁷ Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1951), 329. Many leading scholars from various disciplines in ‘social sciences’ have been very much influenced by his work (especially this and *The Structure of Social Action*), certainly the institutionalism as well as the positivism in economics and political studies, which now dominate these fields, are very much influenced by his work.

¹⁸ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 73, 27.

¹⁹ Michel Foucault, “*Society Must be Defended*”: *Lectures at the College De France, 1975-76*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 32, 8.

By slanting toward natural sciences, social analyses attempt to become more scientific in its approach by ordaining clear-cut, generalizable canons, variables, parameters, definitions, methods, etc.²⁰ The relevant discipline, according to Parsons, must duly adhere to “the basic norms of scientific knowledge”—empirical validity, logical clarity and consistency, and generalizability of the “principles” involved.²¹ Thus, Malinowski espoused, every event in human society and culture has to be reduced to generalizable statements, where “every statement and every argument has to be made in words, that is, concepts. Each concept, in turn, is the result of a theory which declares that some facts are relevant and others adventitious.”²² Parsons, likewise, held similar views, as he insisted on the use of scientific methods in social inquiries since, according

²⁰ The notion of generalizable concepts, parameters, etc. are espoused because, by virtue of generalizing, it makes the concepts, parameters, methods readily applicable to any society regardless of their relevance. Alex Inkeles asserts, for instance, the main task is to improve the “conceptual tools and methodological equipment to make us more effective in the study of *any* society (italics in original).” See, Inkeles, “Understanding a Foreign Society: A Sociologist’s View,” *World Politics* 3 (January 1951): 269-280. Meaning: ‘any’ society can be readily studied by applying the conceptual tools, methods, parameters and universalized terms. The distinctness among societies, in other words, is thereby discarded as something frivolous.

²¹ Parsons, *The Social System*, 335. It may certainly seem easy and unchallenging for scientific minds to reduce complex societal realities into a few handfuls of general principles. Yet, as Benedetto Croce once maintained, “...whilst it is possible to reduce to general concepts the particular factors of reality which appear in history...it is not possible to work up into general concepts the single complex whole formed by these factors, i.e. the *concrete fact*. To divide it into its factors is to destroy it, to annihilate it (italics in original).” See, Benedetto Croce, *Historical Materialism and the Economics of Karl Marx* (New Jersey: Transaction, Inc., 1914), 3-4. By reducing the vast complexities of human society into few general principles, one annihilates “the single complex whole”; with it one’s understanding of society is also reduced. As a result, society is first reduced to—man, then tissue, cell, atom; or society is reduced to social, cultural, political, economic aspects; or social field is reduced to anthropology, sociology, geography, political studies, economics, etc.; or human freedom is reduced to individual freedom, political and economic freedom, freedom of speech, right to vote, etc. with each stage being more impoverished and truncated than the previous.

²² Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, 7, 71.

to Parsons, advancements stem from the generalizability of knowledge, concepts, theories along with the development of special investigative methodologies.²³ Therefore, to make “the study of man more scientific,” science becomes an indispensable tool.²⁴ This in turn, as North maintains, “enormously improve[s] the usefulness of social science theory in confronting human problems.”²⁵ Jeffrey Sachs, as if to make this point, also asserts, “Science has been the key to development from the very start of the industrial revolution, the fulcrum by which reason is translated into technologies of social advance.”²⁶ One could indeed see the laudation Sachs accords to science in the development of societies. Other scholars put to heart the call made by Malinowski and Prasons: Lipset, for instance, affirms the importance of hypotheses and empirically testable statements in social analyses.²⁷ This is why Rostow, for instance, claimed his study of society along with its pertinent stages of economic growth as the general “theory about modern history as a whole.”²⁸ Enthusiasm such as these led North to assert, models and theories in social science have pragmatic ends, where the results spewed out of such studies afford practical policies to be enacted to produce the intended results.²⁹

No wonder, in desperation to become *science*, we see Inglehart and Welzel carry out social investigation by means of *survey* (and *opinion polls*) and apply them to

²³ Parsons, *The Social System*, 3, 333.

²⁴ Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, 7. It is interesting to note that Malinowski—along with Radcliffe-Brown—was advising the British government regarding its colonial policies.

²⁵ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, vii.

²⁶ Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2005), 366.

²⁷ Seymour Martin Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy: Economic Development and Political Legitimacy,” *American Political Science Review* 53 (March 1959): 69.

²⁸ Walt W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 1.

²⁹ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 5.

statistical probabilities; they qualify their study as scientific or empirical, to which one author in the foreword hailed their work to be the “grand theory” in human development.³⁰ This is of course, a very bold claim because such “grand theory” (i.e. *grand theory of everything*) has not even come to pass in the natural sciences. Also any astute reader or scholar will find this troubling because how did *opinion* and *survey polls* become *science*; if this is *science* then we are indeed in a very sorry state as far as advancement in human knowledge is concerned. Certainly, the greatest scientific achievements—quantum physics, electro-magnetism, gravity, theory of atomic structures, etc.,—were not the result of surveys or opinion polls.

Not to be outdone by the above authors, Paul Collier claims to show the reality of the poorest societies by the means of “statistical evidence.”³¹ In other words, the actual lives of human being are reduced to statistical probabilities and numbers. For Collier, the realities of the living, breathing person are of less significance than the “statistical evidence.” For him, the reality is numbers not actual human lives. Here, *one* of the *tools* for our understanding becomes *the understanding* and the *reality*. No longer is emphasis

³⁰ Hans-Dieter Klingemann, foreword to *Modernity, Cultural Change and Democracy: The Human Development Sequence*, by Ronald Inglehart and Christian Welzel (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2005), ix.

³¹ Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), xii. Measuring is becoming (if not, has become) one of the most important aspects of any social analysis. Such circumstance has led some scholars to go against the present measuring tools. Nevertheless, they do not deviate from the orthodoxy that is currently in place. For instance, Stiglitz et al. argues, measurements should be emphasized not on economic productivity but on people’s well-being. See, Joseph E. Stiglitz, Amartya Sen, and Jean-Paul Fitoussi, *Mismeasuring Our Lives* (New York: The New Press, 2010). Still, such an argument is no different from what they have just criticized, viz. they fail to realize how social inquiries could be meaningful without measurements. Human well-being cannot be measured, even the proxies used in measuring can never substitute the actuality of what makes a person well-off—there are numerous sociological, psychological, cultural facets that need to be accounted for. These proxies can never satisfy such demands (or are a very poor substitute), nor can they be quantified.

given on the need to understand, rather central importance is placed on methodologies which are, then, mistaken as understanding. Malinowski objurgates the unscientific methods of historians and humanists because, for him, means other than scientific methods are “immoral”; he urges social sciences to “lay their foundations...on the bedrock of scientific method,”³² which is staunchly adhered to by today’s experts, academics, and professionals.

William Easterly certainly was in congruence with this view of Malinowski; for him, the only way forward for development programs to be successful in the poor, traditional societies was through “scientific evaluation,” where expert professional staffs are “trained in the *scientific method*...who will evaluate random samples” of agencies’ effort; furthermore, these agents and agencies “must be constantly *experimenting* and searching for interventions that work, verifying what works with *scientific evaluation*...”; they “must [furthermore] carefully track the impact of their projects on poor people using the best *scientific tools* available... (italics added).”³³ Easterly disregards the human aspects of unfortunate societies, which he so steadfastly advocates in his polemics. He (as well as other academics, experts, NGOs, aid agencies) is unaware of how the most benign of intentions helps bring misery if all that matters are the scientific methods, experiments and/ or how to improve scientific evaluations, because the emphasis of such demands is no longer on the social, cultural, spiritual, moral well-being, but on the tools of research and evaluation. In other words, scientific tool becomes the acme of understanding, everything else becomes peripheral.

³² Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, 13.

³³ William Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2006), 194, 370, 374.

One can see from what has been expounded thus far that there is an inherent predilection in the examined scholarships to invoke the necessity to borrow and apply methodologies of natural science in the social sciences. Yet, in such blinkered zeal, they failed to realize what Gramsci had once remarked about applying methods borrowed from different disciplines, he wrote: “To think that one can advance the progress of a work of scientific research *by applying* to it a *standard method*, chosen because it has given good results in another field of research to *which it was naturally suited*, is a strange delusion which has little to do with science (italics added).”³⁴ The verity of Gramsci’s statement stands on its own. It is indeed a “strange delusion” to replicate the methodologies of natural sciences in queries concerning social phenomena because methods which natural sciences utilize are “*naturally suited*” to the nature of their inquests. One will see in the following two sections how such appeal is perpetuated.

This section tried to elucidate how the acme of scientific rationality demands social inquests to become more scientific, by borrowing methods from the natural sciences. However, in order to make social analyses scientific, it necessitates the need for concrete *isolate* factors as well as for human activities that best represents the quantitative aspects of society: modern *institutions* and *economy*. This concomitant is only logical: prominence of institution and economy follows acme of scientific rationality because they are inseparable aspects of the aforesaid rationality that render social science *scientific*.

³⁴ Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, 439.

Therefore, the next section (section III) explicates how the primacy of scientific rationality necessitates the acme of institutions; section IV discusses scientific rationality and acme of economy.

Scientific Rationality and Institution

For any discipline to become scientific, it requires narrowing of discipline's scope of interests, which is also a precursor to the *specialization* of the field. This means recognizing the object of study, establishing methodological canons, parameters, concepts, isolating factors/variables relevant to the discipline, establishing general or universally valid laws, etc., viz. what the narrowing, with it the specialization, does is to jettison all the clustered disordered aspects of a discipline, thereby retaining only those features that can be grasped and dissected in a methodologically tidy fashion. In regard to the scientific study of society, this means isolating an aspect of society for concrete analysis. This aspect, for Malinowski, is *institution*, which we know today to be central in socio-scientific (quantifiable) analyses.³⁵ It is hardly surprising then that Ronald A. Heiner proffered how predictable behavior emerges out of uncertainty.³⁶ He argues, in an uncertain, chaotic world, the flexibility of agent's behaviors must be restricted so as to

³⁵ The scintillating appeal, to conceive of a universally generalizable parameter through which to filter the chaotic human activity was irresistible to John Rawls—and thus procuring a *moral* justification. Rawls was committed to apply universal principles in human, social affairs. Thus, he saw the need to reduce human judgments to be *bounded* by *universally generalizable* principle, or “principle of justice,” from which to guide social or human course of actions. Such a view, intentionally or unintentionally, supposes the need for ‘certainty’ pertinent to human affairs. This, according to Rawls, could be achieved through “just or fair institution” that acknowledges and is bounded by the ‘universal principle.’ In other words, the principles and institutions are *standards* by which something is to be claimed or *accepted as legitimate*; they form the *criteria* of what is *counted as valid, legitimate*. See, John Rawls, *Theory of Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1971).

³⁶ Ronald A. Heiner, “The Origin of Predictable Behavior,” *The American Economic Review*, Vol. 73 (4) (September 1983), 560-595.

conceive a set of institutional rules, thus, producing recognizable, *predictable* patterns of behavior. Simply put, it highlights the evolution of institutions due to the presence of uncertainty, where certain sets of behavior or norm, deemed acceptable to (agent or) society, are established. Of course, one of the main rationales behind his paper was to support the scientific explanations and predictions of human society and behavior. Heiner was not shy to claim how his theory was applicable to all disciplines concerning human activities. No wonder, North asserts, it is “the development of the *institutional* framework that has undergirded (italics added)” the development of science; moreover, “an intricate mixture of new knowledge, applied knowledge, and techniques were integrated together by institutions...to realize the potential of this [i.e. scientific] knowledge.”³⁷ In other words, “the growth of knowledge is dependent on complimentary institutions which will facilitate and encourage such growth.”³⁸ This means that the development of science is facilitated by rational institutions because it requires rationalized institutions to make use of scientific knowledge. North has made a big claim by asserting institutions as the basis for the development of science, but what is of more interest, pertinent to this study, is how institutions are directly equated with science. Perhaps, this no doubt provides a clue as to why institutions form the core of contemporary social scientific examinations.

Institution³⁹—well established rules, procedures, customs, norms, values, etc.—for Malinowski, is the concrete reality, the real isolate factor needed for the scientific

³⁷ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 98.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 98-99.

³⁹ The term ‘*institution*’ in this study refers to the well-established rules, procedures, customs, norms, and values of the developed world. These rules, norms, values, etc. are modernized and scientifically rationalized relative to traditional vernacular shibboleths. As such, these institutions function in conformity with logic of science. This way *change* becomes the end goal of such institutions wherever they are

study of culture. The concept of institution, for him, already implies “a number of generalizations or scientific laws of process and of product”; therefore, factors other than *institution*, he argues, are *incorrect*.⁴⁰ For him, any study where culture is the main object, institutions cannot be ignored; they must, in other words, be the center of analysis.⁴¹ North, in parity with Malinowski, places institution at the center of social examinations, especially with respect to societal changes. He saw institutions—by increasing the stock of knowledge and replacing standing systems—as the restorer of order and certainty in a non-ergodic, disorderly human world; this way, the non-ergodic world becomes predictable with institutions stipulating rules, limits, principles, choices, and incentives for every aspect of human activity.⁴² In the quest to transform social studies into science, institution—be it family, religious, social, or economic—becomes the general, universally valid law of society. What is more, for Malinowski, culture is a means to an end, an instrument;⁴³ culture, in other words, is to be studied, analyzed, rather than to be understood. This way the close resemblance as well as the intimate relation with natural sciences provides, to the theory of culture, a *specific* answer to the

foisted. Furthermore, the present study dichotomizes standing values, norms, practices, belief systems, i.e. *shibboleths*, of the traditional world, from modern institutions of the developed world. The term ‘institutions’ is not used in reference to traditional society’s values, norms, habits, belief systems because one will find the term ‘institution’ is an inaccurate designation. In many traditional societies there are no such concepts as ‘*societal institutions*’ or ‘*institutions*,’ there are only norms, values, practices, and belief systems (moreover, all aspects of society are seen in combined holistic manner, i.e. ‘*togetherness*’). Hence, it makes little sense to use the term ‘institution,’ when the term itself has no significance in traditional societies. Furthermore, just because one alludes to modern ‘institution,’ for the purposes of differentiation, one is not advocating for ‘institution’ as a means to understand societies or to carry out social inquiries.

⁴⁰ Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, 67 & 54.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 41-54.

⁴² North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 17, vii-7.

⁴³ Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, 67-68.

chaotic actualities of society. In sum, the quantifiable aspect of the study offers predictive power, forcing the observer to answer either positively *or* negatively to a series of questions purported in the analysis.⁴⁴ This way, *specific* answers, rather than *indeterminate* answers, are ascertained. The room for *grey area* (good *and* bad, or yes *and* no, etc.) is discarded in favor of binary coded answer: 0 *or* 1, yes *or* no, this *or* that, etc.

Malinowski as well as others had grasped the influencing power of institution; not only is it quantifiable and thus a fulcrum from which to transform social sciences into scientific discipline, but he also realized how “the processes of training, of drill, of implanting of correct attitudes and manners are inherent in the working of each institution,” and how “every organized institution provides for specific apprenticeship, in which the newly incorporated member has first of all to learn the rules of trade, of social duty, of etiquette, and of ethics.”⁴⁵ Malinowski was right to have such an outlook because institution reinforces, rewards, punishes certain kinds of habits, norms, etc. “The animal psychology,” writes Malinowski, “teaches us one important fact: a habit which is not reinforced becomes unlearned, “extinguished.” It disappears. We can apply this fully to culture... When a habit ceases to be rewarded, reinforced, that is, vitally useful, it simply drops out.”⁴⁶ Expressed differently, it becomes important to reinforce the norms, habits, practices, and customs of the rationalized institutions in traditional societies; in doing so, the traditional shibboleths cease “to be rewarded,” thereby they become “unlearned,” or “extinguished.” To achieve the desired goals, the prevailing shibboleths need to be

⁴⁴ Ibid., 65 & 79.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 130.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 142.

undermined, eroded: “the life of a society when the traditional structure is *undermined* piecemeal,” insists Rostow, “. . .the modern elements, values, and objective *achieve* a definite break-through; and they come to control the society’s institutions; and then, having made their point, with their opponents in retreat or disarray they drive to *carry the process of modernization to its logical conclusion* (italics added).”⁴⁷ When the existing shibboleths are eroded, modern institutional values are implanted without difficulty, thereby changing the very nature of traditional societies. This way, one of the principal hurdles standing in the way of development is removed: *cultural* attitude towards foreign modes of thought. The following remark by Parsons makes clear about the intention stated in the previous sentences:

The place of science in Western society is part of the ascendancy of a cultural tradition which involves a *high valuation of certain types of rationality of understanding* of the empirical world. . . . *Once such valuation is established and built into the institutional system*, it comes to be strongly reinforced by the practical fruits. . . . In all probability only when such a combination has become *firmly established does it become possible for scientific investigation to acquire the level of prestige which it had enjoyed in the modern Western world* (italics added).⁴⁸

What it means is, “the rules of trade, of social duty, of etiquette, and of ethics” of the new institutions are implanted into societies; it means that society is indoctrinated into unchallenged superiority of scientific rationality, while labeling other modes as absurdities; it also means derision of preexisting beliefs as irrational or unscientific that deserve to be replaced by rational institutions. By indoctrinating new beliefs, society begins to change so as to realize the idealized goals espoused by scientific experts: how a developing, traditional society must look like or become.

⁴⁷ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 70.

⁴⁸ Parsons, *The Social System*, 340.

Parsons, likewise, maintains, “the main non-empirical problem areas is [*sic*] “culture bound” because empirical science does not have the same relative position in other cultures as it does in that of the modern Western world”:⁴⁹ This means that not only is the non-western world lingering in backwardness, but they also have to be guided by rational, civilized societies, otherwise how can they jettison their *incorrect, wrong* belief systems: their beliefs in myth, supernatural, and so forth. Therefore, in order to steer these backward societies toward the *correct, right* belief system, i.e. scientific rationality, they must be guided by the benign hands of the civilized world. Collier, consistent with such attitude, remarks, these societies, “coexist with the twenty-first century, but their reality is the fourteenth century,” riddled with “plague” and “ignorance.”⁵⁰ Indeed, the justification to what gives developed societies the right to decide not only which mode of thought to supersede the standing *irrational* and *unempirical* knowledge of the natives, but also what kind of institutions to be implanted comes from the benevolent image they have of themselves. Perhaps this is why Rostow asserts: “There may not be much civilization left to save *unless we of the democratic north* face and deal with the challenges implicit in the stage-of-growth, as they now stand in the world, at the full stretch of *our moral commitment*, our energy, and our resources”; we must do so because traditional societies “have the right to live their time in civilized settings, marked by a degree of respect for their uniqueness and their dignity...”; as such, these societies “have the right to expect the world of advanced democracies to help on an enlarged scale

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 361. What is evident here is his utter lack of knowledge in respect to other non-western societies, for science is not an object solely belonging to one society.

⁵⁰ Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, 3.

(italics added).”⁵¹ It is obviously clear from the above statement how Rostow has already decided *what is good and civilized* for other cultures. The gage which serves as a measure of civilized society is his own society, thus assuming the superiority of beliefs he is nurtured with. Even his claim of “respect for...uniqueness and...dignity” of traditional societies is negated by his assertion of “the right to live their time in civilized settings” because dictating what is *good* and what counts as *civilized*, and imposing those values to justify the *right to civilized* life only undermine the human dignity and respect he so ardently speaks of.

North, echoing parallel views, sees traditional societies trying to shed their old beliefs as they move towards modern institutions; he argues, these societies must prevail over “the process of disintegration [as they wrestle]...to *overcome the rigidities and erroneous beliefs* that confront societies attempting to make fundamental changes (italics added).”⁵² North already assumes traditional societies to be in a state of discontentment and wanting change; yet, he ignores the unquenchable novel needs and desires that modernity necessarily brings, and how such novel needs in turn create dissatisfaction with the old belief systems. And, for North, anything traditional is “erroneous”; “erroneous” because (as dictated by logic) the society he lives in is affluent, hence what other societies are adhering to must be incorrect, otherwise they should be like his own society. Similar sentiments are echoed by Sachs: “*Human institutions*...should be designed in the *light of reason* precisely to control or harness the *irrational side* of human behavior (italics added).”⁵³ By “irrational side of human behavior,” Sachs means those

⁵¹ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 167, 144.

⁵² North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 8.

⁵³ Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, 353.

belief systems not considered to be rational, as ascertained by the developed world—as he alludes to Kant, Comte, Adam Smith, Condorcet, Locke, Hume to define what rational human behavior means. Collier, likewise, affirms, there are people in traditional societies who want change, therefore, developed societies “can do much more *to strengthen the hands of the reformers*. But to do so we will need to draw upon tools—such as military interventions, *international standard-setting*, and trade policy... (italics added).”⁵⁴

Collier sees societies everywhere in need of guidance. Hence, according to him, it is only proper not to leave these cultures alone; rather they should be baptized in the virtues, norms, and values of the benevolent developed world. This certainly means bringing all societies in *uniformity* with the developed world, which cannot be achieved without some form of *universalized* institutions, which Collier feverously supports. Therefore, Easterly notes, the only hope for poor traditional societies is to borrow “ideas and technology from the West.”⁵⁵ Of course, Easterly thinks it sensible for the rest of the world’s society to emulate and adopt “ideas and technologies from the West,” after all who wouldn’t want to be like them.

Thus, traditional societies “must focus their minds on the task of development,” by “appealing to those values in the west”; moreover, they must also work towards and “accept a large part of responsibility for making those values [i.e. values in the west] come to life, in terms of their own societies and cultures.”⁵⁶ Congruently, Collier

⁵⁴ Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, xi.

⁵⁵ Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden*, 28.

⁵⁶ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 144. The need to supersede traditional systems by Western societies’ institutions is pervasive. For instance, Avner Grief, argues how western institutional systems are far superior than others, and how because of such mechanisms the West has advanced itself—economically, politically, socially; after all, for Grief, institutions are the engines of history. See, Grief’s,

designates those embracing values, norms, and institutions of developed societies as “heroes” and urges to support “the *heroes* in the struggle that is already being waged”; as he continues, “It is important to us [i.e. the developed world] that these people win their struggle (italic added).”⁵⁷ It is abundantly clear that no opportunity must be passed to disseminate the ‘civilized’ values and belief systems. Put differently, no occasion must be missed to establish one *universal* mindset. For North, to help society means, one must first understand it then carry out changes.⁵⁸ He is not satiated to leave cultures as they are, instead they are in need of guidance because they are trapped in their old beliefs awaiting Prometheus to steal fire from the gods to illuminate their darkened world, and Hephaestus to provide tools, metals, and crafts to ignite their ingenuity. And why is there a need for change? The answer is, development and economic prosperity, i.e. civilization, requires “fundamental institutional reforms.”⁵⁹ And the reforms initiate by foisting the ideas of science, for Parsons, “constitute[s] the primary source of initiation of change in the more general belief system of the society.”⁶⁰

Institutions and the Path to the Modern Economy (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006). Also see, Douglass C. North, *Institutions, Institutional Change and Economic Performance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, “The Colonial Origins of Comparative Development: An Empirical Investigation,” *The American Economic Review* 91 (December 2001): 1362-1401; and Daron Acemoglu, Simon Johnson, and James A. Robinson, “Reversal of Fortune: Geography and Institutions in the Making of the Modern World Income,” *The Quarterly Journal of Economics* 117 (November 2002): 1231-1294.

⁵⁷ Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, 86, 96, 175.

⁵⁸ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change* (2005), 163-164.

⁵⁹ Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, 179, 41, 143.

⁶⁰ Parsons, *The Social System*, 515. Thus, economic institutionalism is quite influenced by his theory. One will also find how ‘economics’ now takes the center stage in respect to any societal (social, political, or cultural) discourse—regardless of its relevance to issues at hand. His call for the primacy of science (influenced by Malinowski, Marshall—and his misreadings of—Weber, Pareto, and Durkheim),

Evident thus far are the pillory of non-western cultures. Indeed, it reminds one of the way most *Occident* habitually viewed the *Orients* because to the former, the latter is inferior in every seemingly way possible: from culture—languages, arts, modes of thought, science, music, alphabets, etc.—to the most trivial matters such as dress, facial expressions, even the manner they carry themselves.⁶¹ One has only to read the work *Modern Egypt* by Sir Evelyn Baring, The Earl of Cromer (the first British Viceroy of Egypt), to reify the long held attitude of Malinowski, Parsons, Rostow, North, and others of the superiority of the Western beliefs, mindsets. The Earl was quick to pass judgment about the Orients by claiming they were incapable of reasoning, lack logical faculty, cannot perform a simplest of arithmetical task, alien to reason, incapable to walk on a paved road, have no personal hygiene, easily believe in magic or supernatural, they were docile, meek and submissive, lack any moral standards, and so forth.⁶² The contemporary view of non-western cultures by academics or experts is no different from views held by Earl of Cromer. Of course, today's pillories are wrapped in language of scientifically *neutral, objective* terms: lack rational belief systems, modern institutions, proper investigative faculties, and pervasiveness of myths, other non-empirical beliefs, etc. Yet the sentiments behind these platitudinous terms are the same; they arise from the long held convictions about the inferiority of any non-western shibboleths. Robert Heilbroner denigrates traditional societies by remarking, “the underdeveloped world has no

theoretical analysis, and economics in social inquiry is very much apparent in today's 'social sciences' (exemplified by the scholarships examined in this study).

⁶¹ Said, *Orientalism*.

⁶² Evelyn Baring, The Earl of Cromer, *Modern Egypt*, vol. 2 (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1916).

history,”⁶³ treating them as if they were not even human. Implicit in Heilbroner’s statement is his view that traditional societies are savages—even close to animals—and hence they do not possess cultural or social history.

Rostow, displaying facsimile views, asserts the development of West as the function of expansion in scientific knowledge, i.e. “spirit of science,” and absences of traditional belief systems.⁶⁴ From such a perspective, it means anything—be their belief systems, practices, faculty processes, etc.—that is Western is right or correct; while anything that is not is wrong, incorrect, hence, they must be changed. North, Easterly, and Inglehart and Welzel, in analogous with Rostow, assert how society’s progress depends on its *cultural heritage*, i.e. “*path dependency*,”⁶⁵ meaning, society’s responses to social problems very much depend upon its cultural heritage: “Their cultural heritage will, in many instances, determine the success or lack of success of the actors. To the extent that the cultural heritage has equipped them to deal with such problems they may, in fact, make responses that make that environment more predictable. *If they have not been so equipped they may make inappropriate responses* or relegate the issue to

⁶³ Robert L. Heilbroner, *The Great Ascent* (New York, NY: Harper & Row Publishers, 1963), 17. Even the leader of the free world is not immune from holding such ethnocentric view of the *traditional*. During the 1960’s, the Dutch came under severe pressure from the United States to relinquish their remaining colonial areas to Indonesia. The Dutch Ambassador in Washington appealed to President Kennedy by arguing the Dutch had a moral obligation to the Papuans, just as the United States had for West Berlin. The reply of the President was: “That’s an entirely different matter... (In West Berlin) there are some two and a quarter million inhabitants... those Papuans of yours are some 700,000 and living in the Stone Age.” Kennedy quoted in Marcus Colchester’s, “Banking on Disaster: International Support for Transmigration,” *The Ecologist* 16, no. 2-3 (1986a): 69.

⁶⁴ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 31-33.

⁶⁵ See, North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 21, 156; Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernity, Cultural Change and Democracy*, 78; Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, 188.

witchcraft and /or similar anti-rational responses (*italics added*).”⁶⁶ One can see from the above statement the disparaged views toward traditional societies and their beliefs, as if these were something abnormal, unevolved, or something not even human. Note how easily North relegates societies that cannot increment certainty or predictability to “anti-rational” and “witchcraft.” But why? Because, for North, if a society does not make its environment more predictable, then this is due to the “inappropriate” response since to be *appropriate* means to be rational, thereby augmenting certainty; this way society’s success is equated to cultural heritage—like those of the developed world, which he speaks so fondly of in his work. Differently put, traditional societies are not developed because of their cultural heritage. Furthermore, for North, since developed societies are well-advanced and traditional societies are not, it is obviously the traditional systems that are incorrect, or “anti-rational.” And because social science practitioners see culture to be a means to an end, a tool, an instrument, it can be modified, replaced, or improved just like any generic, mass industrial product being replaced by its plentiful undifferentiating exchangeable parts. No longer is there a need to appreciate, accept cultures *as they are*. Being a tool, any traditional society in its present state is viewed as something

⁶⁶ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 18. The notion of societies’ *past* cultural systems in respect to their development is ever so present in modern social sciences. See, Robert D. Putnam, *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993); Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988); Douglass C. North, and Robert Paul Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Avner Grief, “Cultural Beliefs and the Organization of Society: Historical and Theoretical Reflection on Collectivist and Individualist Societies,” *Journal of Political Economy* 102 (October 1994): 912-950; Edward C. Banfield, *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1958).

undesirable, something to be transformed into something sublime—such attitude only reminds one of Stendhal’s *crystallization*.

Implanting new beliefs, i.e. new institutions, brings stark changes to societies. As Rostow fervently advocated, traditional societies must “become *prepared for a life of change and specialized function* (italics added).”⁶⁷ Certainly, those who espouse change care not the actual lived consequences that befall upon the natives, who invariably will have to bear the brunt of the idealistic fantasies of development. The espousers of development care only in so far as their ideas are implemented or embraced by the who’s who in the world of academics, experts, professionals, policymakers.

Moreover, there is often a benevolent outlook about the changes endorsed. This is because for Sachs, modern institutions “help foster economic system that spread the benefits of science, technology, and the division of labor to all parts of the world”; they also “help promote science and technology, grounded in *human rationality*, to fuel the continued prospects of improving the human condition (italics added).”⁶⁸ So, for Sachs and others, how can this *not* be beneficial to traditional societies? After all, modern institutions grounded on “human rationality” are bound to “foster economic system” that ignites societal development. This logically leads one to assume, since modern institutions help societies develop, because it is rooted in rationality of science, the process of transition for any society is always at equilibrium, or what Parsons calls, *homeostatic equilibrium*: meaning, when one part of society changes, other parts

⁶⁷ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 26.

⁶⁸ Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, 352.

accordingly change, thereby, maintaining stability within the whole social system.⁶⁹ This is to say when one institution faces social change, remaining institutions must change accordingly to maintain equilibrium, or bring the society in disequilibrium, due to change to equilibrium. This is to say that there is a *linear* progression to societal changes.

North, displaying similar views, asserts, “changing just one institution in an attempt to get the desired performance is always an incomplete...activity.”⁷⁰ North is, of course, referring to the point of disequilibrium, which results due to the lack of change in the corresponding societal institutions to bring society, in transformation, back to equilibrium. In unison with Parsons and North’s view, Inglehart and Welzel assert societal (human) development is attained with concurrent changes in socioeconomic institution, which increases the existential security; cultural institution, which proliferates rational-self expressive values; and political institution, which promotes democratic values.⁷¹ Thus, for Parsons, North, and Inglehart and Welzel, society always transforms at equilibrium, i.e. it requires *complete* alteration. If transformation is not at equilibrium, then it is the fault of a given society, since it is limiting the change to one (or few)

⁶⁹ Parsons, *The Social System*, 491-492. This idea of his can be vividly seen in Huntington’s gap hypothesis, see, Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, [1968] 2006). Certainly, Parsons’s notion of social change and its accompanying ‘equilibrium’ is very dominant in social sciences. This idea has enormously influenced the way social scientists view development processes or vicissitudes in any society—be they developed or developing, political or social, economic or cultural, etc. This means societal vicissitudes are desirable events, for they are seen to be proper for any society—because such changes are based on scientific inquiries (or what Parsons calls the *theory of action*).

⁷⁰ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 157. One would have noticed how this is directly taken from Parsons’ *homeostasis equilibrium*.

⁷¹ Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernity, Cultural Change and Democracy*, 134. One could certainly see this thesis to be in congruence with Huntington’s Gap Hypothesis, but Huntington was influenced by Parsons’s Homeostasis equilibrium. Thus, one can see the line of influence from one social scientist to another.

institution instead of the required transformation of all its institutions. Undoubtedly, for the aforementioned authors, transforming at equilibrium shows how well a society is adapting to “novel situations” and how well they have evolved, as these illustrate the proper development of human mind; hence, the society will become better-off. However, if society has (or is) not developed as envisioned, then they have failed to adapt, evolve, and lack proper development of human mind, since, according to North, “that much of our behavior is genetically driven.”⁷² One can see the contempt towards non-conformist cultures: to reason a culture is traditional because it has not fully evolved, genetically, is to jettison the complex aspects of human society by reducing them to genetics and evolution. Such reductionism enables North to implicitly accept the view that since all human behaviors are genetically driven toward modern civilized lives, it must mean traditional societies haven’t yet evolved genetically. Thus, the blame ultimately falls upon the society, not on those who naively advocate societal transformations.

In any culture, standing shibboleths encourage certain kinds of behavior while discouraging others. Some may encourage communal harmony, conviviality, shared property, dependency, while others may encourage mass consumptions, individual achievements and independence, market and monetization of society, productivity, competition, efficiency, etc. And all of these depend upon the lived experiences of society and the day-to-day social realities in which persons navigate in order to maintain some kind of harmony. Different values, customs, ethics bring about their own unique blend of social norms which everyone must in many ways abide by. As such, in supplanting existing shibboleths by modern institutions, they promote their own specific

⁷² North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 168.

kinds of beliefs, thought processes, human activities, analytical investigations, and societal institutions. It also encourages incentive toward certain kinds of skill and knowledge; it will increase certainty and pay-off for those adhering to the new institutional rules, while simultaneously increasing its bias towards the old system.⁷³

It is crucial to understand one specific element within institution (which is itself brought to fore by the need to make computable *scientific* inquest possible) that plays one of the vital roles in its self-perpetuation: *conformity* or uniformity. The element of *conformity* is never explicit in institution; yet it is an ever present state that gives institution much of its *form*, just as our unconscious-*self*, nevertheless, influences our everyday conscious being, even when we are unaware of its presence or effects.⁷⁴

Likewise, to properly elucidate (so as to help the reader properly recognize) the role of institution in social-scientific inquiry, it becomes essential to dig-up or bring to light, if you will, the hidden aspect, thereby, revealing the much obscure element that necessarily underlies institution, i.e. the relationship between institution and conformity. The

⁷³ For instance, “The development of well-specified property rights... will make the overall environment more predictable but will increase uncertainty for those who traditionally have used the land in question without having formal title.” *Ibid.*, 59, 15. It matters very little to North about those who adhere to the old system; for him, it is only rational that old beliefs be superseded by modern institutions since they are a hindrance to economic efficiencies of civilization. Similarly, Hernando De Soto reasons poor in developing societies possess unrealized capital—in the form of properties without proper documentations and ownership rights. As such, actualizations of these properties into ‘capital,’ by means of instating property (titles) rights and other predicated institutions will enable the poor to sell or mortgage their properties/lands, thereby, facilitating development, growth, and prosperity. See, De Soto, *The Mystery of Capital* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2000). What is evident in De Soto’s argument is the inherent call for traditional societies to *conform* or move towards institutional systems of the developed world: property rights, capitalization/monetization, loans, etc.

⁷⁴ Here, we will limit ourselves to the ‘theoretical’ aspects of conformity. The ‘empirical’ aspects of conformity or uniformity is further elucidate in the following chapter, i.e. Chapter Three, by means of the three episodes (UNMDGs, Transmigration in Indonesia, and Villagization in Tanzania) examined.

obscurity of conformity, however, does not mean it is frivolous; rather, like any genius of an architect or advisor, its obscurity only suggests the magnitude of its importance.

Certainly, many will find any examination of *conformity* tedious, especially due to its abstract, turbid nature; even its empirical substantiation can only be suggested *indirectly*, never *directly*.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, the relation between institution and conformity is only the logical progression of scientific mode of thought, since *institution*, the *real isolate factor*, is itself *predicated* on *scientific rationality*. Indeed, for Malinowski, North, and others, institution is the center of any social analysis; it makes scientific study of culture and society possible by making the non-ergodic world ergodic: predictable, uniform. Just as scientific methods demand conformity regarding its methods (while disqualifying those deviating from the established methods as unscientific, irrational, novels), similarly modern rationalized institutions (themselves predicated on scientific rationality) demand conformity (while punishing deviant persons or belief systems); after all, conformity enables the transformation of the non-ergodic to the ergodic world.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ As such, it escapes the much needed scrutiny; thereby leaving its examination to eccentric or obscure scholars (works of Fromm, Nietzsche, Jung, Freud, Kierkegaard, Lorenz, Marcuse, Chomsky, Ellul, Adorno, Plato's Socrates, LeBon, Hannah Arendt, Carl Schmitt, Illich, Havel, Durkheim come to mind). Certainly, there are works (mostly anthropological) dealing with conformity and institutions; however, much of these studies being anthropological or ethnography usually serve to describe how traditional societies are primitive, backward. Still, similar studies, apropos to developed societies, are carried out by Ellul, Lorenz, Chomsky, Fromm, Nietzsche, Jung, Freud, Kierkegaard, Marcuse, Adorno, Plato's Socrates, LeBon, Hannah Arendt, Carl Schmitt, Illich, Havel, Durkheim, among many others. Their works shed much needed light on the issue of conformity and its relation to institutions in civilized societies; yet, much of the works by the aforementioned authors apropos to conformity are not discussed/ taken seriously as often as they should.

⁷⁶ Put differently, conformity rationalizes institutions that, in turn, serve as concrete isolate factors enabling the scientific study of society.

Parsons was thus especially keen on such aspects of social structure, especially because of persons' inherent tendency to conform. The reward-punishment mechanisms very easily reify persons' conformity, since, as Parsons argues, they "...give sufficient rewards for conformity and punishments for deviance to tip the balance in favor of conformity."⁷⁷ What is more, the person who deviates is punished not because of the nature of the offense, but is punished in order to strengthen the values espoused by the institution. This was perhaps first highlighted by Durkheim; he saw punishment had different sets of function other than to simply punish the deviant and protect the society; it had another facet, a *ritualistic* aspect, which was in place to uphold the institutionalized values of society. Punishment served to unite as well as reinforce the values of society, thereby strengthening a group's cohesion. Moreover, punishment was not directed at the deviant, but at others who *potentially* might deviate from the professed institutionalized values, norms, etc.⁷⁸ North, echoing similar sentiments as Parsons, also sees the necessity to punish those digressing from the institutional values; He maintains, "All members of society have an incentive to obey and enforce the rules and that a sufficient number are motivated to punish potential deviants."⁷⁹ Note how the term *deviant* is used to designate digressers of the preached norms, as if they were some odd, abnormal persons. For Parsons, this was an essential aspect in ridding non-empirical beliefs from any traditional society. This way new values are not only institutionalized, but are also *internalized* by persons in society. And this internalization of the new values is ascertained by disrupting

⁷⁷ Parsons, *The Social System*, 234.

⁷⁸ Emile Durkheim, *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1997).

⁷⁹ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 104-105. The above statement is reminiscing of Parsons. Indeed, it is as if the statement by North is directly taken out from Parsons' *The Social System*.

the stability within the society by imposing *strain* upon existing shibboleths. The instability undermines society's "cognitive content" and thus their belief systems. As such, "new equilibrium signifying the internalization of new value patterns [is] attained."⁸⁰ This is an important point to remember because when certain values are *internalized*, they become the very part of one's nature; they define the person (or society). This was clearly indicated by Freud on how one easily internalizes values, beliefs, or actions through conscious purgation of unwanted events or memories in one's life that may otherwise negate one's internalization; once a person's internalization process is complete, the internalized values begin to define the very nature of the person.⁸¹ Likewise, when new values or beliefs are *internalized*, they begin to define, anew, the characteristics of traditional societies in general, such as the manner in which society views its own culture, thus, creating disenchantment with the old belief systems.

Here, *conformity* becomes an essential requirement to perpetuate and provide rationale for the newly foisted institutions. Moreover, *conformity* is a logical consequence of scientific rationality. Conformity, as North argues, increases *certainty* and *predictability* to an otherwise non-ergodic human society.⁸² Here, one is not suggesting conformity is good or bad, nor is one suggesting scientific rationality is good or bad. Rather, one is merely indicating the conditions as they are. Scientific rationality requires conformity. To allow any deviation, in the concepts or methods, is to invalidate the edifice of scientific queries. Scientific inquiry, thus, entails conformity in its methods as well as in its measure of variables, concepts, etc. Hence, any society adhering to scientific

⁸⁰ Parsons, *The Social System*, 551, 492.

⁸¹ Sigmund Freud, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, trans. James Strachey (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2010).

⁸² North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 42.

rationality necessarily involves their values, norms, beliefs to be not only in conformity with those of other rationalized societies, but also requires persons within its own society to conform to the professed rationalized values and beliefs of the new institution. This way computable human society is conceived and brought under universalized concepts, which are assumed to hold true for all places.

North makes this utterly clear, because he sees the presence of “Shared mental models,” no doubt alluding to scientific rationality, reflecting the common beliefs of society, that is further translated into sets of institutional rules deemed legitimate; these rules are seen to be binding provided “first, that the *same* people play the *same* game with the *same* pay-offs and risks; and second, that the uncertainties about the future remain *constant* (italics added).”⁸³ The above statement shows how the transformation of beliefs makes it possible to conceive a predictable human world. This is why North states the *condition sine qua non* (as Heiner had endorsed): the same people playing the same game with the same pay-offs, risks with invariant levels of uncertainties. What this proviso does is make human and societal activities predictable, hence, quantifiable. The first stipulation, by the virtue of repetition, makes human activities malleable to prediction and uniformity by subjecting them (and constructing computable models based on variables: number of games played/repeated, pay-offs, risks, etc.) to statistical probabilities. It also means the need to *conform* in order to make statistical studies possible, for without members’ conformity, uniform universal concepts, methods, definitions which are primary in scientific study, become impossible. The second stipulation negates the uncertainty in human society altogether, thereby removing one of the key barriers which

⁸³ Ibid., 104-105.

hitherto rendered the study of society unscientific, unquantifiable. By removing (or at least—abstractly—having control over) the uncertainty in human society, it sheds its *unpredictable* aspects, and becomes *fixed*. The investigator then assumes it away or, even better, supposes gradations of uncertainty (as if uncertainty can ever be discerned into scales) as he carries out his scientific studies. It must be understood that uncertainty in scientific inquiry is an *anomalous* condition. However, by eliminating (or controlling) uncertainty, the *normal* condition is thereby established permitting the usage of sophisticated mathematic equations in inquests regarding societal phenomena. Notice how the immeasurable, disorderly, and unsystematic aspects of society (or person) are transmuted into orderly, systematically quantifiable activities. Also note how the alterations are made possible by beliefs advocated by (modern) institutions, through conformity, indoctrination, reward-punishment, internalization, etc.

Many fail to realize *conformity* as the necessary feature for the realization of any or every mass modern society. This is because the word itself undergoes *semantic transformation*. Conformity is not viewed as something forced; rather—as Gramsci has pointed out—it is transmuted to mean “*consent*” with professed institutional values for society’s benefits. Not surprisingly, North, iterating Parsons’ sentiments, maintains conformity as “the internalization of social norms so that *individuals want to behave* in ways conducive to the existing social order and/or social control (italics added).”⁸⁴ North sees conformity to be beneficial, as indicated by his use of the word “conducive.” Indeed, he quickly adds “ways conducive to existing social order”; of course, by this he has in mind here the state of a society immediately after the new institutions have been foisted;

⁸⁴ Ibid., 104.

after all, he sees them to be beneficial for any society. This way he implicitly designates the *existing social order* to be modern institutions, thereby equating conformism with behaviors sustaining the permanency of new institutions for the boon of society.

What this does is serve to *discourage* members of society from *deviating* from the norms of rationalized institutions. To deviate is an assured punishment, but punishment can be in many forms. Moreover, there is an even bigger psychological role of punishment in maintaining institutional values, more precisely, the person's fear of alienation from the society: to be left out. Fromm insightfully elucidates how individuals are bound to conform, because they fear they may be alienated, which also happens to be their principal fear, if they digress from the accepted rules.⁸⁵ Individual's fear of being alienated or isolated from the society is one of the most effective means to ensure conformity, because to digress means rejecting "the accepted honour and generosity code, [thus] the individual cuts himself off from the community and becomes an outcast."⁸⁶ As a result, societies are "forced to behave in certain direction regardless of their own preferences and inclination."⁸⁷ Fear of isolation abets the indoctrination of society to conform to standardized norms, beliefs, principles. Without indoctrination, which conformity nevertheless evinces, it is difficult, if not impossible, to conceive of a modern mass society. This is substantiated by Konrad Lorenz who succinctly elaborated

⁸⁵ Erich Fromm, *Escape From Freedom* (New York, NY: Henry Holt and Company, 1965). For instance, this fear of alienation is *rampant* in the world of academics, thus blind conformism to dogmas is what academics are reduced to.

⁸⁶ Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, [1944] 2001), 48.

⁸⁷ Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill, and Bryan S. Turner, *The Dominant Ideology Thesis* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1980), 46.

on how individuals in modern society were extremely penchant to indoctrinations.⁸⁸ Václav Havel also shows of how conforming to standard ideologies, beliefs leads to blatant automaton of persons, in the process of which the proselytized beliefs are established as fact and reality. He, furthermore, shows the subliminal meaning behind the blatant conformism to standard beliefs *reminding* people of the *expected* behaviors, the appropriate conducts, and rules of the game, if they do not wish to be alienated.⁸⁹ The blatant conformism, by persons in society, perpetuates the manufactured beliefs as reality. This was pointed out by Freud. He argues when numerous persons place their *ego-ideal* on the one and the same object, “their intellectual and emotional acts become increasingly dependent on reinforcement by being repeated in similar ways by other members of the group. The superegos of the majority of individuals become thus increasingly rigid and intolerant.”⁹⁰ By such means, the internalization of certain beliefs is attained, which then becomes the *idée fixe* of society.

The internalization of new institutional values is also helped by the process of *education*, i.e. *indoctrination*. This is why Malinowski was eager to insist, the “growing generation has to be prepared, enlightened, and advised” on the rule of the trade, ethics, and so forth by the process of education or *training*.⁹¹ For him, preparation and enlightenment meant indoctrinating through standardized education of citizens to the

⁸⁸ Konrad Lorenz, *Civilized Man’s Eight Deadly Sins* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc, 1974).

⁸⁹ Václav Havel, *Open Letters: Selected Writings, 1965-1990* (New York: Vintage, 1992).

⁹⁰ Freud quoted in George E. Marcus and Michael M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 120.

⁹¹ Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, 105. Indoctrination by means of education is discussed further in the following chapter (by expounding upon the call for universal education—which is one of the aims as stated in the United Nations Millennium Development Goals).

acceptable values of implanted institutions. Socrates was perhaps the first to suggest the powerful indoctrinating process in any civilized society, as he remarks "...imitations, if they are practiced continually from youth onwards, become established as habits and nature, in body and sounds and in thought."⁹² In *Apology*, Socrates further illustrates this case. When Socrates was put on trial for the corruption of the youth, he initiates his defense by declaring the difficulty to substantiate his case to the jury because, as he remarks, "they spoke to you at an age when you would most readily believe them, some of you being children and adolescents, and *they won their case by default, as there was no defense* (italics added)."⁹³ Similarly, the one-way process of proselytizing the values of modern institutions, with concurrent evisceration of traditional shibboleths, invariably makes it difficult for society to think otherwise. Thus, society ascribes itself those attributes hammered into their very mode of thinking. Hence, society simply begins to think, say, and hold dear those beliefs as a part of their very nature: such as, development is good, necessary, and inevitable. Critical understanding, in such a manner, is lost as citizens are perpetually indoctrinated from very early age about the *virtues* and *goodness* of rationalized modern institutions: which implicitly means, *Conformism*.

Parsons, in parity with Malinowski, also held a similar attitude. He stressed the importance of training school children to the values of the "specific-universalistic-achievement system,"⁹⁴ i.e. systems of the developed society, so as to alter traditional social structures. Similarly, North maintains, in order to transform the process of

⁹² Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans. Alan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1991), 395c-d.

⁹³ Socrates, "Apology", in *Five Dialogues*, trans. G. M. A. Grube (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 2002), 18c.

⁹⁴ Parsons, *The Social System*, 240.

learning, it is necessary to build a “common institutional/educational structure... [that] will result in shared beliefs and perceptions.”⁹⁵ Once this is set up *conformity* is easily achieved.⁹⁶ Lipset, likewise, argues how better education provides a sustainable condition for economic development and democratic institutions. According to Lipset, education makes “better citizens”; of course, what he really means by “better citizen” is population’s conformity, by the means of standardized education, to modern institutionalized values. Thus, he maintains, “The higher one’s education, the more likely one is to believe in democratic values and support democratic practices.”⁹⁷ This is not surprising because the more educated a society, the deeper it is indoctrinated into the dominant facile ideologies of an industrial democratic system.

From such perspective, it is possible to justify rationalized institutions’ superseding of the old shibboleths through implantation of new beliefs; thus, making societies conform to the newly implanted norms. This is evident in Rostow’s work, as he maintains, any change in the society necessarily entails “a radical shift in the society’s effective attitude towards fundamental and applied science,” where population “*must be prepared* to accept training for...an economic system whose methods are subject to regular change (italics added).”⁹⁸ There is complete transformation in the “effective attitude” of the society, as Rostow—echoing Parsons and Malinowski’s sentiments—makes it clear, because “involved here is not some vague change in psychological or sociological orientation, but a change translated into working institutions and

⁹⁵ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 27.

⁹⁶ Just look at developed societies, where *conformity* is transmogrified into something virtuous: identifies conformism as ‘doing the right thing,’ or conformist as ‘a good or law-abiding person/citizen.’

⁹⁷ Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy,” 78-79.

⁹⁸ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 20.

procedures.”⁹⁹ These changes in the “effective attitude” are achieved by proselytizing certain beliefs, practices in harmony with implanted institutions, viz. placing higher rewards, approvals on those practices in accordance with *accepted institutionalized norms*, while disapproving, punishing those in tangent. It is, therefore, not surprising to find why traditional societies are habitually asked to change their belief systems with regard to development. Professional experts, academics, specialists from the developed world flock into the developing world. They, then, disdainfully put the blame of underdevelopment on traditional societies themselves, labelling their beliefs as primitive, irrational, unscientific, absurd; or they are seen to be lingering in, as Rostow boldly claims, “pre-Newtonian” era, as opposed to the developed world who whole-heartedly embraced the “spirit of science.”¹⁰⁰

Only through such means can and must the new belief systems be rooted into an alien society. It requires the targeted society to be humiliated by showing the *supposedly* superiority of developed society’s science, economy, wealth, values, and culture; the purpose of which is to show the concerned society’s inferiority in every aspect conceivable. For Rostow, “humiliation by foreigners” serves as one of the most powerful and influencing motives for traditional societies to transition into modernity.¹⁰¹ Because Rostow sees modernity to be inevitable, he saw imperial powers play a constructive role in sterilizing traditional, colonized societies of their incorrect belief systems by transforming their knowledge and intellects; thus ushering in the age of modernity into

⁹⁹ Ibid., 20-21.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., 4, 32.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 26-27.

these places.¹⁰² This way, the unfortunate societies invariably abandon their belief systems; they begin adhering to new values, in the hopes of attaining development, as propounded by experts; or, as Inglehart and Welzel proudly defend, “Rational science and its belief in technological progress becomes the new source of authority in a highly mechanical world.”¹⁰³

Introduction of a new social structure constructs new realities for societies. It sets the condition in which certain specific types of societal activities or institutions are espoused. New needs and desires, which hitherto did not exist, are created; it also generates new patterns of motivation and behavior: from shared property to individual property rights; from barter to monetized system; from laidback, satiated society to emphasis on (economic) productivity; from norms and values based on each society to universalized norms and values; from beliefs in myths, supernatural based on lived experiences to empirical beliefs based on scientific rationality; from local concept of time, where time is seen as one continuous filament, to standardized linear concept of time, where it is devolved into hours, minutes, seconds, milliseconds, etc., and so forth. One of the central features of such changes is the transvaluation of *unmeasurable* experiences of society into *quantifiable* activities. Scientific rationality inexorably gives special prominence to quantifiable concepts in an effort to make the study more scientific. Thus, easily measurable features of society are given special place: money, private property (land, capital, etc.), (economic) productivity, time, etc.; concomitantly, stigmatizing incomputable experiences: shared communal property, barter, continuous

¹⁰² Ibid., 27, 36.

¹⁰³ Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernity, Cultural Change and Democracy*, 27.

unvarying notions of time, satiated attitudes, and lived experiences. The following section discusses how such demands lead to the acme of *economy*.

Scientific Rationality and Economy

With institutions as the locus from which to begin the scientific analysis of society, attention is given to the most computable aspect of human activity: economy. Of all the human activities, economy (or house-keeping, which is what it was actually called) is the most quantifiable and, hence, most *empirical*. This activity includes conjuring around with some basic numbers regarding cost-profit, selling-cost price, discount, interest, growth, value, depreciation, etc. In economics, basic measurable methods for the purpose of accounting or house-keeping are indispensable. Given the nature of the study of economy, i.e. its quantitative nature, the whole examination of society (and of culture) is made to revolve around this single aspect.¹⁰⁴ And what better ways to transpose the unquantifiable, *ascientific* nature of society into a full-fledged scientific discipline than by basing every aspect of society to the most quantifiable feature: economy and its predicated institutions. In fact, Malinowski ardently believed economic theories to be indispensable in the study of society.¹⁰⁵ Echoing Malinowski's views, Parsons saw *economy* as a crucial aspect in the examination of society; he saw it to be "concerned with the phenomena of *rational decision-making* and the consequences

¹⁰⁴ Alfred Marshall, one of the founders of the neoclassical school of economics, states economics to be the "study of man/mankind." See, Marshall, *Principles of Economics* (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1997). Such bold claims are hardly of any surprise, given the scientific aura that surrounds economics. Or Lionel Robbins asserts economics as "science which studies human behavior as a relationship between ends and scarce means." See, Robbins, *An Essay on the Nature and Significance of Economic Science* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1945), 16. Thereby, reducing human behavior to balance between ends and means, and functioning of consequent activities that necessarily follow such balance.

¹⁰⁵ Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, 127-128.

of these decisions within an institutionalized system of exchange relationships (*italics added*).¹⁰⁶ For Parsons, *economy* formed the primary locus in any social interactions since it occupied the key position in understanding any societal change: motivations, needs, gratifications, etc.¹⁰⁷ The pre-eminence of economy as the fundamental basic lens from which to base the scientific study of society, as propounded by Malinowski, Parsons, and others, dominates contemporary social sciences. This, no doubt, led Sachs to advocate for approach in development to be “much more like modern medicine,” since doing so will “improve dramatically if development [experts, academics] take on some of the key lessons of modern medicine, both in the development of the underlying science and in the systematization of clinical practices”; no wonder he terms such an approach as “*clinical economics* (*italic added*).”¹⁰⁸ Not to be outshone by Sachs, Easterly praises the economists who, he claims, do a lot more to help traditionally poor societies than anyone else through their “experiment[s]” and subjecting these to “ruthless testing to see if they really work.”¹⁰⁹ One could hardly miss the constant reference to *science* to justify the propagation of single view, as if *science* is the ultimate arbiter of absolute objectivity, impartiality, fairness, or, better still, even what is good for every society.

This naïve attitude to accept economy as the fundamental base for social-scientific investigation, because of its quantifiable features, makes possible the *comparison* of different societies *not* for the purpose of appreciating or accepting

¹⁰⁶ Parsons, *The Social System*, 550.

¹⁰⁷ Thus, it is no wonder that economic institutionalism (as seen in the works of Douglas North, Samuel Huntington, Daron Acemoglu, Mancur Olson, Paul Collier, Robert H. Bates, Bueno de Mesquita, Avner Grief, Robert Putnam, Adam Przeworski, Dani Rodrik, Robert Keohane, G. John Ikenberry, Michael Doyle, Ronald Inglehart, among many others) is influenced by his theory.

¹⁰⁸ Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, 75.

¹⁰⁹ Easterly, *The White Man's Burden*, 53.

diversity, but rather how one society is superior (or more developed, civilized) than others. Comparisons are made so as to ostracize not only the ways diverse societies live and carry out their day-to-day activities, but also dismiss other modes of thought as absurd. Limiting oneself to one discipline, i.e. economy, one *eo ipso* ignores the varied socio-cultural aspects without which understanding of society becomes a far-cry. Indeed, one could try to cover one's laxity by dressing one's analysis with scientific models, formulae, hypotheses, etc. Nevertheless, in doing so one disregards essential aspects of society. One could, no doubt, argue that even if, for instance, one approaches solely from an economic stand point, one nevertheless takes into consideration the socio-cultural, political, along with other aspects of society. Yet, by virtue of limiting oneself to one specific aspect, one deliberately narrows one's lens to the aspect (i.e. economic) from which one is approaching the study. To give one example: from an economic stand point, one of the ubiquitous claims against traditional societies is the manner in which they spend less time engaging in productive economic activities and instead spend much of their time lolling around, sleeping, wallowing, enjoying the nature. This, according to economic studies, is the cause of underdevelopment and poverty (of course, by poverty it means material poverty) of traditional societies. However, as anthropological study reveals, traditional societies are not lazy just because they work so few hours a day or week, rather they are freer (than those in developed societies) and lead a much frugal, simpler life. Because their lives are simple, most material needs—which amount to basic necessities of life—are easily satisfied. More paradoxically, traditional societies, deemed to be inefficient, indolent, or lazy, are better able to meet the needs of all their persons

than the more affluent societies.¹¹⁰ One can, therefore, see society is a complex organism which cannot be understood in its particularity, for it distorts the multiple bond holding the society together, where one aspect of society not only invariable affects and sways the other, but are also concatenated with one another.

As a result, a person with narrow lens concludes by stating: traditional societies are such and such because they cannot think in a scientifically rational manner, hence they lack any kind of clear logical mindset; therefore, such and such society is economically underdeveloped. The only way to make such and such society developed is to discard the existing shibboleths by injecting rationalized institutions. It is only the minds of those who *do not understand* that lead them to make such facile categorization of human beings and societies as developed, developing, traditional. Differently put, all those whose living standards are horrid or do not measure up to *our* (developed world's) standards are languishing in destitution and, therefore, *they* must be educated in *our* ways of thinking so *they* may live in a condition, which *we* have defined, fit for humans. In other words, since *we* are the keepers of the great *enlightened minds*, and *they* are not; *we* have the *duty* to define what is good for *them*. Indeed, for North, things couldn't be otherwise because "Modern *economic growth* has as its source the growth in the stock of

¹¹⁰ See, Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1971). Dieter Groh also goes on to remark: "People for instance who only possess as much as what they can carry along for a certain distance – i.e. the instruments necessary for hunting and gathering – are not necessarily poor, even if, according to our standards, they live at the edge of greatest poverty.... According to their standards, however, they are living in affluence: they have all they need in abundance, namely nourishment and clothing, and they only need to 'work' in order to obtain it. People who – even if they have time and leisure – do not work until they have everything which we consider absolutely necessary for a worthwhile life, as not necessarily *lazy*. Perhaps, they attribute to leisure a greater value than we do (*italic in original*)." Groh cited in Rahnema, Majid, and Victoria Bawtree, eds., *The Post-Development Reader* (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), 12.

knowledge that is *associated with the scientific revolution* of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. What is the source of this attitude, procedures, and experimental methods that characterized this revolution? It was a Western phenomenon and obviously related to the *institutional development* that led to the rise of the Western world (italics added).¹¹¹ Here, North implicitly shoulders that there have been no developed societies prior to “the rise of the Western world.” He also accepts not only had there been no scientific advancements prior to the sixteenth and seventeenth century, but also there have been no scientific advancements outside of Europe. North saw every scientific advancement to be the product of the Western world.¹¹²

Sachs proffered similar remarks. He maintains, the reason why industrial revolution and thus the development of Western society first occurred in Great Britain (i.e. Europe) and not elsewhere (in China, i.e. Asia) is because Great Britain had modern institutions: political liberty, parliament, free speech, protection of private property rights; but above all it was “one of the leading centers of Europe’s scientific revolution.... Modern physics emerged from the astronomical discoveries of Copernicus, Brahe, Kepler, and Galileo.... The decisive breakthrough came with Isaac Newton’s *Principia Mathematica* (italics in original) in 1687... By showing that physical phenomenon could be described by mathematical laws, and by providing the tools of

¹¹¹ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 101.

¹¹² Certainly, North can be easily forgiven because he is after all a ‘social scientist,’ a product of his day and age, i.e. age of academic *over-specialization*. North is unaware of the advancements in science dating back prior to the 16th and 17th century. Moreover, the age of Renaissance, which he alludes to numerous times, has its origins in the Islamic civilization—where numerous advancements in the natural sciences were conceived. One could certainly go on to show the numerous scientific advancements made in Babylonian, Egyptian, Indian, Chinese, and Islamic societies—even prior to the West—and how modern (natural) science is still predicated on those discoveries, but this is not the point of the present study. Hence, it is best to leave it at that.

calculus to discover those laws, Newton set the stage for hundreds of years of scientific and technological discovery, and for the Industrial Revolution that would follow the scientific revolution.”¹¹³ Leaving aside Sachs’ errors, in parallel with North’s inaccuracies, about the history and development of science, what is evident here is the static mindset about the supremacy of science as well as values of the West. Hence, how can the developed society *not* feel what it has to impart in respect to development—such as, propagation of scientific rationality, modern institutions, etc. — is not valid or correct, the moral justification being its *material* wealth.

The banality of comparison is also vividly evident in Collier’s work; he recalls with much pride the following episode in which he was asked by the government of the Central African Republic for advice on development, he notes: “When I settled into discussion with the government, I asked them a question that I always ask when advising a government, because it forces people to get *concrete* and also serve as a *measure* of ambition: which country did they wish to be like in twenty years’ time (italics added) ?”¹¹⁴ The problem is not so much the content of the question, but such question was

¹¹³ Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, 33-34. The hackneyed epoch of Copernican astronomical revolution, such as the heliocentric view, is the base from which almost every academic and expert refers to in order to show the rise of the West and its openness to science, as if the West was the only society to do so. However, Yajnavalkya of Videha, an Ancient Indian Vedic *sage* (not a ‘scientist’ with the so-called modern technologies), two and a half millennia prior to Copernicus and 500 years prior to Philolaus, Anaxagoras, Aristarchus, not only proposed the heliocentric view, but also measured, accurately, the distance between the earth and moon, and the earth and sun. Hence, when one asserts ‘it is *solely* so and so society that embraces science,’ one only shows one’s limited ken about the magnificence of human society. Subhash Kak, “Birth and Development of Indian Astronomy,” in *Astronomy Across Cultures: The History of Non-Western Astronomy*, ed. Helaine Selin (Boston: Kluwer Academic, 2000), 304-38; Subhash Kak, “The Sun’s Orbit in the Brahmanas,” *Indian Journal of History of Science* 33, no. 3 (1998): 175-91.

¹¹⁴ Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, 53.

asked at all. If one genuinely wants to help societies, when one is asked to give advice, the question would not be *which country a given society wished to be in a so and so period of time*, but rather what can be done (*assuming only if the given society wants change*) to accommodate societal development without decimating the foundations of the society, nor weakening the society spiritually, culturally, socially, or morally. To ask what a society wished to be like in given period of time, or, more importantly, to ask such question in the first place, only epitomizes the acme of scientific rationality (of Collier, as well as of other academics) that forces one to continually measure oneself as well as one's society against another, where it becomes a necessity for one to emulate, i.e. *be like*, the other because the other is considered to be more developed, modern, or technologically advanced. Yet, the reality, which the academics and experts alike fail to realize, is that no matter what one does to become like the other, the emulator can never become that which is emulated.

Much in the same way, the scientific rationality along with the numerous modern institutions can and will never attain the idealized aims being mounted onto traditional societies because of *incommensurable* historical, culture, social, spiritual experiences that shape every society in its own unique ways. It is as if one is trying to become a better human being by only changing the *exterior*, i.e. the outside appearance, without changing the *interior*, i.e. the quality of one's character, which is much more essential. Such exterior embellishments will not make one into a better human being. Or, better still, if one is trying to emulate or be like Gandhi. No one in the world can become like him because in order to do so one must have experienced *exactly* the *same* life experiences: *same* childhood, family, friends; *same* societal, historical, educational, personal, cultural,

political, economic, spiritual, philosophical, religious, linguistic experiences; *same* feelings, emotions, sentiments; *same* sense of love, hate, pity, empathy, sympathy; *same* communal practices, traditions, and views of the world. As one would have already noticed, it is not possible for any two persons to go through these same exact, parallel life experiences. If this was possible then the whole of India would have become *Gandhi*. Likewise, it is not possible for any society, because of its diverse lived experiences, to become like the sublime developed world. Installing scientific modes of thought, modern rationalized institutions, modern beliefs, norms will not make traditional societies like the *developed*, rather it will only create animosity and untold human sufferings.¹¹⁵

Misguided judgments, mentioned above, nevertheless induce one to erroneously assign the superiority of *developed* over *traditional*.¹¹⁶ Rostow, hence, saw scientific rationality and its application as the purveyor of economic progress and modernity, as is evident in this following statement:

once man conceived of his physical environment as subject to *knowable laws*, he began to *manipulate* it to his advantage; and once it was *demonstrated that growth was possible, the consequences of growth and modernization...unhinged one traditional society after another*, pushed it into the treacherous preconditions, from which many,...[of] the world's societies have now emerged into self-sustained growth through the take-off mechanism... (italics added)¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ As evident in the Middle-East, presently; and Transmigration in Indonesia, Villagization in Tanzania, among many others, before.

¹¹⁶ The dependency theory—as championed by Cardoso and Frank—certainly emerges out of such misguided judgments, where banal comparison is made between the developed and traditional, and all the blame for underdevelopment is brought under the notions of exploitation, class struggle, bourgeois conspiracy, etc. See, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, and Enzo Faletto, *Dependency and Development in Latin America*, trans. by Marjory Mattingly Urquidi (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1979); and Andre Gunder Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (New York, NY: Monthly Review Press, 1967).

¹¹⁷ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 90.

Evident from the above statement is Rostow's beliefs in the invariable progress of modernity and with it the "spirit of science" even for "pre-Newtonian" societies. This inevitability is apparent in Rostow's stages of growth which, he proffers, *every* society must inexorably face: from traditional society, to preconditions for take-off, to take-off, to drive to maturity, to age of high consumption. These stages, for Rostow, are not merely descriptive, but they also have "an inner logic and continuity... an analytical bone-structure."¹¹⁸ This *linear* movement from one stage to another—mainly due to a move away from pre-Newtonian to Newtonian science, i.e. scientific knowledge—is marked by *similar pattern of choices* promising *similar structural evolution* for *every society*, i.e. uniform outcomes for every society.¹¹⁹

Sachs, years later, echoes a similar conclusion: after giving a brief example of women working in Bangladeshi sweatshops and how such sweatshops are for these women their "first rug on the ladder" towards development, which is Sachs' own version of Rostow's *takeoff* stage, he goes on to vilify the traditions of the old, after which he sings paean about the forces of economic growth, development, and how it is empowering women; he writes, "Virtually *every* poor country that has developed successfully *has gone* through these first *stages* of industrialization. These Bangladeshi women *share the experience* of many generations of immigrants to New York city's garment district and a hundred other places where their immigration to toil in garment factories was *a step on the path to a future of urban affluence* in succeeding generation (italics added)."¹²⁰ Likewise, Inglehart and Welzel argue: every society as they develop

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 12-13.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 90.

¹²⁰ Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, 11-12.

goes through two phrases or stages—industrial and post-industrial (which is their own version of Rostow’s stages). In the industrial stage, the society becomes more rationalized and secularized; whereas, in the post-industrial stage, the society becomes more self-expressive in terms of individual, socioeconomic, political, and intellectual autonomy.¹²¹ Certainly, such conclusions as envisaged by Rostow, Sachs, and Inglehart and Welzel are only the logical outcomes of the rationality they utilized. And, since the aforesaid authors approach their studies scientifically, it is not surprising to find socio-cultural uniformity or universalization as their end results. Yet, as pointed out by Hirschman, “the idea,” as envisaged by Rostow and others, “that development, once started, will proceed smoothly for some considerable time until the problems of “maturity” and “old age” appear, gives a misleading image of the growth problems of underdeveloped countries.”¹²² There is merit in Hirschman’s arguments, because no society can or will experience the same societal conditions as imagined by scientific minds. The “inner logic and continuity” may be a helpful analytical tool; still society follows neither the logic nor the continuity of an abstract scientific rationality.

One may certainly think it is unfair to move the culpability from scientific rationality to the paramount of economy; however, this is not the intent, because an astute reader might well have observed, the principal of economy in societal inquiry is conceived due to the fascination of social studies to become more scientific in their

¹²¹ Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernity, Cultural Change and Democracy*, 25- 151.

¹²² Albert O. Hirschman, *The Strategy of Economic Development* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1958), 45. Or as Illich puts it, “Most countries in Latin America have *reached the “take-off” point* toward economic development and competitive consumption, and *thereby toward modernized poverty*: their citizens have learned *to think rich and live poor* (italics added).” See, Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (London, UK: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1970), 7.

approach in order to qualify themselves as *science*. In mimicking natural sciences, the purpose of investigation is altered: *means* become *end*. *Whether or not scientific criteria are met become the purpose of an inquiry*, not whether one understands the examined issue.

It is well to keep in mind that in scientific study, the answer to a query depends on the concepts, variables, parameters, and methods utilized. Thus, it is completely *logical*, in scientific study, for the answer to any given question to be dependent upon any of the variables selected. Thus, if institution is the key concept in an inquiry, then the answer as well as the culprit to the problems of development, in such studies, will inexorably be rationalized institutions and the standing societal shibboleths, respectively. In other words, the solutions to the question are already determined from the outset by the questioner's preference of the certain variables selected for the inquest. Thus, there is an inherent limit to application of scientific methods in social sciences. When natural sciences' methodologies are transposed from their natural milieu to artificial environment, social sciences, they lose their potency, their objectivity. This is because the object of study, which scientific methodologies were constructed to investigate, is different. And, as Aldous Huxley makes clear, it is precisely for this reason, i.e. different objects of study, that natural science's methodologies cannot be extended to the social sciences.¹²³

Moreover, how does one implant such rationalized institutions, derived from questionable methodologies that pass for *science* in social sciences? For the professional experts and academics, the answer is simple: through training or indoctrinating the

¹²³ Aldous Huxley cited in George A. Lundberg, "The Future of the Social Sciences," *The Scientific Monthly* 53 (October 1941): 347.

society into the deemed *correct* manners—be they rules of the game, ethics, duties, principles, etc.—of the rationalized institutions. To realize such an exalted state, as fantasized by experts, new rationalized institutions are implanted; with it comes the internalization of the (new) institutionalized values harnessing the social structure of motivational behavior, which in turn creates new roles, values, practices, and expectations for the society.¹²⁴ With such transformation, traditional societies begin to deride their existing values; they even begin to feel ashamed of their past histories and beliefs. In such manners, the dissemination of uniform thought process and ways of life is completed. Traditional society now begins to think, even begins to aspire for the *same* kinds of societal development and progress, as visualized by experts, academics.¹²⁵

It is one of the *raison d'être* of scientific rationality to construct *universal* concepts, methods, norms. In doing so, it creates a canon through which varied subjective human world is filtered into the dispassionate world of science with *uniformity* as its essence: *universalized* values. As such, what happens is, by virtue of economy being the center of all social scientific inquiries, as it is the logical outcome of scientific rationality, it leads to *universalization* of economy and its values. Thus, one hears of universalized economic values to be *intrinsic* to *every* society: such as free market, monetization of society, accumulation of wealth, concepts of rich and poor, private property, investments, transformation of every other organic entities, including humans, into *resources* (human

¹²⁴ Parsons, *The Social System*, 42.

¹²⁵ The cases in the following chapter clearly illustrate this point. Moreover, with acme of economy, it becomes the starting point of any empirical study; it, moreover, tends to view itself as the locus of all social investigations. Consequently, economic productivity, investments become necessary; it demands traditional shibboleths to be replaced by modern ones; it advocates for science, democracy, free market system, freedom, liberty, smaller families, etc. Still, given the rationality it utilizes, this is only to be expected for it cannot be otherwise.

resources, natural resources, etc.), profits, optimizing behaviors, consumerism, as well as the claims that pursuit of selfish interest leads to social good (as proselytized by neo-classical school), etc. As Easterly affirms, “The *free market* is a *universally* useful system,” for “*market instincts are hardwired into human nature* (italics added).”¹²⁶ Note how Easterly implies economic freedom (i.e. free market) as *universal* good. He boldly claims “market instincts” to be part of human nature as if these were some innate human emotions or feelings—like love, compassion, and pity. However, why is “market instincts” and “free market” universal? The answer, as Easterly proffers: because the “Economist[s] have mathematical proofs.”¹²⁷

It is also important to note that economic freedom is not the only value to be universalized; there is also the universalization of political freedom. These two universalized values are inextricably interlaced with one another. “Economic freedom,” writes Easterly, “is one of mankind’s most underrated inventions, much less publicized than its cousin political freedom.”¹²⁸ Meaning: there is an inherent predilection in “*mankind*” towards economic—free market—and political freedom—democracy. Hence, Lipset associated democracy with economic development. He fervently alluded to how

¹²⁶ Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden*, 72, 74.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 72. Such platitudinous claim about the assured universality of human values is also championed by the likes of Fukuyama (with his miscomprehension of Hegel and Marx); he visions the burgeoning of “true global culture” pivoting around liberal democracy and capitalist system of exchange. See, Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1992). Additionally, apologist like Amartya Sen reduces development to the issue of freedom (economic, political, social), since, for him, any society not embracing the democratic values of the developed world is not free. See, Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York, NY: Anchor Books, 1999). Yet, Sen in trying to make his case only shows his limited knowledge in respect to the diversity not only of human societies, but also, more importantly, of the equally diverse interpretations of human freedom.

most traditional societies, lacking democracy, were economically underdeveloped.¹²⁹ No wonder, Rostow proclaimed the same sentiments, for he saw, like Lipset, “the *democratic creed* can easily be translated into the terms of other cultures: it is broadly speaking, *what most human beings would choose*, if the choice were theirs (italics added).”¹³⁰ We see a very bold generalization in Lipset’s, as well as in Rostow’s statement, for they are quick to reduce the pith of humanity to values of institutions they were brought up with, after all, only a non-human, savages will prefer to remain traditional and non-democratic (since, for Rostow, any human being would choose democratic creed, for it is *universal*). Implicit also in such an argument is Lipset’s beliefs that every society must adhere to a modern democratic industrial system, since it is only proper for any rational society to follow such a system.

Mindsets such as these are only concurred by Easterly who sees traditional society to be in need of quality institutions: such as democracy, free market, rule of law, contracts, etc.; all of which will bring an end to their cyclical poor growth.¹³¹ These

¹²⁹ Lipset, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy,” 73-75. Such arguments continue to be endorsed; for instance, Przeworski et al. argue societies fostering democratic institutions experience higher economic growth and development. Przeworski et al. paralleling Lipset’s arguments, also affirm democracies to survive in wealthier societies than in others. See, Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub, and Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

¹³⁰ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 165.

¹³¹ Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, 225-279. His reasoning is in analogous to Lipset and Rostow’s. Easterly, in *The Tyranny of Experts*, regurgitates the same rhetoric which he has been prescribing in his, *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, and *The White Man’s Burden*. He continues to maintain, the way towards development is to get the (social, economic, political) principles right. In developing societies, he argues, there is shortage of rights—similar to Amartya Sen’s arguments—as such there is an urgent need, in these societies, to install democratic principles (political rights) and economic rights. As he goes on to remark: greater freedom equals greater development. See, Easterly, *The Tyranny of Experts* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2014).

institutional reforms—such as, democracy—are necessary because, as Easterly reasons, they provide economic growth and development.¹³² No wonder, Inglehart and Welzel saw modernity to bring “cultural changes that make democracy the *logical institutional outcome* (italics added).”¹³³ Or, for Collier to assert, “One body that could propose political standards would be the European Commission. After all, the EU has explicit *standards of democracy* that are required for membership. It should not feel squeamish about *projecting those standards onto a wider stage* than Europe (italics added).”¹³⁴ Note the authors’ assertiveness in the beliefs of their society; also note how easily they equate their values to the *universal*, as if these were the emblem of humanity. One can clearly trace the essential logic behind universalization of concepts to scientific rationality.

Given the essentiality of economy in the scientific study of society, Malinowski and Parsons praised its indispensability to the construction of unified, scientific theory of culture, or what Sachs calls “science for development.”¹³⁵ When certain features of a society are elevated as the principal of social examination, it is perfectly logical for that *features* and their predicated aspects to become the fulcrum of what is the correct, bona fide way to understand or analyze. With economy as the framework, economic

¹³² Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, 279.

¹³³ Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernity, Cultural Change and Democracy*, 2. One can note how their argument is in parallel to Lipset, Rostow, and Easterly’s.

¹³⁴ Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, 186. Note the parity of this argument with Lipset, Inglehart et al., and Rostow’s.

¹³⁵ Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, 282. The call to science to understand development is so permeating that it is sometimes comical to observe how such appeal unites academics from far opposite ends of the banal ideological continuum; take for example, Andre Frank (in respect to Rostow or Easterly) calls for the need to “formulate scientific theory” to understand development. See, Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America*, 116. Of course, this is an ubiquitous feature among ‘social scientists.’ If one wants to give an air of verity or factualness about one’s works, then one ineluctably invokes “science.”

attributes—capital, property rights, land, resources, employment, incentives, investments, technology, material resources, goods, productivity, outputs, etc.—become primary features of social queries. Furthermore, the apex of economy also brings economic redefinition of what is to be valued, honored, or esteemed: prominence of money, individual success, productivity/performance, accumulation of individual wealth, property, profits, competition, industrialization, income, etc. In sum, there is a whole new orientation for the society, i.e. conformity to the new institutional beliefs.

Malinowski saw the essentiality of land, capital, property, etc., in the study of society;¹³⁶ Parson, likewise, saw money, because of its “unambiguous quantitative measurability,” to encompass the whole symbol of success. This meant, “all acquisition of the symbols of *achievement* should be *possible only by the appropriate achievement* (italics added),”¹³⁷ which is to say, there is a well-defined set of norms dictating the *legitimate means* to attain the *legitimate feats and accomplishments*. The *legitimacy* here means that which is considered to be *legitimate* by the new institutions; thereby, perpetuating their own prominence. It is no secret that Parsons had no liking towards the *traditional*, for it represented a disorderly, unempirical world, where each society’s standards or norms were based on its particular *context*. However, modernity was different. For him, modernity signified the trend towards universalism because it was linear, systematic, thus, objective and *neutral by context*. He even saw kinship solidarity, which hitherto maintained harmony within traditional societies, as a hindrance to

¹³⁶ Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, 127.

¹³⁷ Parsons, *The Social System*, 244, 424, 425.

development. So, he endorsed reduction in kinship solidarity.¹³⁸ These views are fervently echoed by Lipset, Rostow, and other social scientists.¹³⁹

As if to make this case, Lipset was quick to ween that traditional societies lacked all sorts of progress: in terms of per capita income, level of industrialization, degree of urbanization, education as well as in ratio of vehicles, radios and telephones per person, newspapers per thousand, and so on.¹⁴⁰ Parallel sentiments were displayed by Sachs years later, when he used similar variables to advocate for societal development.¹⁴¹ Easterly, exhibiting similar views as Lipset's, writes jubilantly about how technology in Nigerian film industry skyrocketed, he recalls: "New technologies have been spreading, giving Africans more information, more entertainment, more choices. The number of TV sets on which to watch Nollywood films has skyrocketed, following previous explosion of radios."¹⁴² How cretin is it to reason more TV sets for entertainment are better for

¹³⁸ Ibid., 100, 160-161.

¹³⁹ For instance, Hoselitz reasoned, cultural change is of outmost necessity for development. See, Bert F. Hoselitz, *Sociological Aspect of Economic Growth* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1960). Also see, Shmuel Noah Eisenstadt, *Tradition, Change and Modernity* (New York: Wiley, 1973); Marion J. Levy, *Modernization and the Structure of Societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1966); Everett Hagen, *On the Theory of Social Change* (Homewood, IL: Dorsey Press, 1962); Neil Smelser, "Toward a Theory of Modernization," in *Social Change*, eds. Amitai Etzioni and Eva Etzioni (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1964); Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (New York: New Press, 1958); Catherine V. Scott, *Gender and Development* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1995); Alex Inkeles, and David H. Smith, *Becoming Modern: Individual Change in Six Developing Countries* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1974).

¹⁴⁰ Lipset, "Some Social Requisites of Democracy," 75-77. Similarly, Heilbroner saw, development, which he called the "Great Ascent," as the fundamental reality; he saw the need for every society to develop and modernize in accordance with the institutions, habits of the developed world. The foisting of which will dismantle native societies' existing edifice. See, Heilbroner, *The Great Ascent*, 24.

¹⁴¹ See, Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, 18-19, 36.

¹⁴² Easterly, *The White Man's Burden*, 102, 105. Similarly, Dani Rodrik argues, the ability to produce and consume goods: such as TV's, PC's, T-Shirts, etc.; at a lower

traditional societies. Is this what it means to *understand* a society? Does it mean TV sets are more important to societies than, say, living with human dignity regardless of the state of one's material circumstances? Not to be left behind, Collier maintained, as Lipset, economic development brings about healthy institutional changes: such as, democracy, rule of law, transparency, amalgamation of the society into global market, etc.¹⁴³

Lipset, moreover, takes the facile, external aspects of society and from them boldly posits modern economic development (based on his variables) sustains political stability, while traditional society, lacking modern institutions, suffers from underdevelopment as well as political instability. Similarly, Rostow asserts, traditional societies are economically debilitated because of their inability to apply modern scientific knowledge and technology; hence, their productivity is low and puts upon themselves a ceiling that restrains the level of output attainable per head. Rostow additionally argues, traditional belief systems, such as importance of family, clanship connection, etc. hampers societal development. Therefore, the only way to overcome such hurdles is to alter the major characteristic of society “in such ways as to permit regular growth: its politic, social structure, and (to a degree) its values, as well as its economy.”¹⁴⁴

Inglehart and Welzel similarly maintain, “Industrialization brings rationalization” to society that helps “establish and sustain the institutions best suited to maximize human

price makes everyone better-off. See, Rodrik's, *The Globalization Paradox* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2011). Rodrik—in parity with Easterly, Lipset, and Rostow—reduces human well-being to material consumerism.

¹⁴³ Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, 51.

¹⁴⁴ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 4, 6.

choice—in a word, democracy.”¹⁴⁵ One can see the authors’ favorable view toward institutions already in existence in the developed world. Moreover, they proudly maintain, as society develops or modernizes, they create a “socially liberating effect” that *frees* individuals from the “bounding ties of closely knit groups, enabling people to *make and break social ties readily* (italics added).”¹⁴⁶ There is no doubt about the authors’ derision toward the traditional beliefs; still, it is certainly vacuous to be panegyric about “socially liberating effects” enabling people to readily “make and break social ties.” Even if persons within society readily make and break ties, it cannot be conceived without some form of malady to the society itself. *Anomie*, which Durkheim¹⁴⁷ speaks of, plagues modern society precisely because of the rootlessness of the persons. The meaning and purpose are lost, the root itself is ousted; thereby, leading to social, moral, physical, spiritual atrophy. Only those unaware of the consequences of societal atrophy blindly advocate or write odes about that which they have no understanding of.

What is more, with *economy* as the base for social inquiry, it is not surprising to equate one’s understanding of society to this one aspect. Thence, *economy* becomes the nucleus of social query. Rostow, like Malinowski and Parson, thinks this to be so as he asserts his study of the stages of growth to be not only a “theory about economic

¹⁴⁵ Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernity, Cultural Change and Democracy*, 1-2.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 28-29. Such claims are not new. For instance, Alex Inkeles maintains, individuals and societies need to condition themselves in order to meet the demands of modern political-economic institutions: such as, readiness to accept changes, tolerance of impersonal exchange system, intolerance of fatalism and passivity, need to keep a fixed schedule, make judgments by following the legitimate authority, i.e. on the basis of objective evidence and technical competence. See, Inkeles, “Becoming Modern: Individual Change in Six Developing Countries,” *Ethos* 3 (Summer 1975): 323-342.

¹⁴⁷ Vide, Durkheim’s, *Suicide: A Study in Sociology* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1951); and *The Division of Labor in Society* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1997).

growth,” but a “theory about modern history as a whole.”¹⁴⁸ Attitude such as these no doubt led Easterly to proffer: the whole problem of development is, “*not the failure of economics, but the failure to apply the principles of economics* in practical policy work (italics added).”¹⁴⁹ For Easterly, it is not economics, nor its importance to be blamed; rather it is the improper applications of “principles of economics” that hamper development processes. No wonder, he sees economics to be scrupulous because it is *empirical* with principles derived from scientific methods; so, how can science or economics be wrong? Instead, people unaware of economic principles are to be blamed. Such bold assertions (of Rostow or Sachs by *reducing* not only history but society, as well, into a predicate of *economy*) are possible because the *economy* has become the principal hub of social inquiries. Implicit also, in Easterly’s arguments, is his naïve assumptions about the universality of economics, signified by the term “principles” (no doubt trying to give an air of verity by mimicking the *principles* in exact sciences). Easterly, here, fails to realize the universal *homo economicus*, and as such economics, is an idea rooted and constructed by the modern Western man, it is not universal.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 1.

¹⁴⁹ Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, xii.

¹⁵⁰ Vide, Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1971); Lorna Marshall, “Sharing, Talking, and Giving: Relief of Social Tensions Among /Kung Bushmen,” *Africa* 31, no. 3 (1961): 243-44; Elie Halevy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1928); Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, [1944] 2001); Louis Dumont, *From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); Ivan Illich, *In the Mirror of the Past: Lectures and Addresses, 1978-1990* (London, UK: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1992); Laurens van der Post, *The Lost World of the Kalahari* (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, 1958); William Mariner, *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, vol. 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012); and Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

Consequently, we also see *social scientists* assert the same sentiments as Rostow, Easterly, and Sachs: For instance, Mancur Olson decided to base the rise and fall of society on how the fight over *resources*, among special interest groups, hampers the economy, ultimately, leading to its decline: reducing efficiency and productivity of society under which they operate.¹⁵¹ One can also look at Acemoglu and Robinson's, *Why Nations Fail*: the authors highlight the importance of western (plural inclusive) economic and political institutions, and how lack of such institutions invariably leads to the downfall of societies. By following, they assert, the inclusive institutions of the West, developing society can become better-off. They give an ostentatious tone to the path taken by Western Europe as the proper path for any society to (and must) follow if it wants to develop.¹⁵² What is of interest of these works (as well as many others) is not only their grand titles (such as: *Why Nations Fail* or *The Rise and Decline of Nation*) foreboding the rise and fall of society or of modern history, but they equate such episodes to a period of lapse in the *economic* aspects of society: it is the unfavorable institutions of society, or the fight over economic resources between groups, or the unfavorable societal practices, norms, and so on.

With economic dimensions firmly embedded in the thought process of society, one very easily falls back on *economy* to find solutions as well as to understand any problem which one necessarily encounters. What propagates from such state of affairs is the idea that not only:

¹⁵¹ Mancur Olson, *The Rise and Decline of Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982).

¹⁵² Daron Acemoglu, and James A. Robinson, *Why Nations Fail* (London: Profile Books, 2013).

...economic progress is possible, but that *economic progress is a necessary condition for some other purposes, judged to be good*: be it national dignity, private profit, the general welfare, or a better life for the children. Education...broadens and changes to suit the needs of modern economic activity. New types of enterprising men come forward...willing to mobilize saving and to take risk in pursuit of profit or modernization... Investment increases, notably in transport, communications, and in raw materials in which other nations may have an economic interest. The scope of commerce, internal and external, widens. And...modern manufacturing enterprise appears, using the new methods (italics added).¹⁵³

Thus, development of society becomes one dimensional. By virtue of equating societal development in terms of economy, as seen from Rostow's statement, other aspects—be it cultural, political, or social (even morality)—of society become predicated on economic factors. Even the methods of query are borrowed from this field: use of statistical probabilities (or, econometrics). The above statement makes clear about the priority of economy not only as a means to economic growth, but also as the source of beneficent *good* to the society: brings forth “benefits,” “profits,” “welfare” to the “society,” “individual,” “children,” “nation.” Even the purpose of education is transmuted to serve “the need of modern economic activity”; every societal activity is concentrated to sustain economic activities—investment, manufacturing, producing capital, trade, markets, communication, transportation, etc.—which are deemed necessary for

¹⁵³ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 6-7. Indeed, such ideas are still prescribed by many academics who discount the societal elements and reduce every aspect of a person's life to economic variables. For instance, Banerjee and Duflo in their article, *The Economic Lives of the Poor*, blame the poor for their own misery. They insist the poor have choices just like anyone else; however, they argue, in order to escape poverty, the poor should take the responsibility to make good choices. Banerjee and Duflo maintain they wanted to know the lives and choices of the poor. However, they got the lives of the poor very wrong, which they then bloated up into a book, thereby, inadvertently showing their naïve knowledge on the actualities of human conditions affecting the lives of the poor. See, Banerjee and Duflo's, “The Economic Lives of the Poor,” *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 21 (Winter 2007): 141-168; and *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty* (New York, NY: PublicAffairs, 2011).

development. Likewise, for North, even the growth of knowledge is only meant for economic purpose, as he maintains: “the application of scientific knowledge (with its origins in the renaissance) to solving economic problems, [has led to]...an immense leap in economic productivity and human well-being and longevity.”¹⁵⁴ While Inglehart and Welzel even go so far as to affirm, “Economic growth and growing material prosperity” increases “people’s sense of *existential security* (italics added).”¹⁵⁵ Note how the authors reduce “existential security” to “economic growth and growing material prosperity,” thereby, amplifying the importance of *economy*.

However, what constitutes person’s or society’s existential security is neither limited to economic, nor material prosperity. There is indeed more to existential security than just economic or material prosperity: such as sense of human feelings, emotions, sentiments, sense of pity, connectedness, compassion, love, sympathy, empathy, etc. Without these human aspects, societies’, let alone a person’s, existential security cannot be conceived. Take, for instance, in the modern technologically advanced societies, which do not lack in economic or material prosperity, many of their population nevertheless suffer from depression (leading to over usage of medications, which does not actually cure the depression, hence, an increase in suicidal tendencies), despair, melancholy due to alienation, dissatisfaction at work, meaninglessness and purposelessness in their lives, privation of inner reflection, privation from what is natural to human beings (persons), i.e. want of human emotions and feelings.¹⁵⁶ Still, these

¹⁵⁴ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 87.

¹⁵⁵ Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernity, Cultural Change and Democracy*, 30.

¹⁵⁶ See, Jacques Ellul, *The Technological Society* (New York: Vintage Books, 1967).

portents are not heeded. The reason being: productive economic activities, it is argued, will negate the foul societal consequences, in due course.

In such manners, economy becomes the meaning of human society and understanding. “*Market exchange*,” writes Easterly, “makes it possible for us to *determine what we are good at*, to specialize in producing it, and to trade it for other things produced by people good at producing those things (italics added).”¹⁵⁷ The problem here is not so much with the trading or exchange of goods, after all humans have been trading since time immemorial, but with the author’s emphasis on economic aspects. Easterly espouses society to organize itself according to the needs of the market—implicit is his attention to economic activity as the ontology of society. He also supposes what each person is good at, i.e. “what we are good at,” is determined by market exchanges. However, one becomes aware of one’s ability, i.e. “what we are good at,” through one’s human emotions and senses. So, does it mean we, as human beings, must plan our lives according to the needs of the market and not on the needs we have as human beings? This is what Easterly forgot to ask himself. Society purely operating on the needs of the market is never a healthy society, it is highly doubtful such a society can even exist without amassing enormous societal pathologies.¹⁵⁸

The scintillating power of economics—ignores social maladies, on the one hand, and, on the other, claims to *offer* solution by transforming the non-quantifiable inquiry

¹⁵⁷ Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden*, 73.

¹⁵⁸ Vide, Ellul, *The Technological Society*; Konrad Lorenz, *Civilized Man’s Eight Deadly Sins*; Polanyi, *The Great Transformation*; Fromm, *Escape From Freedom*; Durkheim, *Suicide*; and *The Division of Labor in Society*; John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress* (Lanham, MD: AltraMira Press, 2008); Weston A. Price, *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* (Le Mesa, CA: Price-Pottenger Nutrition Foundation, 2004); Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993).

into a scientific study of social phenomena—even seduces the most erudite of scholars: in 1945, John Maynard Keynes proposed a toast before the Royal Economic Society, he proclaimed, “I give you...the toast of the Royal Economic Society, of economics and economists, who are the trustees not of civilization, but of the possibility of civilization.”¹⁵⁹ Of course, what is evident here is Keynes’ explicit supposition that economic deeds or accomplishments not only make civilizations possible, but, more importantly, sustain them.

No doubt, such mindset led Rostow to assert economic take-off to be the great watershed in any society, where old traditional resistances to steady growth are overcome. With economic growth, new industries begin to dominate. Modern techniques are introduced into the agricultural sectors. Agriculture, as a consequence, becomes commercialized as increasing numbers of farmers come to accept new methods along with profound changes they interminably bring to their existing ways of life. By unleashing the forces of modern economic activities, according to Rostow, “growth becomes the normal condition” and “Compound interest becomes built...into its habits and institutional structure.” In other words, the basic economic, social, and political structure of society changes in such a way as to accommodate as well as sustain growth.¹⁶⁰ Ultimately, as society begins its path towards development, it undergoes successive stages of higher growth, which to Rostow are the logical steps of modernity. However, to strike the match, if you will, something is needed to serve as the catalyst to jump start this logical process. The answer, for Rostow, is the West. He reasons, we (i.e.

¹⁵⁹ John Maynard Keynes, cited in Rostow’s, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 166.

¹⁶⁰ Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth*, 8, 7, 8-9.

the West) “have the resources and the pool of technical assistance to play a major...role in making sure the underdeveloped areas...move through the preconditions and through take-off,” for “there will be...no return to the old-fashioned...era. The traditional societies have moved too far into the pre-conditions for take-off for that to be possible.”¹⁶¹ One can see how the author inextricably interlaces traditional societies to the path of development and modernity.¹⁶² However, even the technical assistance, according to Sachs, is not enough, since it is “the ability to use modern, *science-based ideas* to organize production (italics added)” that leads to development.¹⁶³ In other words, society without scientific rationality cannot develop.

Economic take-off, as imagined by Rostow, occurs when, as North maintains, traditional shibboleths are supplanted by modern institution. North, like Malinowski, Parsons, Lipset, and Rostow, saw such transformation as a benign effort on the part of the developed world to “improve the performance of the third world economies,” as he further goes on to argue, because “institutional change has altered the pay-off to cooperative activity, increased the incentive to invent and innovate, altered the pay-off to

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 137-138.

¹⁶² Furthermore, according to Rostow, traditional societies should be assisted to generate conditions required for growth: improving social overhead capital, industrialization of agricultural sector, and building up foreign-exchange earning sector through “improved exploitation of natural resources”; as such, the fiscal, monetary, and other policies (including education) must be directed to meet these ends. See, Ibid., 139. These variables are supplemented by modern institutions ushering in division or specialization of labor forces, reducing transaction and production costs, increasing incentives and efficiencies, opening new markets for trade, and moving society from personal to an impersonal system of exchange to achieve economies of scale. See, North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 73-91; Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, 61; Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, 108; and Easterly, *The White Man’s Burden*; and *The Elusive Quest for Growth*, 41-42, 66-177.

¹⁶³ See, Sachs, *The End of Poverty*, 41.

investing in human capital, and lowered transaction costs in markets.”¹⁶⁴ Here, North implicitly assumes such mechanisms make civilized, modern societies possible, as if every society in the world gyrates around pay-offs, incentives, innovations, transaction-costs, capital, etc. For him, what constitutes the core problem of development is the inability of societies to transition from old belief systems to modern rational institutions.¹⁶⁵ Consistent with Rostow and North’s view, Inglehart and Welzel assert development is possible only when societies move away from their traditional belief systems. The authors further go on to illustrate how democratic, developed societies have entered the post-industrial service oriented stage with rational-secular beliefs asserting primacy of self-expressive values, while developing societies being undemocratic, with their traditional beliefs still intact, are heavily reliant on agricultural sectors.¹⁶⁶ Therefore, by changing their existing belief systems, one can go on to tackle the core challenges of development, as Collier argues, this way lack of economic growth can be reversed by foisting in modern institutions: democracy, trade, capital investments, technological skills, instituting international standards, laws, charters, contracts.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁴ North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change*, 18. The idea of transforming the political as well as economic institutions and how such changes foster development is one of the most ubiquitous recommendations in social analyses. See, Robert H. Bates, *Prosperity & Violence: The Political Economy of Development* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2001); and *When Things Fell Apart* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 43, 117.

¹⁶⁶ Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernity, Cultural Change and Democracy*, 57-237.

¹⁶⁷ Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, 11, 86-141, 180. In parity with Collier, Dambisa Moyo argues trade along with increase in capital, loans, and production of goods and services will generate domestic demands, thus, facilitate economic development. See, Moyo, *Dead Aid* (New York, NY: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2009). It is interesting to note how academics—such as: Sen, Moyo, Banerjee, Bhagwati, among many others—from the developing societies go on to make such facile arguments or generalizations. One would have, at least, thought these scholars would pay acute attention to realities

Unswervingly evident in the works examined, hitherto, is to take their own society as the standard from which to gage other societies. The touchstone becomes their institutions and the values they disseminate. They desire traditional societies to embrace, accept these values unreservedly. Yet they seem to be ignoring the fallacies of their own rampant institutionalized values, as Illich notes, “When *values have been institutionalized* in planned and engineered processes, *members of modern society believe that the good life consists in having institutions which define the values that both they and their society believe they need* (italics added).”¹⁶⁸ This way institutionalized value not only perpetuates itself as something indispensable to the society, thus leading to further institutionalization of society’s values, but also begins to frame or define the social reality itself. Hence, Inglehart and Welzel after asserting how modern beliefs, values, institutions are better for development, ask: “Does our approach propose a uniquely Western standard that cannot be applied to non-western cultures?” Their answer to which they proffer is a resounding, No. Their approach, they argue, is applicable to all societies around the world, as they affirm, “All the empirical evidence indicates that these are *universal human aspiration*” and on this “point *there is no difference between human societies* (italics added).”¹⁶⁹

faced by developing societies. Still, at the same time, it is only obvious for them to make such vacuous arguments, because of their limited understanding of societal realities, and being educated (and now teaching) in developed societies, they are indoctrinated gradually into the orthodoxy of theories and methods, thereby, adhering to *de rigueur* facile generalization of development. Indeed, they consciously lost their sense of *lived* experiences either due to constant dose of anesthetic medicine, i.e. scientific rational way to view the world, or due to implicit pressure to conform so as not be isolated by the academic world. Or, it may so happen, both factors played a role in making them oblivious to *lived* societal realities of the developing world.

¹⁶⁸ Illich, *Deschooling Society*, 113.

¹⁶⁹ Inglehart and Welzel, *Modernity, Cultural Change and Democracy*, 289.

Likewise, the universalization of *certain specific forms* of institution, and how these are applicable to the rest of human societies are fervently promoted in the name of progress.

Certainly, the authors conveniently skip through thousands of years of history, lived experiences, memories that shaped each society. The authors simply reduce diverse human societies into their hidebound variables of modern aspirations, which they adamantly preach. They automatically assume, by virtue of being ‘advanced,’ the institutional beliefs they espouse are morally and ethically superior to traditional shibboleths. Moreover, they also assume, every society must follow the path taken by the developed world, i.e. the inevitable path towards modernity and democracy, since this path is the *universal* path for all humanity. In other words, for the authors, if there is—as Plato’s *theory of forms* supposes—the *perfect form* of human beliefs, then that *perfect form* is the existing values of the developed world; hence, every society should not only strive to *become* like them, but also embrace their values.

Apparent in the works examined is their “belief in the role of modernization as the only force capable of destroying archaic superstitions and relations, at whatever social, cultural, and political cost. Industrialization and urbanization [are] seen as the inevitable and necessarily progressive routes to modernization. Only through material advancement could social, cultural and political progress be achieved.”¹⁷⁰ In other words, every society must be like ‘us’ (i.e. developed society), *uniform*: at least, pertaining to material needs, desires, and organization of society. Every society must accommodate the materialism of progress; new values comparable with modernity must be instituted, viz. new meaningless economic values must replace the meaningful traditional shibboleths. Yet, modern values—economic materialism—are in and of themselves meaningless, created

See, Jagdish Bhagwati, *In Defense of Globalization* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2004); Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Making Globalization Work* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2006).

¹⁷⁰ Escobar, *Encountering Development*, 39.

out of, what Ivan Illich identifies as, the wasting of culture, i.e. out of destruction of cultures.¹⁷¹ The new values that usurp the old ones are not values, instead they are “disvalues”;¹⁷² they serve no purpose, nor provide meaning to the society in which they are imposed. Of course, such malefic effects are ignored by the enlightened minds because to acknowledge such pernicious effects is to acknowledge also the limitations of economic materialism, thereby acquiesce to the essentiality for diversity. However, diversity, in its strict sense of the word, is a threat to the uniformity of scientific rationality and progress. Thus, such horrid effects *have* to be ignored.

With such an outlook, path towards human progress only seems inevitable. More importantly, explicit in the assured progress of human society is the idea of development based on rational schemes derived through scientific means. The rational schemes are given an air of superiority, over other modes of thought, by alluding to *scientificity* of their empirical proofs or results. So, the schemes inexorably involve rationalization of a given traditional society, where modern social institutional behaviors are implemented in order to aid the development process. The dogmatic proclivities of scientific rationality, however, does very little to serve the ultimate purpose of that which one claims to be doing. Rather it prevents burgeoning of alternatives. When alternatives are silenced, it creates an environment in which there seems to be *only one way* of thinking, *one way* of what is considered to be pragmatic.

From what has been discussed so far, it must, by now, be apparent to the reader, the acme of scientific rationality in development discourse. Consequently, the form which scientific rationality takes is the preeminence of institution and economy as the

¹⁷¹ Illich, *In the Mirror of the Past*.

¹⁷² Ibid.

principal elements from which to probe into social phenomena. Therefore, it would be proper to examine in brief the consequences or what follows when one mode of thought is accorded prominence over others.

CHAPTER III

DEVELOPMENT AS CULTURAL ATROPHY

The Episodes

The previous chapter discussed how scholarships in development are rooted in scientific rationality. In this chapter, however, we will explicate the progression or influence of scientific rationality from the roots to its actual applications. Put differently, (note: '→' = influence) how scientific rationality → scholarships → organizational/institutional schemes → actual applications of development schemes. To illustrate this, three episodes are examined: the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), Transmigration in Indonesia, and Villagization in Tanzania, which will be dealt separately in the following three sections.

One could view this chapter as the continuation of the preceding chapter. Here the main focus is not so much, for instance, to establish the apodictic of one's reasoning through the empirical episodes chosen; instead the principal concern is to illustrate the influence of scientific rationality. The three affairs or episodes are examined because they perhaps provide the best means to inquest into the principal concern of the present inquest. Moreover, the three episodes provide some concrete existential events enabling the reader to grasp the influence of scientific rationality. Sure, the three events are some of the most ambitious development goals and schemes carried out in modern history.¹ Yet, their magnitude counts for little in this study because it is not the purpose of the

¹ MDGs, one of the most ambitious goals set-up to address some of world's most vexing problems (i.e., development), is the result of the largest gathering of world leaders in history; the largest transmigration program in human history, Indonesia; and one of the largest (and the largest during the years of its occurrence) forced resettlement carried out in independent Africa, Villagization in Tanzania.

present query to prove or establish an undisputable (natural) truth with the examples selected. Rather, these events are examined in order to illustrate or bring to attention what happens when one mode of thought is given paramount place in social inquests. Undoubtedly, one could argue, the present study is alluding only to negative or pathological episodes. However, it is essential to recognize that in order to understand what one queries into, one must first understand the negative, pathological episodes. These are the basic means of arriving at an understanding of phenomena. We know of many occasions in physics, astronomy, mathematics, and physiology where the prober not only understood the phenomenon, but also advanced their disciplines by examining pathological or negative episodes. The establishment and acceptance of the heliocentric view was in a sense possible by querying into the problems of Ptolemaic view and its unresolved perturbation, even with Ptolemy's adjustments by introducing quants and epicycles, of Mercury's orbit. The founding of Non-Euclidean geometry was based on probing into Euclid's notorious *fifth postulate*, which states: if a straight line intersects two straight lines and the two resulting interior angles are less than the sum of two right angles, the two lines, when extended indefinitely, will intersect invariably.² Or take the wave theory of light. It enabled better understanding about the nature of light by examining the negative episodes, i.e. Newton's corpuscular theory of light, which could not adequately explain many phenomena. Even the indispensability of our thyroid glands in the production of hormones, by Emil Theodor Kocher, was achieved only by looking into its pathological episodes: attempts to treat exophthalmic goiter and myxedema. In

² Euclid, *The Thirteen Books of the Elements*, vol. 1, trans. Sir Thomas Heath (New York: Dover Publications, 1956).

sum, no advancement in human knowledge, or in science, is possible without looking into the negative events.

It is essential to remember that the three episodes are considered only for the purpose of elucidating to the reader the influence of scientific rationality. As such, it matters little to exhaustively analyze the events, since: first, there are numerous thorough scholarships in respect to these episodes; and second, these affairs are examined only in so far as to explicate the deeply entrenched habitual tendency to lean towards one mode of thought. Thus, doubts or questions concerning the selection (why these episodes and not others) as well as the thorough analysis of events are superfluous to what the study intends to explicate.

Before commencing the critique of the three episodes, it would be proper to note an essential caveat. This is done so that the reader would not misconstrue the intention behind what is to unfold in this chapter. It must be noted: The study is not trying, as mentioned in Chapter One, to romanticize traditional societies, nor is it trying to suggest that no problems exist within these societies, or that there is only happiness and goodness in everything they do. Like any human society, traditional societies have problems of their own; however, it is up to them to deal with their own problems; there is no need for anyone to meddle in someone else's internal difficulties. Furthermore, the critique of the episodes may seem, to the reader, as if the present study is idolizing traditional societies, yet the study is only stating what it is stating not to romanticize them, but to contend against the habitual conceptions (held by developed societies) that view native societies as if they have no redeeming qualities whatsoever (of course, this view stems from the fact that since traditional societies do not embrace scientific rationality, the developed

world immediately assumes everything—habits, beliefs, knowledge, modes of thought, etc.—they do and everything about these societies to be barbarous, backward, or primitive). Hence, a scientific person may perhaps see the arguments put forth as the revivification of the old idea of the *Noble Savage*. However, *noble savage* is itself a pejorative term. The only reason why such concept will pop-into the reader’s mind is because the reader is *misunderstanding* or has *misunderstood* what is being or been reasoned in this study. Indeed, Rousseau’s concept of noble savage (after all it was he who was among the first to advocate on behalf of the *savage*) interested him (as well as Marx, Engels, and Montesquieu) only in regard to the autonomy enjoyed by these *savages*, otherwise Rousseau (or for that matter Marx, Montesquieu, Engels) had very little interests in (preserving) social systems or ways of life—beliefs, knowledge, customs—of these *savages*.³ With this caveat, let us begin by examining the episode concerning rationalized goals: United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Millennium Development Goals

It is important to recognize that we are, here, more concerned with the nature of the goals rather than whether the set targets have been successful attained. The MDGs is of concern because it illustrates the preeminence of scientific rationality, thus making it possible for those who adhere to such a mode of thoughts to formulate them in the first place. As mentioned in the previous chapter, because scientific rationality dictates how inquiry ought to be carried out in development studies, it simplifies or generalizes complex human reality into vacuous quantifiable variables. This is because scientific analysis becomes cumbersome or well-nigh impossible without *standardized* reductionist

³ Vide, Hugh Brody, *Maps and Dreams* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981).

variables. Furthermore, *technicians of development*⁴ have become so dependent on scientific means that these rational tools render them virtually oblivious to the realities of society. Since technicians of development are very much dependent on scientific means to ascertain every nook and cranny of what they inquest into, the only way for them to comprehend is to compress numerous complex societies with all their myths, memories, histories, cultures, and other societal elements into a few statistical variables. Technicians generalize numerous aspects of traditional societies into undifferentiated monadic units. Certainly, generalizing makes their job a lot easier; yet, such a facetious approach—guised under the term *science*—ignores complex edifice that builds each society in its own unique image. As such, agents of development are lackadaisical—because everything is reduced to generalized variables—in their approach to understand societies. As, one eccentric development expert puts it: “to ‘move the money’ they have been charged with spending, ‘development’ agencies prefer to opt for *standardized ‘development’ packages*. It thus suits the agencies *to portray developing countries in terms that make them appropriate targets for such packages*. It is not surprising,

⁴ The term, ‘*technicians of development*,’ is here referring to academics (economists, political scientists, sociologists, anthropologists), government agencies, non-profit aid agencies, even journalists along with numerous non-governmental organizations. The term *Technicians* is more fitting, because by virtue of being a technician, one is required neither to *think critical* nor to *understand*. This is, of course, what *technicians of development* do; they have no understanding, nor are they pensive about complex cultural shibboleths constituting the traditional world. These technicians thoughtlessly take given conventional scientific knowledge as truths, and assume them to be applicable in every society regardless of obvious diversity among societies. And just like technicians whose utilities lie in their ability to perform tasks they are taught to do without much thinking, for they are *conditioned* by their profession to do so, so it is with technicians of development, where to think critically and to understand is to delve into the realm of fables. Furthermore, technicians like to mention ‘laymen’ when referring to those who are not part of their *over-specialized* (i.e. *sub-divisions of sub-divisions of sub-divisions*) fields, yet in reality these technicians are more of laymen within their own fields as they are outside; they are, in other words, ‘intellectual laymen’ themselves.

therefore, that the ‘country profiles’ on which the agencies base their interventions *frequently bear little or no relation to economic and social realities* (italics added).⁵

When nescient development agencies (as well as technicians of development) cannot be bothered to accept societal realities, the pre-packaged standardized plans certainly become most desirable. One cannot but be amazed at such languid efforts undertaken by technicians; yet, it is at the same time equally amazing to see them being so flippant, when it comes to their understanding of the complex traditional world.

This brings us to the MDGs, an example of scientific rationality in *motion*. The MDGs are the product of Millennium Summit which transpired into the largest gathering of world leaders in New York in September 2000. The Summit adapted the UN Millennium Declaration, now known as the Millennium Development Goals: The MDGs are the “*time-bound*,” “*quantified targets*” set to address extreme poverty in all its numerous aspects—hunger, lack of shelter, income poverty, education, gender equality, health, environment sustainability, etc.⁶

Here, the MDGs assume all developing societies face analogous problems; therefore, ways to deal with them are also equivalent. As is evident from the eight MDGs, they are as follows: eradicating extreme poverty and hunger; achieve universal primary education; promote gender equality and empower women; reduce child mortality;

⁵ James Ferguson, “The Anti-Politics Machine: “Development” and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho,” *The Ecologist* 24 (September-October 1994): 176.

⁶ UN Millennium Project, *Investing in Development: A Practical Plan to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, report to the UN Secretary-General (New York: United Nations, 2005).

improve maternal health; combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases; ensure environmental sustainability; and develop a global partnership for development.⁷

These goals were conceived precisely because of the generalized views on traditional, developing societies. If the emphasis on generalization seems familiar, from the authors discussed in the last chapter, to the reader, one would be right, after all the primary author of the MDGs was none other than Jeffery Sachs who called for “science for development” to improve human conditions.⁸ Indeed, generalization is also emphasized, for instance, by Malinowski who espoused for every societal event to be reduced to generalizable statements, or Parsons who insisted on the generalizability of knowledge, or North who maintained generalization enables one to make good models and theories to face real uncertainties of the world.⁹

This generalization thus affords MDGs to view, for instance, poverty as something *ahistorical* or *acontextual*, i.e. something already present or *a priori*, not realizing it is the intrusion of external norms and values that create poverty in traditional societies. Norberg-Hodge shows a Himalayan society in Ladakh with no previous notion of poverty to an emerging one, where new economic practices along with the introduction of western goods, and technologies brought modernized poverty, thus leading to a breakdown of community ties and bringing irreversible changes.¹⁰ It must be remembered

⁷ UN Millennium Project, *Investing in Development*.

⁸ Jeffrey Sachs, *The End of Poverty* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2005), 282, 352.

⁹ See, Bronislaw Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture and Other Essays* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, 1944); Talcott Parsons, *The Social System* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1951); Douglas North, *Understanding the Process of Economic Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005).

¹⁰ Helena Norberg-Hodge, *Ancient Futures: Lessons from Ladakh for a Globalizing World* (San Francisco, CA: The Sierra Club Books, 1991).

that poverty is not some ubiquitous features of traditional societies. In many non-western societies it was introduced from the outside. As one Yupik Indian from Alaska recalls:

'Poverty' has only recently been introduced to native communities... for thousands of years people subsisted from the land and ocean along the west coast of Alaska. It was a hard life, but it had none of the frustrations and stigmas of poverty, for the people were not poor. Living from the land sustained life and evolved the Yupik culture, a culture in which wealth was the common wealth of the people as provided by the earth....

.... The new economic system ... began replacing food and fur with cash, cooperation with competition, sharing with accumulating.

.... It is not so well known that the economic impact of western civilization was every bit as devastating to the well-being and spirit of the people ... these new ways of doing things can be as disturbing to the life of a person or of a culture as the Measles infection is to the life of a body (italics added).¹¹

The above statement is quoted at length because it provides one with the existential realities that negate the simple lackadaisical attitude to assume universal values, which the author(s) (headed by Jeffrey Sachs) of MDGs did, such as the *a priori* supposition to assume every society goes through analogous societal experiences: poverty. It is out of the vacuity of a person that such generalization becomes inevitable, since it simplifies complex human expressions. Certainly, in many societies across Africa, Asia, and the Pacific (i.e. the Oceanic), poverty was introduced either through colonial powers or through civilizing efforts to modernize the natives. The British in Kenya, the Germans in New Guinea, Australians in Papua and toward Aborigines, the Dutch in East Indies, and the French in West Africa created a new reality, i.e. poverty, by introducing poll tax made payable only through the means of money, i.e. *cash*, the failure of which meant, for the natives, facing long jail sentences.¹² This induced natives to work

¹¹ Cited in Majid Rahnema, and Victoria Bawtree, eds., *The Post-Development Reader* (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), 45. The Yupik Indian continues, "Fortunately a cure has been found for measles. A cure has not been found for our 'poverty.'"

¹² John H. Bodley, *Victims of Progress* (Lanham, MD: AltraMira Press, 2008).

as manual laborers in plantations and in other civilizing works for the Europeans in order to procure cash. As one scholar, observed: “The poll tax and hut tax to which natives are subjected have been used as a means of *forcing them into the European economic system* (italics added).”¹³ This is what Chamberlain meant in his speech to the House of Commons in 1926: “Under all circumstances the *progress of natives toward civilization* is only secured when they shall be *convinced of the necessity and dignity of labour*; and therefore I think that everything we reasonably do to encourage the natives to work is highly desirable (italics added).”¹⁴ The imposition of developed society’s institutions, which have been discussed thoroughly in the previous chapter, as evident in Chamberlain’s speech is so obvious that those who authored the MDGs seem to be following what the ‘enlightened’ Europeans had done prior to them.

The same attitude is evident in MDGs approach to universal education. The technicians (such as authors of MDGs) assumed: the standardized and highly mechanized modern educational systems, based on the ones from the developed world, would be beneficial for traditional societies since technicians have already decided the natives’ education, based on each society’s realities, must be eliminated. For them, these are not even education; rather they are assortments of primitive superstitions. Every corner of the world should, therefore, be brought under one mass universalized education system, just like the standardized modern mass consumer society. As one author argues, traditional

¹³ W. H. Hutt, “The Economic Position of the Bantu in South Africa,” in *Western Civilization and the Natives of South Africa*, ed. I. Schapera (London: George Routledge and Sons, 1934), 212-213.

¹⁴ Joseph Chamberlain quoted in John H. Wellington, *South West Africa and Its Human Issues* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), 250.

societies instead of living by their ancestral laws must be educated in scientific outlook.¹⁵ Yet, the modern education system has nothing whatsoever to do neither with the liberation of traditional people nor of their minds. Instead, it is but a blatant *colonization of thought*. Forget the archaic colonization of people, land, culture by force and imperial domination, for that is much too antiquated; today there is the colonization of thought, which is much more refined, dressed in the gown of progress. After all, by depriving persons or societies of their *freedom of thought*, which is the essences of human freedom,¹⁶ they very easily succumb to outside manipulation, whereby, they are cultivated to virtues, values, beliefs, norms desired by the manipulator or the dominant society.¹⁷

Under colonialism, in the name of progress, many societies were introduced to a modern education system, where the content along with what was taught had nothing whatsoever to do with societies' reality. However, it did one thing with immaculate result: it proved to be an indispensable tool for *acculturation* of the natives to the values

¹⁵ Garth N. Jones, "Strategies and Tactics of Planned Organizational Change: Case Examples in the Modernization Process of Traditional Societies," *Human Organization* 24, no. 3 (1965): 192-200.

¹⁶ Notice that the term *human freedom* is mentioned not 'individual freedom.' The reason being: Human freedom is most essential, it is the *freedom to think* (i.e. *freedom of thought*) that defines us as human beings with free will. The hackneyed term, 'individual freedom,' is deliberately avoided because it is but a perversion of the freedom of thought concocted by plebeian thinkers like Kant, J. S. Mill, Locke, Hume, Bentham, and later on Dewey, Rawls, among others. All they did was to make a person into an ardent unthinking conformist: from *each* person to *mass* herd, content with the vacuous slogan 'freedom of speech.' Since this is only a tangent to the present study, it will suffice to leave it at that.

¹⁷ Alas! This is especially true of any modern mass democratic societies. It is hardly of any surprise that, presently, mass democratic societies are easily manipulated by polls and surveys, where these banal aspects are equated to equally empty terms, such as accountability and transparency, keeping the ignorant mass happy. Here, freedom of speech—in the forms of opinion polls and surveys—is esteemed, which is but a bovine excuse to hide the manipulation of the nescient masses.

of their colonizers, thereby, destroying their cultures; it created new needs which hitherto did not exist; it fostered new dissatisfactions in the society; it was an effective means of destroying society's self-esteem; and it disrupted traditional societies without empowering them to have control over conditions affecting their everyday lives.¹⁸ This is manifestly apparent if one looks into the case of Native Americans. One of the best means that destroyed the culture and society of the Native Americans was education. For instance, the United States government in order to deal with the "Indian Problem" established numerous boarding schools where native children, from a very young age, were required to attend. These were places where the civilized society sanitized the minds of young savages. There native children were exposed to new haircuts, given English names, introduced to Western dresses, and schooled in educational models of the civilized society.¹⁹ One can, for example, call to mind how the Native American children were *domesticated* through government-controlled schools through art education, such as, the Sherman Institute in Riverside, California and the Albuquerque Indian School in New Mexico.²⁰ The purpose behind such kinds of school were simple: they served as means to assimilate Native Americans by instilling values, norms, and ideals of mainstream society; they also served to transform "little savages" into civilized men and women; and to show the system was succeeding in its aims, artworks of the students were displayed at national conventions or exhibitions which functioned as evidence of the natives' progress toward civilization.²¹

¹⁸ Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, 126.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 128.

²⁰ Marinella Lentis, "Art Education in American Indian Boarding Schools" (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 2011).

²¹ Lentis, "Art Education in American Indian Boarding Schools."

Similarly, the French in its colonies also established schools as an instrument for cultural modification. Here, schools educated natives on French language, its ideals of respect, order, politeness, cleanliness, obedience, and good habits, as well as meaning for terms such as charity, compassion, justice, altruism, respect, pity, concepts with which the French presumed the natives were unfamiliar. The most important lesson, however, was the need for loyalty to France and its interests; furthermore, natives were taught to despise their own cultures and traditions. The French, moreover, proselytized to the natives that since Whites were much more advanced and better educated, it would be better for them to work for the white man, this way they will become intelligent, industrious, and progress more rapidly.²² Introduction of modern education meant destruction of native cultures and societies, as one Dadacha, an elder of Borana tribe in Kenya, recalls the ruination brought into his society: “I think of it [modern education] as a device whereby the enemy is out to make people forget what they already know. The device whereby he destroys our age-old wisdom, by making it impossible to pass it down to the younger generation. In such schools, our children, far from studying their own language, are thrown out of school for using it....”; however, “Worst of all is that they also force our young to abandon our own customs and to adopt this borrowed one along with them. In this way our great customary system is denied its natural place.”²³ Certainly, the purpose of education, which the new system instilled upon the younger generations, was to show the inferiority of local societies and superiority of enlightened

²² Raymond L. Buell, *The Native Problem in Africa*, 2 vols (New York: Macmillan, 1928).

²³ Gudrun Dahl, and Gemetchu Megerssa, “The Spiral of the Ram’s Horn: Boran Concepts of Development,” in *The Post-Development Reader*, eds. Majid Rahnema, and Victoria Bawtree (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), 59.

Western/European societies. What the young learned in their schools had no relevance to the actual realities of their daily lives. The traditional ways of educating their young, about contributing to society's needs, maintaining harmony, conviviality, self-reliance, all of which were meaningfully adapted in accordance to the actual needs of their societies, were eviscerated. The sanitization of traditional societies by means of new schooling systems transformed other parts of the world into ready-made consumers, who are made into conformist, work-oriented beings or, to use Marcuse's term, one-dimensional man.

It was such destructive features of modern education that Gandhi advocated against. He was against the Anglo educational system because it did nothing but destroy the ancient village organizations that emphasized self-support, conviviality, compassion, caring, and other human values *appropriate* to Indian life. And what Gandhi did was a threat to the colonizer's interests of disseminating its values in Indian society, or rather the British saw his teaching to be in opposition to progress.²⁴ For Gandhi, "Not only was [the education system introduced by the British] irrelevant to the learning needs of the millions, but it constituted a major...instrument for their enslavement and the destruction of their cultural roots.... The object of this education was called 'progress', although it represented new processes of isolation, destitution and dependency for the grassroots"; because education, for Gandhi, meant an "all-round development of human faculty," it had to be rooted in one's "natural, social and cultural environment. It does not isolate

²⁴ Dwarika Singh, *Basic Education, Then and Now: Progress and Development of Basic Education in India* (Bombay: Indian Council of Basic Education, 1980).

[one] from [one's] life realities.”²⁵ Modern education system, which is standardized and mechanical in nature, indeed does very little, if anything at all, in the overall development of human faculty—critical thinking, building one's character, one's spiritual knowledge, one's artistic and creative sensibilities, and so forth.²⁶ This is because abstract institutionalized values of modern education are devoid of societal actualities. What is worse, each cultural knowledge or collected wisdom passed down for generations addressing the actual needs of society are replaced at the same time new institutionalized values are being foisted.

Take for instance education of the young in the BaMbuti community in Congo. Here, games children play are the imitation of their parents. Children love to mimic their adult idols, i.e. their parents; this is the beginning of their education. Fathers will make miniature bow and arrow for their sons; likewise, mothers will weave, for their daughters, miniature nets, carrying baskets, etc. The “playing house” of the children is reenactments of their elders, where girls build miniature houses, while boys hunt with their bow and

²⁵ Gandhi quoted in Majid Rahnema, and Victoria Bawtree, eds., *The Post-Development Reader* (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), 121. Also vide, Singh, *Basic Education, Then and Now*.

²⁶ Turnbull succinctly summarizes what one had in mind, as he proffers: “The economic reality, for us, is so harsh that our universities too readily fall into the trap of encouraging youth to devote themselves to the pursuit of job training, physical or intellectual, rather than to the art of reasoning.... [A]ll too often our universities take up where high (or public) school left off, continuing the process of fragmentation of self and stressing more than ever the value of individual success.... [A]t the end of youth the individual has come to see security in terms of economic competence rather than social concern; survival has become mechanical rather than organic. Compassion and caring have become almost totally dissociated from the business of earning a living...” which is now transformed “by the fact that society has to offer economic incentives, so that social concern itself becomes a tax write-off.” Colin M. Turnbull, *The Human Cycle* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1983), 150-51.

arrow shooting an ear of corn or a stray plantain.²⁷ The interesting aspect here is: children soon find “the games they have been playing are not games any longer, but the real thing, for they have become adults. Their hunting is now real hunting; their tree climbing is in earnest search of inaccessible honey; their acrobatics on the swings are repeated almost daily, in other forms, in the pursuit of elusive game, or in avoiding the malicious forest buffalo. It happens so gradually that they hardly notice the change at first, for even when they are proud and famous hunters their life is still full of fun and laughter.”²⁸ The education of the BaMubti is rooted in social, natural, and cultural actualities of their society in which they are placed. The lessons they learn, by means of children’s play, have special meaning, purpose, and significance; their actions and curiosity are answered by the world around them, where they imbibe on the age-old wisdom passed on by their elders. Through inquest into wonders and mysteries of the world around, they slowly begin to learn and become a *conscious being*. They acquire social consciousness teaching them the special meaning and special importance of everyone and everything in their world.²⁹ Children are brought into a world filled with meaning, with purpose; they fill the

²⁷ Colin M. Turnbull, *The Forest People: A Study of the Pygmies of the Congo* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1962).

²⁸ Turnbull, *The Forest People*, 129.

²⁹ The education system in traditional societies is more meaningful as it contributes to the sustenance of their society as well as helps develop the persons within. As Illich puts it, “*Traditional society was more like a set of concentric circles of meaningful structures, while modern man must learn how to find meaning in many structures to which he is only marginally related. In the village, language and architecture and work and religion and family customs were consistent with one another, mutually explanatory and reinforcing. To grow into one implied a growth into the others.... If an apprentice never became a master or a scholar, he still contributed to making shoes or to making church services solemn. Education did not compete for time with either work or leisure. Almost all education was complex, lifelong, and unplanned* (italics added).” See, Ivan Illich, *Deschooling Society* (London, UK: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1970), 22.

child's imagination and give the child a sense of awe and amazement. This way, for the BaMbuti, education is cultivation of human faculty, becoming a thinking being, a being of conscious, a social being that is continuously in a state of *becoming*, so as to maximize one's potential for humanity.³⁰ Certainly, manners in which the BaMbuti educate their young are suited only for their society; after all, *context* is important, for education serves the need of their society in accordance to their particular context. One cannot blindly institute every society under one form of universalized education system jettisoning social, cultural, natural context of diverse communities, and expect to provide meaning to those who adhere to it.

What is more, modern systems of education, foisted to replace a native's ways of teaching their young, have little, if at all, to do with enlightening minds. Illich shows how modern education is itself rooted in *indoctrinating* institutionalized values, thereby, leading to decadence of persons and growing misery in society: psychological impotence, social polarization, and physical pollution. Illich reasons: schools (in modern society) serve a double function: to create new needs and to prepare persons for their role as consumers.³¹ They become means of social control, dictating what is deemed acceptable, what is not; it creates pre-packaged values and instructions for citizens (starting from children)—hence, increasing the perennial demand for endless mass consumptions. School in developed society is but a factory through which pre-planned citizens are produced to satisfy endless consumerisms, thus manufacturing the next generation of consumers. The meaning of education is corrupted; children are forced to learn things

³⁰ Turnbull, *The Human Cycle*.

³¹ Illich, *Deschooling Society*.

that have no relevance to them, which in turn only stuns their creative, artistic abilities.³²

“Stupefying education,”³³ therefore, becomes the culmination of modern education.

Certainly, the call to transform education to serve economic purposes is clearly evident in MDGs call for universalized education.³⁴

Societies schooled in modern education system are instilled with the notion that everything in the world—from babies’ intelligence, nations’ development, person’s imagination, learning, personal growth, progress towards peace (calculated in terms of body count), to man itself—is gradable or quantifiable. Moreover, if something is not measurable then it is immediately viewed with *suspicion*. It also burgeons the need for a standardized approach towards everything: societies and countries are categorized like castes according to average years spent in modern education systems; schools and universities are graded or ranked, which has little to do with education and everything to do with their conformity.³⁵ No wonder, there is a call for universal education. This way

³² Ibid.

³³ Ivan Illich, “Disabling Professions,” in *Disabling Professions*, eds., Ivan Illich, Irving Kenneth Zola, John McKnight, Jonathan Caplan, and Harley Shaiken (London, UK: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1977), 31.

³⁴ This proselytization to transform education to serve economic purposes is clearly seen in the works of Lipset, Collier, Rostow, Sachs, Inglehart and Welzel, and Easterly. Collier (2007) argues education to be a form of wealth and qualifies educated persons as “human capital,” certainly, for Collier, education must adjust itself to meet demands of modern economy; or Lipset (1959) to argue economically developed democratic societies have larger proportions of their population with higher education, in other words, education makes societies more democratic and economically developed; or Rostow (1960) to advocate for education to adapt and change in order to meet the needs of economy; or for Inglehart and Welzel (2005) to equate education to economic needs, which they argue will increase society’s existential security. While Easterly (2006) and Sachs (2005), no matter how different they claim they are from each other, nevertheless emphasize the need to educate population in scientific methods (science and technology) for economic growth and development.

³⁵ See, Illich, *Deschooling Society*. Furthermore, Illich writes, “*People who submit to the standard of others* for the measure of their own personal growth *soon apply*

the dissemination of one mode of thought deemed proper is actualized, because, as Illich had argued, once people begin to accept measurement for themselves, they soon apply it to everything and everyone around them.³⁶ No wonder, technicians, therefore, assume modern education will drive traditional societies toward progress, after all look at the developed world and how its systems of education have advanced them, in terms of material wealth. The MDGs assumed away messy contexts and prefer to lie in the cold bosoms of scientific rationality and its detached generalized parameters.

Analogous sentiments drive the MDGs view in respect to women, health (and diseases) and environment. Essentialities of context rarely matter because they are cumbersome to the eyes of the *universalizers* or *generalizers*. Thus, they see women everywhere, outside of the developed world, to be in absolute oppressive conditions. Just because the position of women does not resemble or is not analogous to ones in the developed world, it is automatically assumed, traditional societies are—by employing platitudinous terms as—bad, immoral, backward, or primitive. Technicians view status of women elsewhere in a different light without considering their differing contexts. It matters very little to these technicians to give a moment's thought on how every kind of society, tradition, belief, etc. is framed according to its cultural contexts. To disregard the

the same rule to themselves. They no longer have to be put in their place, but put themselves into their assigned slots, *squeeze themselves into the niche which they have been taught to seek*, and, in the very process, *put their fellows into their places*, too, *until everybody and everything fits* (italics added).” Ibid., 40. The pervasiveness in today's academic world to stress on *niche* is but malady of decaying education systems that puts too much faith on scientific rationality. Also between rankings and finding niches, every one and thing is fitted somewhere or into something, this way the cluttered mess of reality is cleared, in other words, everything becomes *uniform*, nothing is out of place, everything is where it should be as envisaged by scientific minds. Everything is quantifiable by applying uniform methods.

³⁶ Ibid., 40.

context by measuring or comparing different societies' values and norms, only illuminates one's inanities.

One will find in many traditional societies the role and position of women are as equally important as of men. For instance, among the Ilongots in the Philippines, the role of men and women are complimentary, one is required for the other. There women are seen to be stable and reliable producers upon which the survival of the family depends; they are the foundations of family; they can join in men's conversations; even join them on their hunts. Though there are certain expectations of men and women, these are not some sort of hierarchical gradation; rather these are complimentary to each other: both men and women help each other in taking care of the household chores, gardening, etc.³⁷ While among the Meratus in Indonesia, men and women are not confined to specific categories, both are seen as equally essential in respect to societal issues. Even in regard to marriage, it is about mutual understanding and assistance upon which survival of the family depends. A wife is not seen to be a domestic servant who takes care of her husband's cloths, foods, etc.³⁸ Whereas, among the Mbuti in Congo, women occupy an important position; they are important in the furtherance of their society; they are the *givers of life*, they *signify life*, the splendid manifestation of the goodness of the forest, the Mbuti believe. Furthermore, they go on hunts with men, for it is, after all, a joint effort; they take part in free discussions with men; both men and women also assists each other in taking care of the house, picking mushrooms, or taking care of their children,

³⁷ Michelle Z. Rosaldo, *Knowledge and Passion: Ilongot Notions of Self & Social Life* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

³⁸ Anna Lowenhaupt Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1993).

etc.³⁹ The point which one is here trying to elucidate is this: one should not presume traditional society to be *a priori* anti-women; or that they have nothing else better to do than to contemplate on how to keep women oppressed and downtrodden.⁴⁰

Such a kind of parochial mentality also leads one to suppose that these societies have no sense of good or clean health, are disease ridden, have no knowledge of medicine whatsoever. Yet, traditional societies are presently plagued by health crisis not because they have been this way since time immemorial, but rather their age-old collected wisdom on how to care for the health of their bodies and of society has been systematically annihilated, in favor of modernized education proselytizing the superiority of the developed world's sciences, medicines, manners of life, processes of thought, and inferiorities of the rest. What is more, many new diseases were introduced into traditional societies with the dissemination of *progress: civilization*.⁴¹ Weston Price in his voluminous work shows how contact with civilization displaced traditional foods by modern commercialized foods, thus spelling disaster for traditional societies: Swiss of Switzerland, Australian Aborigines, Islands of the Outer and Inner Hebrides, Melanesians, Polynesians, the Eskimos of Alaska, Native Americans, Central and Eastern

³⁹ Turnbull, *The Forest People*.

⁴⁰ Certainly, it is not like developed societies do not have problems of their own, in respect to women. The Feminist and the Marxist scholarships argue women in developed societies are reduced to commodity; indeed, there are certain merits to their arguments. So, it is not like there exists a society where there are no social problems or vices. Thus, it would be best to accept each society in its own accord and let it work out its own social problems on its own (without external disturbance) that best addresses its needs.

⁴¹ See, Donald Heyneman, "Development and Disease: A Dual Dilemma," Presidential Address to the American Society of Parasitology, *The Journal of Parasitology* 70 (February 1984): 2-17; M. Taghi Farvar, and John P. Milton, eds., *The Careless Technology: Ecology and International Development* (New York, NY: Doubleday Publishing, 1972); Gordon McLachlan, and Thomas McKeown, eds., *Medical History and Medical Care* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1971).

African Tribes, Maori of New Zealand, Malay tribes north of Australia, and Peruvian Indians. The displacement brought about dental caries, birth defects, complications during birth, face and feet deformities, tuberculosis, heart diseases, affections of internal organs, arthritis, susceptibility to disease, crowded teeth, narrowing of facial structures, and other chronic diseases, all of which were hitherto unknown to traditional societies. Moreover, conditions that caused dental decay also promoted other diseases not known in these societies. The reason was simple, civilized man's food lacked essential nutrients causing dental decay and physical deformities. Price found traditional diets contained as well as provided essential body building nutrients essential for good health, in general; these also provided resistance to tooth decay and many other modern illnesses.⁴²

Even in terms of medical knowledge, each traditional society utilizing its own collected wisdom abetted each in curing numerous *indigenous* health maladies specific to it. Consider the Eastern Africa tribe of Masai. For hundreds of years they are reported to have known the carrier of malaria; they knew it was mosquitoes. Furthermore, they also knew how to prevent serious spirochetal infections caused by syphilis; they exposed members of their tribe who were infected with syphilis to malaria to prevent serious infections. Yet, modern medicine investitures itself as the pioneer discoverer of using malaria to relieve or prevent further syphilitic infections. Price even considers Masai's tribal veterinary knowledge to be comparable with modern veterinarian science (at least relative to the period of his study).⁴³ Traditional societies aren't oblivious to the world around them, as assumed by most social scientists. In the field of medicine, old collected

⁴² Weston A. Price, *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* (Le Mesa, CA: Price-Pottenger Nutrition Foundation, 2004).

⁴³ Price, *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*, 134-135.

wisdom taught society how to cure many diseases. For instance, modern science claims it discovered vitamin C. But it was native Indians in Canada who had known, for a long time, how to cure scurvy.⁴⁴ The contribution of traditional knowledge is not just limited to scurvy. Consider the following, the modern agent for treating allergies and other serious digestive tract ailments is kaolin (or aluminum silicate), i.e. clay. But this knowledge is already well known among many traditional societies all around the world. The Aboriginals in Australia, the Central African tribes, and indigenous societies in South America, all had knowledge of kaolin.⁴⁵ They always tipped their ball of clay into their foods and drinks before consuming. It was later found by modern science that the clay (kaolin) helped prevent serious digestive ailments, and other bacterial infections of the gut. Modern science, latter came to show clay (kaolin) helps collect toxic products or substances. Furthermore, the clay or kaolin acts as an absorbent that helps in remedying modern allergies.⁴⁶

One should remind oneself about the importance of collected wisdom for the traditional world: take numerous African societies prior to European's *mission civilisatrice*, for instance: here most societies were immunized against malaria, they were even vaccinated (for life) against small pox. All these were possible because prior to outsiders interruption, natives knew their environment where they resided, which taught

⁴⁴ Ibid., 75.

⁴⁵ Of course, they were not known by the name 'kaolin'; rather it was a ball of clay which was one of the ubiquitous items in these societies.

⁴⁶ Price, *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*, 266, 418. The following account by Price sums up the irony of modernity, i.e. introduction of natives to development and its consequent physical degenerations: "The cook on the government boat was an aboriginal Australian from Northern Australia. He had been trained on a military craft as a dietitian. Nearly all his teeth were lost. It is of interest that while the native aborigines had relatively perfect teeth, this man who was a trained dietitian for the whites had lost nearly all his teeth from tooth decay and pyorrhea." Ibid., 181.

them, in return, how diseases can be avoided or cured. These were complex civilizations all well adapted to their ecological milieu. Contact with modernity, however, destroyed natives' ways of life; hence, what we find in Africa, presently, is societies unable to remedy themselves against those diseases which they hitherto were immunized against. Presently, malaria is one of the most serious diseases in the whole of Africa. The native African societies knew how to circumvent malaria. How they combated malaria was simple common sense: living in small groups in dry and high places spreading over large areas. This way the risks of malaria were thus avoided. However, destruction of traditional cultures and knowledge meant vast rural population, who previously lived in small groups, crammed into urban towns, thereby increasing population's vulnerability to infectious diseases. The large urbanization is now a big hurdle to many African societies who once lived in tranquility within their environment.⁴⁷ The European civilizing mission also introduced diseases which were previously unknown, for instance: smallpox, in the Incan society.⁴⁸

Certainly, illnesses found among traditional societies were endemic or indigenous. Hence, they learned how to cure native ailments confined within their milieu. There is a reason why collected wisdoms are of principal importance to natives: they provide protection and safety, be they curing ailments or providing purpose, meaning, *hope*. Thus, within their own milieu, until their contact with outside civilized people, they had essential skills and knowledges helping them overcome local indigenous maladies. They did not require elaborate machines, specialized skills or technologies precisely

⁴⁷ See, Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997).

⁴⁸ Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel*.

because they had no need for them, conditions did not arise for these to be needed. And from Price we know the consequences of their contact with the civilized man, in terms of their physical health. Hence, it seems rather imprudent to view traditional societies to be plagued with diseases which they cannot cure, while at the same time dismissing responsibilities for the many non-indigenous maladies introduced into these societies with their contact with the *modern*.⁴⁹

It would be a gross misunderstanding to assume modern medicine along with its universalized health system to be better if not superior to what has been destroyed in traditional societies, i.e. societies' ability to care for themselves by means of collected wisdom. Surely, appeal to universalized health system, as in modern societies, is but the institutionalization of society, thereby depriving each person the freedom of autonomous choice. Here, the person's freedom to die is deprived due to technical organizing of society and the medical system; the whole society is universally medicalized and highly

⁴⁹ See, Farvar, and Milton, *The Careless Technology*; McLachlan, and McKeown, *Medical History and Medical Care*. It is certainly imprudent to ask such question as: 'do you think curing malaria or polio or so on with modern medicine is good? Answer either Yes or No, I don't need any explanation, i.e. *context*.' To answer such questions in simple 'yes' or 'no' is to ignore the history of diseases and conditions giving rise to modern disease in traditional societies. Presently, traditional societies are unable to cope with diseases because: first, their culture is destroyed, with it their collected wisdoms thereby depriving them of their capacity to cure for themselves, at least indigenous endemic ailments. Second, apart from local ailments, new non-indigenous diseases were introduced (see, Price; Farvar and Milton; McLachlan and McKeown) where no such maladies were known prior to their contact with the *developed*. Third, because there is no prior history with the new diseases, traditional societies are unable to cure novel maladies using local knowledges. Lastly, to bring relieve or cure modern ailments requires modern drugs, however, developed societies being too eager to accumulate profits (by protecting or invoking patent laws) charge stupendously for the medicines; as such helping these societies become secondary (in other words, they do not want to clean the mess they created, or that they are going to charge traditional societies an arm and a leg to cure the maladies they introduced in the first place—this perhaps is the modern civilized humanity at its best).

medicated (and made dependent on it).⁵⁰ Furthermore, people are made into patients without even being sick. This way they are institutionalized and are made dependent on *professional physicians* for the rest of their lives. The professional medical technicians employing their mystical esoteric languages and medical rituals, to fool patients, decide what is to be counted as illnesses, what is to be labelled as deviance, etc., i.e. what counts as *normal*, what constitutes *health needs*, what must be *provided*. Indeed, advancement in modern medicine is also accompanied by increase in iatrogenics.⁵¹ Human illness is transformed into *technical error*; the patient is not seen as an organic being, rather it is seen as a mechanical thing, like Descartes' clock made by the divine Watchmaker; hence, the mechanical thing (for the person is transmogrified) is to be corrected by medication which does not actual *heal* the patient but induces the patient to become dependent on the *professional*. Illnesses in modern society, which are actually due to limitless industrialization, commodification, and monetization, are nevertheless blamed by medical economists, professional physicians as the result not of the system itself—which

⁵⁰ Vide, Ivan Illich, *Limits to Medicine: Medical Nemesis* (London, UK: Marion Boyars, 1995). This is a rich analysis of the limits of modern medicine, the mystic rituals of medical professions, the consumeristic proclivities of the medical system, commodification of patients and health care system, the standardization and institutionalization of life from birth to death in industrial society, specializing in taxonomies of new illnesses to justify the profession as well as the epistemological legitimacy of the (*taxonomized*) diseases, the acme of '*profession*' creating an aura of objective truth behind their dubious practices, defining what constitutes as illnesses and others as nonsense even when they are not, the society's rising inclination towards therapeutic, mechanical, and technical solutions to health care, etc. Also see, Samuel Proger, ed., *Medicated Society* (Collier Macmillan, Ltd., 1969).

⁵¹ See, Robert H. Moser, ed., *Diseases of Medical Progress: A Study of Iatrogenic Disease* (Charles C. Thomas Publishers, 1969); P. F. D'Arcy, and J. P. Griffin, eds., *Iatrogenic Diseases* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1986); Eliot Freidson, *Profession of Medicine: A Study of the Sociology of Applied Knowledge* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1988); J. H. Alston, *A New Look at Infectious Disease* (London: Pitman, 1967); Proger, *Medicated Society*.

atrophies social, psychological, cultural essentialities of a person—but blame some entity that has entered the body of a consumer, for human beings in such societies are but a conformist, standardized consumer.⁵² What is more, modern medicine brings re-emergence of diseases, old and new (drug resistance bacteria, viruses). While the beacon of humanity, i.e. development, brings with it its own *developed* diseases (such as: bilharziasis, sleeping sickness, even malaria).⁵³ Indeed, most of the epidemic diseases, such as, measles, smallpox, cholera, plague, flu, and tuberculosis, are what is called zoonoses, transmitted from domesticated animals—through pests such as mosquitoes, rats, mites, ticks, fleas, and mice, that invariably accompany animals—to humans. Here, mass crowding, which civilizing process inevitably brings, is key to the transmission of these diseases.⁵⁴ In fact, as Scott notes, many traditional societies, such as the *Zomia* for instance, understood such relations and took measure by living and keeping safe distance between themselves and the civilizing states.⁵⁵

Even in terms of environment, traditional society has much to impart to the *developed* about preserving nature. The unlimited consumption and demand of modern developed societies as well as the needs to satisfy them depletes the environment; the Earth is consumed and defiled all in the name of progress. They say nature is to be manipulated for the advantage of human beings, but in this process we as, humans, invariably have to perennially remake and remold ourselves in order to fit into the new

⁵² See, Illich, *Limits to Medicine*.

⁵³ Moser, *Diseases of Medical Progress*; D'Arcy, and Griffin, *Iatrogenic Diseases*; Freidson, *Profession of Medicine*; Proger, *Medicated Society*; Alston, *A New Look at Infectious Disease*.

⁵⁴ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

⁵⁵ Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*, 158-59.

environment we create by sullyng the Earth; in a sense, we will be our own undoing. Modern manufacturing and agriculture defiles the environment and drains the soil of its nutrients. The scientific revolution in agriculture with scientifically enhanced seeds to yield more outputs per given acre only exhausts the soil and organic world by consuming indiscriminant amounts of water in conjunction with increased usage in pesticides, insecticides, fertilizers, energy, etc. What is more, such mode of agricultural practices is proselytized in societies where agriculture is still *primitive* or *traditional*.⁵⁶

Diversity in agricultural practices and societal context in which such practices are applied is of little relevance to the uniform myopic ken of modern scientific man. Uniformity is the crux from which modern man is not allowed to digress, for man is *conditioned* to be so. Thus, for instance, the supposed superiority of, as proselytized by developed world, *monoculture* over *polycropping* as practiced in many traditional societies. In the eyes of modern scientific agriculture specialist, the obvious superiority of organized, systematic monocultures is leaps and bounds ahead of messy, highly disordered polycroppings. The following episode shows the inanity of myopic mindset: the indigenous agriculture system in West Africa, for centuries, has relied on polycropping, where diverse arrays of crop along with equally diverse subspecies have been simultaneously farmed on the same field. Yet, for modern agricultural specialists, polyculture gave the visual effect of messy sloppiness of the natives. The disordered chaos of confusing plantation of numerous crops, to the Western eyes, was a symptom of

⁵⁶ MDGs justified such practices under the platitudinous term ‘sustainability.’ They assume such practices ‘sustain’ and replete the environment. Perversely, they suppose such practices to be superior and more nature friendly than traditional modes of agriculture, which are seen to be primitive. See, J. E. Davies, and W. F. Edmundson, *Epidemiology of DDT* (Mount Kisco, NY: Future, 1972); Keith Mellanby, *Pesticides and Pollution* (New York, NY: Collins, 1967).

society's backwardness and their reliance on primitive techniques. As such, campaign was launched to rid polycroppings in favor of monocultures, which were carried out feverously by colonial administrators and later by the local successors.⁵⁷ However, Western scientific agriculturalists ignored the reason as well as the context—ecological, climate, tropical soil—behind natives' practice of polyculture. Polyculture in the tropics helps preserve the thin layer of soil from erosion, be it through sunlight, rain, or wind. Furthermore, agriculture in this climatic zone is directed according to the timing of rain; thus, polycropping helps farmers protect their crops from too much rain or too little rain by cultivating as many varieties of crops that can best take advantage of local rain and soil conditions.⁵⁸ It offered a variety of combinations not only to meet changing circumstances from season to season as well as within each season, but it also afforded farmers to meet changing ecological and soil conditions. This enabled each farmer to plant crops according to the farmer's individual needs and preferences.⁵⁹

Chaotic polyculture violates methodical systematic cultivation of scientific monoculture, yet behind the seemingly unscientific chaos, there is hidden logic (which is not *hidden* for the natives, because for them it is just 'good sense') which very few astute

⁵⁷ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). Also see, Paul Richards, *Indigenous Agricultural Revolution: Ecology and Food Production in West Africa* (London, UK: Unwin Hyman, 1985).

⁵⁸ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 273-74. Scott also reasons, "The diversity of species naturally occurring in a tropical setting is...consistently greater than the diversity of species in a temperate setting. An acre of tropical forest will have far more species of plants, although fewer individuals of each species, than will an acre of temperate woodland. Thus unmanaged nature in temperate climates *looks* more orderly because it is less diverse, and this may play a role in the visual culture of Westerners. In favoring *polyculture*, the *tropical cultivator* also *imitates nature in his techniques of cultivation* (italics added)." See, Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 273-74.

⁵⁹ Paul Richards, "Ecological Change and the Politics of African Land Use," *African Studies Review*, Vol. 26 (2) (June 1983), 27.

outsiders discovered, as one colonial mycologist describes of Europeans initial reaction to polycropping:

The whole scheme seems to him [i.e., the European] laughable and ridiculous, and in the end he would probably conclude that it is merely foolish to crowd different plants together in this childish way so that they choke each other. Yet if one looks at it more closely there seems a reason for everything. The plants... have been planted at proper distance on hillocks of soil arranged in such a way that when rain falls it does not waterlog the plants, no does it pour off the surface and wash away the fine soil... and although several kinds of plants are growing together they were not sown at the same time nor will they be reaped together: they are rather successive crops planted in such a way that the soil is always occupied and is neither dried up by the sun nor leached out by the rain, as it would be if it were left bare at any time.... This is but one of many examples that might be given that should warn us to be very cautious... before we pass judgement upon native agriculture. The whole method of farming and outlook of the farmer are so entirely new to us that we are strongly tempted to call it foolish merely from an instinctive conservatism.⁶⁰

Therefore, just because cultures still rely on traditional methods of agriculture, it does not mean they are ignorant. Their collected wisdom plays a crucial role in abetting them to sustain their society, and doing so with as little (to no) harm to the natural world as possible. In other words, there is, as Claude Lévi-Strauss once reasoned, an inner logic behind the apparent chaos and disorder in the ways of the native.⁶¹ Furthermore, their ways of farming even help modern societies understand problems of their own: heavy reliance on scientific industrial agriculture that, in turn, depletes the soil of its nutrients. As Stamp notes agricultural practices in Nigeria, where the farmers have developed a scheme for farming which, in principle, cannot be improved or be bettered. These schemes, Stamp argues, afford almost complete protection against loss of soil fertility and

⁶⁰ Howard Jones quoted in Paul Richards, "Ecological Change and the Politics of African Land Use," *African Studies Review* 26 (June 1983): 40.

⁶¹ See, Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Totemism*, trans. Rodney Needham (Boston: Beacon Press, 1963).

soil erosion.⁶² Polycropping defying systematic scientific monoculture can be seen elsewhere. Edgar Anderson notes of such cropping in Nicaragua, where to the eyes of Westerners the garden may seem all at the same time like a beehive, an orchard, a dump heap, a vegetable garden, a medicinal garden, and a compost heap. Yet, Anderson reasons, it is more than what the superficial exterior visual effect might otherwise suggest. This polycropped garden affords foods and vegetables to grow all year round; moreover, the year round vegetation protected the soil from eroding. The thick vegetation provided essential humidity during dry seasons; furthermore, the variety of plants cultivated on the same soil, checked insects, pests, and other diseases.⁶³ On the contrary, monocropping increases the problem with insects, where massive acreages of land are devoted to a single crop. This in turn leads to increase usage as well as dosage in pesticides and herbicides, consequently leading to soil erosions.⁶⁴ An astute reader would have likewise noticed how devotion to single mode of thought atrophies one's understandings of the human world.

Even traditional shifting cultivations, considered by scientific agronomists not only as backward and sloppy but also damaging to the environment, actually help in forest regenerations, preserve essential soil nutrients, and limit soil erosions. Here, swidden plots cultivated in the previous year are let to fallow allowing the soil to restore its fertility, while large trees are allowed to remain; this prevents soil erosion and helps

⁶² L. Dudley Stamp, "Land Utilization and Soil Erosion in Nigeria," *Geographical Review* 28 (January 1983): 32.

⁶³ Edgar Anderson, *Plants, Man, and Life* (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, 1952).

⁶⁴ Rachel Carson, *Silent Spring* (New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin, 1962). The MDGs calls for more market-oriented farming, i.e. large-scale monoculture, in native societies where traditional-subsistence farming, polyculture, is still practiced. See, UN Millennium Project, *Investing in Development*. Therefore, it is no wonder, the usage of pesticides and insecticides have increased and with it the problems of soil erosion.

with the structure of the soil. However, from the Western viewpoint, such practices have backwardness and ignorance written all over—the heaps of brush to be bruned, field half-cleared with branches and stumps with interspersed crops, which are not even sown in *a straight line*.⁶⁵ In other words, traditional practices violate the Westerners' tidy, structured, and scientifically methodical approach. Thus, native practices are stigmatized as ignorance, backward, and dangerous to the environment.

Just because traditional societies are not modern, one should not instantaneously assume they threaten the environment. The Mbuti, for instance, sees the forest to be sacred, their survival depends on the survival of their forest; thus, they work to keep the forest uncut and intact. The forest, for them, is the essence of their very existence; it is the source of everything good, and *good*. They sing, whisper, shout, talk to the forest addressing to it as their father, mother, or both. To Mbuti, the forest is their father and mother, who provide food, shelter, clothing, warmth, and affection.⁶⁶ Indeed, these are the most basic essentialities for the existence of any person or society, especially, if a society (or a person) is not to be undone. Theirs is a world filled with meaning and purpose, where everything has its own entelechy, something that contributes to the world that is beautiful and divine. As such, it is out of one's stubborn attachments to one's blinkered beliefs that make one to view traditional societies as a threat to this organic world. Traditional societies are not interested in the hackneyed term such as

⁶⁵ See, Scott, *Seeing Like a State*; and Tsing, *In the Realm of the Diamond Queen*.

⁶⁶ Turnbull, *The Forest People*, 30-31.

sustainability (which the developed world is so found of); rather they *preserve* and *tend* the nature, they are *one* with the nature.⁶⁷

There is a reason why traditional societies have lasted as long as they have and with them the ability to keep the environment without much destruction or destitution. The destruction of environment is the result of industrial revolution that took place in Europe. Traditional societies have the ability to limit their needs to essential necessities of life, thereby limiting the blatant destruction of their environment. They have occupied the world for most part of human history with little obliteration to the natural milieu, in general. However, modern man, which is but less than a husk compared to the existence of traditional man, has managed to annihilate and bring to ruin the environment upon which life on earth depends. It is therefore hypocritical for modern man, the man of science, to preach to traditional societies how to preserve nature by proselytizing the phantasmagoric benevolence of modern science and its techniques.

One can see from what has been mentioned so far in this section, the context, the polyvalence of society's practices, beliefs matters very little to technicians. Therefore, it is of little wonder that technicians espouse global partnership for development (as stated in the MDGs). Of course, the global partnership is but the mass standardization of various societies, who are there to be brought into the modern world; or to bring parts of the

⁶⁷ Contemporary environmental, feminist, and eco-feminist movements (and theories) are an example of blinkered views of modern society on issues of environmental problems. Most of these theories regurgitate the same arguments they say they oppose. Furthermore, most of their novel ideas are not novel at all, for what they claim as 'novel' arguments on environmental issues are but the ways of life of native societies. In other words, these movements are passing off natives' ways of life as something novel, as a product of their insight. More surprising is the fact that these movements (or theories), especially feminism and eco-feminism, are based on their complete misunderstanding of phenomenology, philosophy of pragmatism, and Freudian ideas.

world not presently under its grasps—be they socially, politically, or economically—to be brought within the system. The target (as justified in the MDGs): to foist rule-based, open, predictable trading and financial system; and good governance. By open, predictable, rule-based financial and trading system, it means the economic system preferred by or utilized in the developed world. While by good governance, it means the democratic system. No doubt, an astute reader will recognize these targets to be very reminiscent of what was discussed in the preceding chapter.⁶⁸ Certainly, MDGs are geared to serve economic ends since according to MDGs: education, hunger, health, environment, gender equality are a means toward economic productivity, growth, and development.⁶⁹ The MDGs blatantly direct the goals to meet economic ends through societal (institutional) changes, as is evident in the professed *universalized* objectives.

However, simplifications of societal reality, by universalizing human conditions as evident in MDGs, are only to be expected because it is rooted in scientific rationality.

⁶⁸ Consult Chapter Two of the present study.

⁶⁹ See, UN Millennium Project, *Investing in Development*. Note how the rationale behind MDGs is analogous to works in the previous chapter: directing every societal activity for economic purpose. For instance, Malinowski (1944) and Parsons (1951) both saw economy to be indispensable for scientific study of society; such reasoning arises from the fact that they assume every human event or activity is done for economic purpose or is economic in nature. This is why Easterly not only affirms “market instincts are hardwired into human nature (2006, 74),” but also espouses “what we are good at” is determined by “market exchange,” viz. every human activity is economic in nature or for economic purpose (2006, 73). Or for Rostow (1960) to note, every society occupies and goes through “stages of growth,” where societal activities are concentrated to push each society to enter higher economic stages, with each stage being better than the last. Differently put, every societal activity is directed for economic purpose, i.e. stages of growth. While North (2005) maintains, societies can be developed by instituting new incentives and pay-offs into the existing societal structure; he thereby assumes societal activities to be synonymous with economic purpose. Collier (2007), on the other hand, also believes betterment of society depends on economic growth; hence, he argues, societies should concentrate on economic activities—trade, capital investments, technological skills, institutional charters, etc.

The methodologies of scientific rationality are an utter giveaway to the expected outcome of *universality*. Take, for instance, the essence of scientific rationality, i.e. methodology of scientific analysis (this example is extremely relevant and fitting, as one will see). The process of carrying out an inquiry in a scientific manner requires a strict procedure: offer proposal for the study, state the research question, postulate some hypotheses, elucidate the methodologies, state the variables, review the literature, state the novelty of the study (which is being undertaking), cite empirical evidences, how hypotheses are to be tested, *generality* of the findings, significances of the study, not to mention the avoidance of first person pronouns, such as I, Me, etc. because objective studies cannot allow any subjectivity. In other words, there are strict dogmatic rules from which one cannot deviate if one's inquiry is to be deemed scholarly or scientific. If any of the strict rules are bypassed or ignored, then the study is subjective, neither scholarly nor scientific. This is to say, every kind of inquiry must be carried out in the *same uniform* manner, regardless of the applicability of the methods/rules to the subject of inquiry. Here, adherence to dogmatic methods, not understanding of phenomena, is privileged. When phenomena are analyzed by following the *same strict uniform* methods, it is only obvious for scholarships of development (or social sciences, in general) to call for social changes that disseminate *sameness* into every culture. And just as scientific rationality cannot tolerate any tangent from the *uniformity* of its methods, so can no society differ from the *uniformity* which developmental progress invariably brings. Indeed, the issue of *standardization* is a matter of course in every aspect of the developed world, from standardized education, examination, health care, etc. to standardize culture—thereby, eliminating diversity under platitudinous terms: country or nation-state. Certainly, one of

the ubiquitous steps promptly undertaken in any development analysis is the facile generalization of traditional societies, from which technicians go on to draw a picture, which is but a figment of their phantasmagoric society, where diverse aspects of society are relegated under the term *ceteris paribus* or put under brackets. The animated human aspects of society, jettisoned. What the nineteenth century French writer, Alexandre Dumas, speaks of seems a far cry to technicians: “All generalizations are dangerous, even this one.”⁷⁰ Hence, one can see here how universalization becomes the logical outcome of MDGs.⁷¹ This generalization is only the manifestation of developed society’s mindsets: “Present-day industrial society organizes life around commodities. Our market-intensive societies measure material progress by the increase in the volume and variety of commodities produced. And taking our cue from this sector, we measure social progress by the distribution of access to these commodities.”⁷² Without doubt, MDGs measure the *traditional* using commodities as the standard by which development, modernity, civilization, or human development (as indicated by the facile United Nations Human Development Index, HDI) is computed. One will find goals itemized in MDGs to be a

⁷⁰ Alexandre Dumas quoted in Colin Swatridge, *Oxford Guide to Effective Argument and Critical Thinking* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2014), 153.

⁷¹ No doubt, technicians may here argue, there is no point in understanding traditional societies because theories, they have at their disposal, are derived from a series of commonalities that holds true for almost every society. To this one can reply: of course, there is bound to be some commonalities but these commonalities are those aspects of society which, for instance, tell nothing about what makes them a Hopi, an Azande, a Mindoro, a Nuer, a Hutu, a Pygmy, a Bedouin, etc. It is obvious societies will have those superficial elements where quantifiable commonalities can be found: such as numbers of population, male to female ratio, number of farmers, etc.; but these are only facile *external* aspects of society that tell nothing about the more *intrinsic* features—such as: myths, relations to gods, memories, customs, etc.—that make them unique and thus make them a Hopi, a Nuer, or a Pygmy. These intrinsic features cannot be measured nor can they be generalized or put into a formula.

⁷² Ivan Illich, *The Right to Useful Unemployment* (London, UK: Marion Boyars Publishers, 1978), 23.

measure of how well societies have integrated into modern market-intensive system. So, technicians take their *cue*, for development, from the “distribution of access to” the market-intensive commodities. Everything is tailored for economic purpose.⁷³

Development, for MDGs, is one-dimensional, like the rationality it arises from.

Transmigration in Indonesia

Let us now examine what happens when *universalized* human conditions are put into praxis for development. For this purpose, we will be examining two episodes of

⁷³ Jeffrey Sachs in his recent work, *The Age of Sustainable Development*, regurgitates the same arguments which he laid out in his previous works, *The End of Poverty* and UNMDGs. In his recent work, he utilizes the same platitudinous generalization, he utilized in his previous studies, except in this case he changes the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). In other words, there is no change in the structure as well as in the manner of his thought. He continues to follow the same line of reasoning, scientific rationality, substantiated by his generalization of societies and their needs. He maintains the importance of holistic framework that brings together economic, social, and environmental objectives. Yet, his reasoning for holistic framework is negated by his emphasis on the holistic framework as a means to attain economic ends, which the SDGs are the acute instances of such. He, for instance, makes the same fuss about how poverty can be ended by 2030 or that development can be abetted through universal education (of course, ‘poverty’ and ‘education’ defined from the lens of the developed world). He even reduces Africa to resource by reasoning that the continent is a fecund place for investment with regard to future sustainable or green technologies (such reductionism by Sachs reminds one of resource grabbing, profit seeking spirits of the colonizer in Conrad’s *The Heart of Darkness*). The numerous societies are thus swept under the power of future investments and returns. Furthermore, he haughtily asserts the SDGs to be good concepts to transform the course of the societies, globally, and that they (i.e. the rich societies) must work to attain the targets of the SDGs through investment in *human, social, and capital resources*. This is to say, it matters not what affects the means or tools will have on societies so long as the generalized SDGs targets are attained. See, Jeffrey Sachs, *The Age of Sustainable Development* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2015). Living societies are, hence, bulldozed to realize the generalized goals that attempt to make societies uniform by changing societies’ existing social structures to accommodate the demands of modernity and development. Such fantasized arguments are possible precisely because Sachs implicitly assumes the whole of humanity to be driven by one single mode of thought and that every society wants or desires the *same* things, lifestyles, material goods, societal institutions, and so forth. In other words, societies existing beyond the favored system should be brought into the system. Thereby, making societies uniform.

development: Transmigration in Indonesia and compulsory Villagization in Tanzania. However, it would be helpful for the reader to note the following qualification: the two examples are of interest to this inquiry only to the extent that they afford better means to show the acme of scientific rationality in development—from its rationality to its schemes to its practices. Furthermore, these are not comprehensive analysis of the cases because numerous other scholarships have done a cogent task in their exposition of the two episodes; hence, it would be superfluous, pertaining to this inquest as well as in the broader contexts of its place in scholarships concerning Tanzania and Indonesia, to regurgitate another exhaustive examination.

Take, for instance, the largest transmigration program in human history undertaken in the name of *development* in Indonesia.⁷⁴ Certainly, the program of transmigration is not the sole idea of the Indonesian government, but rather it arises from the colonial periods. Since 1905, the Dutch began moving population from densely populated inner islands to outer islands for plantation purposes.⁷⁵ This program continued even after Indonesia's independence from the Dutch. The validation remained the same, however: it was to reduce the pressure of over-population and unemployment in the inner Islands of Java and Bali.⁷⁶

During the second half of the 1900s, the plan became relatively more urgent. Here, the plan was to move millions of landless poor from central Indonesian islands of

⁷⁴ Of course, this event is largely forgotten. Hence majority of development scholarships (even at academic level) are bound to ignore such human tragedies. This mass atrocity is even largely ignored in universities claiming to specialized in development studies.

⁷⁵ J. M. Hardjono, *Transmigration in Indonesia* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1977); Colin MacAndrews, "Transmigration in Indonesia: Prospects and Problems," *Asian Survey* 18 (May 1978): 458-72.

⁷⁶ Hardjono, *Transmigration in Indonesia*.

Java, Madura, Lombok, and Bali to sparsely populated outer islands: West Papua, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Flores, Ceram, Halmahera, and Timor. The problem, however, was its *assumptions*: assumed the outer islands to be underpopulated and underdeveloped, when in fact they were home to numerous indigenous societies that have developed and adapted themselves to a sophisticated, yet, interlacing relation with their prevailing environmental circumstances. What transmigration did was, it isolated and deprived indigenous societies from their ancestral lands, hence ruining their cultures. They were forced to participate in development projects, thereby, destroying the whole basis of their existing ways of life.⁷⁷ It is not surprising then Western educated technicians, who were indoctrinated or who bought into the scientific mode of thought, filled the departments responsible for such *abstract* and *uniform* understanding of realities of the outer islands. Technicians of development, in this case, *assumed away*⁷⁸—because it is easier to negate various societal complexities by *assuming* or enclosing under the term *ceteris paribus*—diverse cultural contexts of the outer islands, thus, giving an apodictic generalized view: these islands are all the *same*, underdeveloped and underpopulated. By taking a scientific approach to the program, technicians *assumed away* animated diverse cultures hitherto populating the outer islands. Indeed, such generalization discarded the fact that Indonesia has nearly 300 distinct ethnic groups, each with its own distinct culture.⁷⁹ The result: indigenous people were utterly dispossessed from their ancestral lands, resources, and

⁷⁷ The Ecologist, “Open letter to Mr. Clausen, Retiring President of the World Bank, and Mr. Conable, President Elect,” *The Ecologist* 16, no. 2-3 (1986): 58-60; MacAndrews, “Transmigration in Indonesia.”

⁷⁸ Assumptions play a vital role in any scientific rationality. Certainly, one could argue assumptions—which almost all development studies and schemes are—are a lazy way to carry out any inquiry.

⁷⁹ MacAndrews, “Transmigration in Indonesia.”

livelihoods. It also created ethnic tensions between the indigenous and transmigrant communities. The indigenous peoples of the outer islands became a minority in their own land; robbed not only of their land, food, and shelter, they also became victims of mass atrocities. Furthermore, they were forced to abandon their traditional ways of life and integrate themselves into the transmigrant settlements in order to *conform* to the national goals of development and progress.⁸⁰ The development project was also more or less an operation to carry out mass ethnocide against indigenous people with the sole aim of eliminating ethnic diversity.⁸¹

The project afforded the chance to get rid of indigenous populations along with their cultures. These societies were seen as isolated, backward and alien people, simply because they were not integrated into the mainstream Indonesian society. Under the guise of development, full-scale annihilation of cultural diversities was launched. The reader will find, as we move forward, even the rhetoric used to justify the cleansing of diversity is in parity with polemics utilized by MDGs as well as in works examined in the previous

⁸⁰ Robin J. Pryor, ed., *Migration and Development in South East Asia* (Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979); G. W. Jones, and H. V. Richter, eds., *Population Resettlement Programmes in South East Asia* (Australian National University: Canberra, 1982); Marcus Colchester, "Banking on Disaster: International Support for Transmigration," *The Ecologist* 16, no. 2-3 (1986a): 61-70; and *The Ecologist*, "Open letter," 58-60.

⁸¹ Robin Osborne, *Indonesia's Secret War* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1985); and Carmel Budiardjo, "The Politics of Transmigration," *The Ecologist* 16, no. 2-3 (1986): 111-117. The following statement clearly sums up the uniformity of developmental progress: "[W]e are *one* nation, the Indonesian nation; we have *one* native country, Indonesia; *one* language, the Indonesian language. By way of Transmigration, we will try to realise what has been pledged, to integrate all the ethnic groups into *one* nation, the Indonesian nation... *The different ethnic groups will in the long run disappear because of integration... and there will be one kind of man...* (italics added)" Indonesian Minister of Transmigration cited in *The Ecologist*, "Open letter," 59. This really summarizes the negation of differences and diversity into one undifferentiated, uninteresting entity which scientific rationality strives to attain and *attains: sameness*.

chapter. As an internal document from the Department of Social Affairs (Government of Indonesia) justified the programme by stating, development is necessary since indigenous societies are devastating the environment with their primitive farming techniques, these techniques pose danger to ecological equilibrium; their religion is still animistic; their diets are inadequate; their health conditions are below the accepted norm; they lack any kinds of *formal* education; they are illiterate; their arts and cultures are predominantly magico-religious in character; they still depend on *barter* system and *monetary* form of exchange is largely *unknown* to them; they are ignorant of state's or government's existence and have no sense of duties as citizens; and because they largely depend on the natural environment, they must be brought into the mainstream society so as to enable state's administrative control over them, i.e. brought from *illegible* to the *legible* system.⁸² Note the parallel between the above polemics and those in the preceding chapter and previous section. The same ubiquitous trite dictions are used to illustrate the cultural inferiority of the indigenous in order to warrant the uniformity of development.

Under such pretexts, the social and economic organization of tribal societies was to be structured according to “rational” and “modern” principles. This meant resettling them from their ancestral lands and dwelling places to government assigned settlements which were linked to national administration by roads. These resettlements were carried out forcibly and against the will of indigenous groups.⁸³ The project legitimized the resettlements by arguing: it is done to prevent shifting cultivations, decrease soil erosions,

⁸² Memorandum accompanying 1979-1984 Five Year Plan, Department of Social Affairs, Government of Indonesia cited in Marcus Colchester, “Unity and Diversity: Indonesia Policy towards Tribal Peoples,” *The Ecologist* 16, no. 2-3 (1986b): 89-98. Also see, Robin Hanbury-Tenison, *A Pattern of Peoples* (London: Angus and Robertson, 1975).

⁸³ Hanbury-Tenison, *A Pattern of Peoples*.

increase soil fertilities, reduce loss of valuable timber from non-commercial logging, employ unskilled laborers in the logging industry, increase education and standards of living, facilitate development, etc.⁸⁴ Moreover, traditional rituals, ceremonies, as well as curing practices were banned in order to undermine indigenous customs, thus creating the perception of cultural inferiority. Their ancestral religious practices embedded in the very fabric of their society were banned; in their place monotheism was proselytized—especially giving significant privilege to foreign missionaries.⁸⁵ Tribal societies, such as the Dani in West Papua, were forced to be clothed, their hairs shorn; anyone who disobeyed was imprisoned. Modern education was introduced to emasculate traditional customs, and children were forcibly taken to schools.⁸⁶

Surely, it may seem methodically tidy to assume away or put under brackets all the complexities of indigenous world, in addition, “rational” and “modern” principles may seem to succinctly illustrate the present as well as the future of the natives; yet, reality has the tendency to always mock at abstract systematic rationality of the human mind put down on sheets of paper, journals, books, or reduced to statistics. Evident from the development project is its aims to sanitize anything different, for *differences* are anathema to the uniformity of scientific principles. Anything different is an eyesore for the scientific minds, it reminds the man of science that the world is not like they imagine it to be; so to defy nature, because they cannot accept the world *as it is*, they try to

⁸⁴ Gerard Persoon, “From Affluence to Poverty: The “Development” of Tribal Isolated Peoples,” in *Poverty and Interventions: Cases from Developing Countries*, eds., Leem Boer, Dieke Bujis, and Benno Galjart (Leiden, Netherlands: The University of Leiden, 1985).

⁸⁵ K. G. Heider, *Grand Valley Dani: Peaceful Warriors* (New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1979); Colchester, “Unity and Diversity”; and Persoon, “From Affluence to Poverty.”

⁸⁶ Heider, *Grand Valley Dani*.

manipulate and change the world so that it would be transformed into their fantasized *idea*. In trying to transform reality into a systematic, un-chaotic, certain world, they reaffirm in themselves the validity of science, viz. it is a process to re-establish their faith in the illusive truths or validities of scientific rationality in face of the majestic, non-conformist human world. Therefore, indigenous communities are forcefully brought under the grasp of modernity; it is not enough for these communities to be left alone *as they are* and leave them to dwell in the innocence of their natural world. For technicians, such communities nullify the *sameness* of progress, thus traditional societies must be brought under the legible modern system.

Moreover, technicians cannot fathom the possibility of societies wanting to live outside rationalized civilization. James Scott insightfully shows how societies intentionally shy away from civilizing process. The *Zomia*, for instance, stretching from Northeastern India to the Central Highlands of Vietnam traversing five Southeast Asian states and four provinces in China, is an illustrative example of such societies. These hill societies, over the course of two millennia, have been fleeing and going *out-of-the-way* of civilizing processes such as conscription, epidemic, slavery, warfare, taxes, corvée labor, etc. Furthermore, their *oral* culture, as a means to keep civilized society at arm's length, makes them an anathema to the uniform and *legible* (or *writing*) processes of civilization. And because these societies could not be brought into the *system* of civilization as they are, they are, therefore, stigmatized as *primitive, barbarian, or raw*.⁸⁷ No wonder, the transmigration project likewise aimed at acculturating indigenous communities. This was

⁸⁷ Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

done by resettling them into new settlements which were connected to national administration by roads, i.e. to bring them into legible system.

The resettled communities, however, experienced marked decline in their nutritional standards; their health likewise deteriorated because these hitherto isolated communities were introduced to non-indigenous diseases. The resettled communities were moved from their relatively disease-free areas to malarial infested zones. Even the claim to increase self-sufficiency for the indigenous was a way to make them dependent on the market-cash system, which they were unfamiliar with; they, therefore, became *corvée* labor in plantations in order to procure cash.⁸⁸ The indigenous were resettled in cookie-cutter housings with a plot of land in perfectly symmetrical rows, like the numerous mass produced cookie-cutter suburban areas in the developed world, signifying the systematic, methodical scientific approach to development. However, technicians in their infinite scientific ken failed to consider everyday realities of the natives, as Colchester elucidates, “Such housing is made of non-local materials which are provided initially by government, but which can subsequently be repaired with materials only available through the cash economy.” As such, natives who were previously independent were now made dependent on market cash economy. Thus, “The houses are designed according to a model of social organization that conflicts directly with traditional social structures.... In fact, such modern dwellings frequently provide less effective protection against the elements and against insect-borne diseases than the traditional houses.”⁸⁹

⁸⁸ Colchester, “Unity and Diversity.”

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 95, 95-96. What is more, settlers were forced to dwell in houses designed for nuclear families. This is because traditional long-houses, hitherto utilized, were considered by technicians as unhygienic, uncivilized. It was argued such traditional forms of housing only encouraged sexual promiscuity, sexual orgy, and low morals. See,

Indigenous lives and their cultural identities were thus sanitized; new realities were imposed—such as monetary system of exchange—by making them a factor in continuous regurgitation of the nouveau social system.

It never occurred to technicians that, may be, traditional societies are content with the way they are; that they do not place importance in individual competitions over communal harmony; that being one with their community, with their environment (nature) is of outmost primacy than material benefits; that nature provides them enough of everything essential for sustenance of their society such as fruits, wild-games, plants, nuts, subsistence-agriculture, etc.; that sustaining and handing one's society to future generations is much more important than seeking material prosperity; that passing on one's societal *subjective* values, myths, legends, memories are most essential to them than passing on baleful rationalities of science; that passing one's ancient myths, one's accumulated wisdom is one's *Gift* to the next generation is much more important than welcoming future generations into a world deprived of meaning. Studies reveal that in many traditional societies—Native Americans, Eskimos, Pygmies in Congo, Nilotic Nuers, Dayaks in Indonesia, Aborigines in Australia, Maoris in New Zealand, Ilongots in Philippines, among many others—passing their world with all their ancestral myths and accumulated wisdoms are regarded one of the most significant responsibilities for any generation, for such knowledge gives meaning to their world and welcomes future generations into a world filled with human love, meaning, purpose, and significance.⁹⁰

Hanbury-Tenison, *A Pattern of Peoples*; Heider, *Grand Valley Dani*; Colchester, "Unity and Diversity."

⁹⁰ Turnbull, *The Human Cycle*; Renato Rosaldo, *Culture and Truth* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1993); Konrad Lorenz, *Civilized Man's Eight Deadly Sins* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc, 1974); Brody, *Maps and Dreams*; Price, *Nutrition and*

This is a *gift* to be passed from one generation to the next; it sustains communal harmony; provides meaning as well as dignity to every single person in the community; accords each person in a society to live a full, frugal life. When such essential aspects of society are ignored because they are considered irrational, subjective, or cannot empirically be tested in a laboratory, scrap of paper, or sophisticated calculating machineries, one is completely discounting the pith of each society.

Moreover, because features of the traditional world cannot be measured nor generalized into a formula, what goes amiss is, “The essence of preindustrial societies is their variety and local adaptation. Each is tied to a specific habitat and has evolved its own cultural and behavioral expression. The wide variety of resulting human social forms is a response to an equal variety of habitats, each with a set of distinctive environmental constraints.”⁹¹ These local adaptations which are specific to certain habitat cannot be measured; each habitat provides its own resources, advantages, and hindrances which in turn shape the norms, mores, or customs of each society. Such richness of cultural diversity can never be entertained by technicians because, for them, the interesting human world in its diversities must be eliminated into a dull monotonous world of science.

Certainly, for technicians, cultural complexities or contexts are too particular to succinctly fit into their scientific projects: development. The result of such forced development is the utter cultural collapse. Torn from their socio-cultural fabric, that hitherto gave societies a sense of meaning to their lives, societies begin to wither from within. The result is the growing sense of anomie, sense of personal alienation, as well as

Physical Degeneration; and E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1969).

⁹¹ Heyneman, “Development and Disease,” 6.

destruction of personal intrinsic values and self-respect leading, in the other islands, to societal breakdown: increase in drunkenness, cultural collapse, prostitutions, etc.⁹² Here, simple platitudinous assumptions such as outer islands are empty, underdeveloped, less man-to-land ratio, employment, productivity, progress, development, and so forth easily neglected actual human expressions. In the project's efforts to be *practical* (highly emphasized among the academics, professionals, and experts), human actualities are relegated as something insignificant, or, as fervently advocated by Malinowski, "adventitious and fortuitous happenings."⁹³ This is because understanding complex realities only baffles and confuses technicians, since they are *conditioned* to be myopic as well as *conditioned* to suspect anything which cannot be quantified. Thus, the empty underdeveloped lands, used to justify the transmigration program, belonged to numerous *animated* indigenous ethnic groups. This meant dispossessing natives from their ancestral lands; after all, what can the natives do, as large-scale military operations were launched to disinfect lands from their rightful owners.⁹⁴

There is a difference in values between those implementing or concocting development projects and those whose actual lives are affected by them. For instance, for the indigenous groups in West Papua, one of the outer islands designated for transmigration program, their lands were not just a commodity or a resource to be exploited and used for the advantage of man, rather their lands had profound significance in their lives: the lands were sacred, something to be cared for so as to sustain their

⁹² Colchester, "Unity and Diversity."

⁹³ Malinowski, *A Scientific Theory of Culture*, 5.

⁹⁴ See, Arnold Kohen, and John Taylor, *An Act of Genocide: Indonesia's Invasion of East Timor* (London: Tapol, 1979); Carmel Budiardjo, and Liem Soei Liong, *The War Against East Timor* (London: Zed Books, 1985); Osborne, *Indonesia's Secret War*.

society, they gave meaning, a purpose to their life, they were the *singularity* of their existence, they were the apotheosis of their culture and history. As is made clear by Colchester, “For the Papuans, land is a sacred good, held in trust by the living both for the dead and for those yet to be. For the invaders of their territories, however, land is merely a commodity, a material good to be given and exchanged like any other.”⁹⁵ The Papuans (i.e. Melanesians), like other indigenous groups of the other outer islands, did put-up resistances against transmigration, for they were opposing to maintain their very cultural identity and existence: “It is almost a spiritual war against the material world. The Melanesian is still largely a spiritual beings, and thinks of worldly things as not as important as spiritual things and elements. Should his way of thinking be reversed, so that he values worldly things more?”⁹⁶ Questions such as this pose no concern for technicians or experts, because to consider such a question would only substantiate the fantasy of scientific rationality and its applicability in answering *actual* human concerns. Hence, little thought is given to concerns of *actual* lives in the *actual* world; and to decontaminate one’s mind of real human questions, one firmly holds true to abstraction of the actual world as well as quantify, as much as possible, aspects of person, society,

⁹⁵ Colchester “The Struggle for Land: Tribal People in the face of Transmigration Program,” *The Ecologist* 16, no. 2-3 (1986c): 109. Colchester elucidates on the ethnocide of Papuan culture, where they were dispossessed from their lands. The transmigration sites, where new settlements were built, belonged to numerous ethnic groups. Still, for indigenous Papuans, these lands were much more than *land*, they weren’t *resources*, rather they were sacred, the nucleus of their existence. The lands were their past, present, and future; they were there to be taken care of, to be preserved for the future generations.

⁹⁶ William T. Wawn, *The South Sea Islanders and the Queensland Labour Trade* (London, UK: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1893), 553. It is exactly this spiritual view of the Melanesian life that Jared Diamond (in his *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*) fails to consider when a Melanesian, one by the name of Yali, asked him “Why is it that you white people developed so much cargo and brought it to New Guinea, but we black people had little cargo of our own?”

and culture, thereby reducing them to impersonal variables or concepts under pretexts of *practical-ness* or *pragmatism*.

The disasters against indigenous peoples were augmented by the fact that the development program designed to increase transmigrants' living standards became an utter failure. Their lives actually became worse and their living standards reduced. The transmigrants had sold what they had in their home towns prior to their migration in the hopes that they will (as promised by the government) be provided with homes to live in and plots of land to farm on, none of which were adequately fulfilled by the state; what is more, the program only increased landless farmers, which was opposite to what the project had intended—reduce landlessness and unemployment.⁹⁷ Technicians assumed since the outer islands were underdeveloped and underpopulated, these islands would be fecund for agriculture. And since migrants will be given plots of land to farm on, this will, in turn, increase their livelihoods and living standards. Nevertheless, because technicians, too keen on scientific schemes, emphasized abstract methods and *assumed away* complex realities of the outer islands, they failed not only in recognizing the delicacy of the soil in the tropical rain forests, but also failed to consider Indonesia's two monsoon seasons, which any Indonesian can tell (just as any sub-continent Indians can tell the yearly monsoon), that play a key role in determining the nature of Indonesia's ecology—types of soil, climate, trees, forests, plants, crops, etc. Modern technologies can augment man's power over nature, but it cannot make the nature yield to what it does not fancy. The plots of land given to migrants were unsuitable for farming, which were made

⁹⁷ Mariel Otten, "'Transmigrasi': From Poverty to Bare Subsistence," *The Ecologist* 16, no. 2-3 (1986): 71-76; and Colchester, "Banking on Disaster"; R. M. Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985); Hardjono, *Transmigration in Indonesia*; MacAndrews, "Transmigration in Indonesia."

all the more arduous by wild animals because new lands being cleared for transmigration sites were homes to numerous wild animals. This was not helped by torrential tropical rainfalls⁹⁸ because *technicians* in their infinite ken disregarded local ecology and climate, which were regarded as tertiary to the primacy of their statistical figures. The lives of the migrants, thus, actually became worse.⁹⁹

One could, certainly, argue this developmental scheme was undertaken by a developing state; hence they are to be blamed, not the developed world. This may be so, but it does not make up for the fact that by the end of 1985 “Western Governments had collectively poured nearly \$800 million into the programme.”¹⁰⁰ How does one justify the

⁹⁸ Charles Secrett, “The Environmental Impact of Transmigration,” *The Ecologist* 16, no. 2-3 (1986): 77-88.

⁹⁹ The transmigrants, it was argued, will, *theoretically*, be given plots of land which they could own; however, *even in theory*, it was never intended for these migrants to end their cycle of poverty, rather it was intended only to sustain them at subsistence level, growing only basic or sustainable crops. See, Koentjaraningrat, *Javanese Culture*; M. Oey, “Transmigration Programme in Indonesia,” in *Population Resettlement Programmes in Southeast Asia*, eds., G. W. Jones and H. V. Richter (Canberra: Australia National University, 1982). Still, the transmigrants, in *actuality*, were left without plots of land and settlement housing units promised. These transmigrants faced starvation due to lack of arable lands and unfavorable soil conditions; the heavy machineries—utilized for logging, road building—not only destroyed the fragile environment, but it also damaged the delicate soil. Migrants who decided to return to their native places were put under custody to prevent them from spreading negative reports about the project. When this did not work, the transmigrants weren’t even allowed to return to their native place. Soon, the government began to blame transmigrants for failures of the project and accused them of being *lazy* and who were only looking for ways to be *spoon-fed*. See, Otten, ““Transmigrasi””; and Charles Secrett, “The Environmental Impact of Transmigration,” *The Ecologist* 16, no. 2-3 (1986): 77-88.

¹⁰⁰ Colchester, “Banking on Disaster,” 61. Certainly, the amount of money \$800 million in today’s term may seem relative insignificant; nevertheless, it is essential to keep in mind that, for instance, in terms of pre-1985, this amount is significant and if one takes into account the exchange rate (again in pre-1985 terms) in relation to Indonesian Rupiah, it amounts to a considerable sum; after all, the aid money—from various international states and aid agencies (be they in US Dollar, British Pound, Deutsche Mark, Dutch Guilder, etc.)—had to be exchanged into local currency for it to be used for the project.

support and money poured into the project by the developed world? Why did the World Bank, one of the leading backers of the program, along with United Nations Development Program (UNDP) (currently known for its MDGs), USAID, numerous other NGOs, and other developed societies—West Germany, Netherlands, France, United Kingdom—keep on supporting and financing the project even when there was evidence of the Indonesian government carrying out mass atrocities and ethnocide against its own indigenous people?¹⁰¹ Furthermore, the idea of transmigration did not just come to the Indonesians one fine midsummer’s eve; rather the idea “has its roots in the ‘Kolonisatie’ policy of the Dutch Colonial Government. The Dutch viewed a large part of the population of Java as constituting “surplus people.” It was argued that resettling this “surplus people” elsewhere would improve social and economic conditions on the island by relieving the pressure on land.”¹⁰² This framework of transmigration was inherited by the nationalist leaders, who were mostly Dutch educated, after their independence; it first announced a program to move 48 million people over the period of 35 years, this grand scheme was later reduced, or, rather, made palatable by deciding to move two million people every five years from Java to the outer islands.¹⁰³ The same argument was used by the Indonesian government to justify transmigration of millions of peoples; this was vehemently supported by developed societies and agencies of development: such as, the

¹⁰¹ Kohen, and Taylor, *An Act of Genocide*; Budiardjo, and Liong, *The War Against East Timor*; Osborne, *Indonesia’s Secret War*.

¹⁰² Otten, “‘Transmigrasi’,” 71.

¹⁰³ Budiardjo, “The Politics of Transmigration.”

World Bank, UNDP, and others.¹⁰⁴ In lights of such material, it would be hypocritical to solely blame the developing society.¹⁰⁵

Villagization in Tanzania

Let us consider another episode where the actuality of human societies is discarded in the name of development: the compulsory villagization or *Ujamaa* in Tanzania. During the late 1960s, Tanzania decided to embark on a radical road towards development with villagization as the center piece of the whole project. The compulsory villagization was an attempt to permanently settle Tanzania's largely scattered traditional settlements. This was done by bringing the country's largely scattered population into planned villages with planned local economies, layouts, and housings.¹⁰⁶ Indeed, for Nyerere, then the President of Tanzania, villagization was essential for the development of his country; in his words "To Live in Villages is an Order."¹⁰⁷ The hand-hoes technology, he zealfully declared, will no longer satisfy the country's needs for development: the aim was to increase agricultural production for exports utilizing modern technologies, ploughs, fertilizers, tractors. Hence, to use modern tractors for cultivation, he reasoned, villagization was absolutely essential because without these machineries all

¹⁰⁴ Pryor, *Migration and Development in South East Asia*; Jones, and Richter, *Population Resettlement Programmes in Southeast Asia*; Kohen, and Taylor, *An Act of Genocide*; Budiardjo, and Liong, *The War Against East Timor*; The Ecologist, "Open letter"; Colchester, "Banking on Disaster"; Oey, "Transmigration Programme in Indonesia."

¹⁰⁵ Dr. Marek Steedman has most astutely pointed out the policy (transmigration program as well as the villagization in Tanzania) cuts across various regime types—as in the case of Indonesia: colonial, communist, authoritarian to contemporary regimes—for the same purpose: development. Indeed, this illustrates the primacy of scientific rationality. Marek Steedman, in discussion with the author, February 2015.

¹⁰⁶ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

¹⁰⁷ Julius K. Nyerere quoted in Henry Bernstein, "Notes on State and Peasantry: The Tanzanian Case," *Review of African Political Economy* 21 (May-September 1981): 45.

attempts for development will come to not.¹⁰⁸ To deliver his people from, as Nyerere saw, the “life of death,”¹⁰⁹ a standardized order was imposed, thereby disregarding the actualities of his society. For technicians, who carried out Nyerere’s visions, it was simply a matter of manipulating peasants to extract surplus food for the purpose of feeding the cities and for exports.¹¹⁰ On paper, technical designs with numbers were simple, neat, and ordered, they were neither complicated nor messy. Reality, it seemed, was as ordered or technical as represented on papers and in the technicians’ mind. Mentality such as these, on the other hand, encouraged the belief in the superiority of European and American *experts*, mechanical power, and technological solutions to problems.¹¹¹

The blanket villagization writes off societal circumstances *en masse*. Tanzania, for instance, has four climatic zones: wet savanna, dry savanna, coastal climate, and highland climate. Under these, rather, unforgiving, inauspicious ecological milieu, Tanzanian peasants for centuries developed diverse settlements as well as particular sets

¹⁰⁸ Julius K. Nyerere, *Freedom and Unity* (Dar es Salaam: Oxford University Press, 1966), 183-84.

¹⁰⁹ Julius K. Nyerere quoted in Andrew Coulson, “Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania,” *Review of African Political economy* 4 (September-December 1977): 74.

¹¹⁰ Andrew Coulson, “Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania,” *Review of African Political economy* 4 (September-December 1977).

¹¹¹ Coulson, “Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania.” Beliefs such as these only perpetuated or gave new life to the old colonial policies in Tanzania. It also created a belief on the correctness of technical prescriptions and military like organizations, where the population was compelled—by means of threat and imprisonment—to carry out agricultural practices supposed to be for their own good. See, Coulson, “Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania.” The villagization was essentially a modernizing strategy to raise agricultural yields through new improved packages (such as scientifically enhanced seeds) and practices (such as use of heavy agricultural machineries), greater specializations, developing infrastructures, technical coordination, economies of scale, etc. See, Bernstein, “Notes on State and Peasantry.”

of agricultural practices and animal husbandries applicable to their pertinent climatic conditions. These skills and practices enabled them to make the best out of given conditions using hoe, axe, machete (panga) for their tools; and family labor along with accumulated wisdom passed down for centuries to realize wherewithal of their existence. This is why, for example, perennial crops were cultivated in areas with well-distributed and ample rainfall, while annual or drought resistance crops were cultivated in areas with lower or shorter rainfall with prolonged dry seasons.¹¹² However, technicians discounted such diverse ecological conditions; instead they concocted the imposition of *uniform* reality on every community regardless of its relevance. Yet, for technicians, there is nothing *uniform* application of scientifically enhanced seeds, fertilizers, modern machineries, and scientific minds can't solve or overcome.¹¹³

The actual living circumstances of local population mattered very little to technicians, who designed the project. As long as the design looked neat on paper in accordance with scientific rationality, technicians gave little concern over the real world applications of their design. What an English economist, Ely Devons, said in a meeting certainly rings true: "If economists wished to study the horse, they wouldn't go and look

¹¹² John Shao, "The Villagization Program and the Disruption of the Ecological Balance in Tanzania," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 20, no. 2 (1986): 219-39. As such, areas with 20 or less inches of rainfall, such as the Masai steppe, are generally unsuitable for agricultural, hence these areas are used for grazing, while areas with 30-40 inches of rainfall, such as the Sukumland, where rain is plenty, wide varieties of crop are grown year round. See, Shao, "The Villagization Program."

¹¹³ Scientifically enhanced hybridized maize seeds, which were said to yield 3-4 times more, brought to replace local seeds were less resistance to pests and lack of rain. Compared to the introduced hybridized seeds, the traditional varieties such as sorghum or millets were better in resisting pests and lack of rain; these crops were sturdy and were better suited to local conditions. See, Zaki Ergas, "Why did the Ujamaa Policy Fail? – Towards a Global Analysis," *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 18 (September 1980): 387-410.

at horses. They'd sit in their studies and say to themselves, 'What would I do if I were a horse?'"¹¹⁴ The technicians, as disciples of economics, could not be bothered to experience for themselves the actual societal realities as well as diverse ecological conditions affecting traditional patterns of settlements and agricultural techniques before deciding to blanket the whole country with uniform standardized plan. They were only too satisfied to "sit in their studies" with abstract numbers in some university or government offices and perform their pseudo-scientific rituals thereby formulating a neat technical and methodical plan on how to develop a society. To paraphrase Devons, the technicians couldn't be bothered to go and look at the reality that molds a Tanzanian peasant, rather they sat in their studies while thinking to themselves what they would do if they were a Tanzanian peasant. This is evident in the manner in which villagization was made mandatory.

Any technician or specialist planning development *eo ipso* sees anything traditional to be anathema to the progress of human society. As such, traditional scattered homestead settlements and use of primitive agricultural tools signified, for technicians, backwardness; yet, in thinking traditional settlements to be primitive, they ignored how these homesteads, traditional tools, and farming practices were actually based on local ecological conditions. Traditional scattered settlements provided a solution to problems of soil erosion, and protection from wildlife and other vector-borne diseases. Their use of hand-hoes, man-powered energy helped sustain their fragile environment and protected against depletion of the soil's fertility; their traditional techniques of farming, modes of production, and crops farmed were a proof of the fundamental soundness of their

¹¹⁴ Ely Devons quoted in Ronald Coase, "The Task of the Society," *International Society for New Institutional Economics* 2 (Fall 1999): 3.

collected local knowledge.¹¹⁵ Yet, for technicians, villagization was a necessity. As World Bank, which heavily influenced Tanzania's agricultural policies, justified by remarking, "When people move to new areas, they are likely to be more prepared for and receptive of change than when they remain in their familiar surroundings. And when people are under pressure to move or see the advantage of doing so, they can be required to abide by the rules and to adopt new practices as a condition of receiving new land."¹¹⁶ As one can see from the above statement, the man-land relation along with man's dependence on the pertinent milieu matters not to the proponents of villagization. All that matters to them is people should be settled in new areas, by doing so, the postulated results, spewed out by scientific studies, for development as envisaged in papers will surely come to pass. For technicians, this process was only proper because by moving locals out of their local environment, they would be made into throngs of modern producers conforming to instructions of experts.¹¹⁷

Thus, under the pretext of development, diversity in settlements, in farming practices were discarded in favor of modern scientific practices. Local peasants have for centuries, through application of their collected wisdom, tended to lands so as to procure not only their needs, but also, at the same time, protect their lands from erosion and depletion of fertility. They had their own traditional ways to restore soil fertility. In the highlands and wet savannas, for instance, local peasants for centuries used mulch, cattle

¹¹⁵ Helge Kjekshus, "The Tanzanian Villagization Policy: Implementational Lessons and Ecological Dimensions," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 11, no. 2 (1977): 269-82.

¹¹⁶ International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), *The Economic Development of Tanganyika* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1961), 75.

¹¹⁷ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

manures, crop rotations augmented by fallow cultivations to retain fertility. Whereas, in the coastal areas and dry savannas, peasants practiced shifting cultivation to retain soil's fertility; such practices allowed the soil to be used to the best of its capacity without depleting it of its precious nutrients or destroying the land.¹¹⁸ Local farmers were deeply familiar with several varieties of crops, how to tend and harvest them, how deeply to sow them, how to plant them, and how to prepare the soil. This knowledge was *specific* to particular milieu, i.e. *place specific*, since the farmers had to be knowledgeable about rainfall, types of soil including the peculiarities of soil within each plot of land they cultivate. Such local knowledges were stored as collected wisdom of the localities through oral culture: knowledge about the land, soil, varieties of seed, techniques, and ecological informations.¹¹⁹ Yet, such particularistic realities were jettisoned because they would only baffle scientific minds who are only interested in *simplifying* reality. The villagization, therefore, took no consideration of such everyday diverse ecological conditions within Tanzania. This way local knowledge is made useless because by resettling farmers in different ecological settings, their local or collected wisdom becomes all but useless, "Thus, when a farmer from the highlands is transported to

¹¹⁸ Shao, "The Villagization Program." Technicians also forgot to realize immense achievements of traditional agricultural systems (including pastoralism) in protecting soil from deteriorations while at the same time increasing production. See, Coulson, "Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania." Tanzanian peasants have for centuries developed intricate yet subtle agricultural tools and systems in accordance to their given ecological conditions, thus encouraging specific types of agricultural practices and settlements: depending on time, duration, amount of rainfall, etc. See, Bernstein, "Notes on State and Peasantry." So, for instance, in terms of cattle, traditionally dispersed settlements or homesteads ensured availability of as well as the usage of all grazing grounds and water points, while simultaneously safeguarding cattles from wild animals and thefts at night. For the same reason, it was good sense for each farm to be located in one's homestead as it was easier to protect one's crops from birds and baboons. See, Coulson, "Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania."

¹¹⁹ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 251.

settlement camps... he is instantly transformed from an agricultural expert to an unskilled, ignorant laborer, completely dependent for his survival on the central government.”¹²⁰ The villigazation takes farmers from a setting in which they had particular skills and resources through which to produce and procure much of their own needs to a setting in which their skills and knowledge become nugatory. The local knowledge becomes all but futile; and farmers are reduced from self-sufficient persons to medicants.¹²¹

Technicians assumed away, in their boundless ken, complex, particularistic socio-ecological realities, in order for their minds to grasp, which in their view was, the sensibility of scientific reasoning. This is evident in the manner in which the sites for villages were based on strict standardized criteria, analogous to scientific methods utilized in scheming the villagization program. The program was a scientific utopia: *simplification* of reality. It worked out annual planes and targets for agricultural production and infrastructural projects, set production targets, set work targets for each year, set numbers of technical callers stationed in each village, it required all villages to have uniform communal farms of at least 100 hectares. It also established uniform or standard operating procedures by creating divisions of labor, uniform village with uniform administrative systems, specialization in particular crops, enlarged technical apparatus to supervise the fulfillment of targets set, set up uniform work timetables and rules making sure they are adhered to, monoculture replaced traditional polycropping, uniformity in rules concerning minimum acreage requirement designated for each crop

¹²⁰ Jason W. Clay, Sandra Steingraber, and Peter Niggli, *The Spoils of Famine: Ethiopian Famine Policy and Peasant Agriculture* (Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival, 1988), 55.

¹²¹ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 253.

for each area, uniform rules for proper cultivation of crops, and fines and imprisonments for those violating the uniform guidelines. It also established technicians to direct economic performances in line with set programs. Such technical, standardized rules were also applicable with respect to agricultural techniques: *uniform* soil preparation, application, weeding, planting, fertilizing, and scheduling of labors.¹²² All these uniform standardized guidelines further served to *quantify* or *measure progress*: *numbers* of areas under cultivation, *numbers* of house lots, *numbers* of communal farms surveyed, *numbers* of water projects, *numbers* of village buildings, *tons* of fertilizers delivered, *numbers* of people moved, *numbers* of new villages created, *numbers* of wells drilled, and *numbers* of people mobilized for tasks.¹²³ Just as scientific methods emanate uniformity and tidiness of equations, or numbers in rows of geometric line, all of which are guided by canon of rules, scientific technicians likewise impose such orderliness in the real world, as the following account illustrates the banality of it all: “The desire to have all the houses in a *planned village perfectly aligned*... might require that a *house be dismantled*

¹²² Bernstein, “Notes on State and Peasantry”; Cheryl Payer, “Tanzania and the World bank,” *Third World Quarterly* 5, no. 4 (1983): 791-813. One could certainly see the banality of standardized, technical planning of human society: “The settlement pattern was... uniform throughout the new villages. The site is divided into quadrangles of about two acres each, allocated one each to individual households for their houses and “gardens.” These therefore constitute the homesteads. The several homesteads surround a central service area of fifty acres for a school, dispensary, and so on. Around the several homesteads and apart from them are the block farms, with different blocks for different crops designated by the authorities; each block of land is then divided among the households so that each household can grow each of the designated crops.” See, Shao, “The Villagization Program,” 233.

¹²³ Vide, Bernstein, “Notes on State and Peasantry”; and Scott, *Seeing Like a State*. This obsession with measurement relegated the actual well-being of the people. It allowed technicians to view local population as lazy and accused them of being ungrateful in the face of what was being done for their own good. See, Bernstein, “Notes on State and Peasantry.”

in order to move it a scanty fifty feet to the surveyor's line (italics added).¹²⁴ Or in some case, “one farmer had to move his large, well-constructed *tukul* (italic in original) [i.e. traditional thatched house] some 20 feet so that it would be ‘in line’ with all the other buildings in its row.”¹²⁵ In this way, the results predicted on paper, utilizing *en vogue* scientific tools, applying statistical probabilities, become reality. Differently put, new reality is *imposed* not by the processes of nature, but by strict doctrines concocted by technicians to fit scientific arrangements while, at the same time, proclaiming how the predictions forecasted on paper, by the infallible scientific minds, became *the reality*. This, they zealously claim, is the *truth* or *superiority* of science over every other mode of thought. This is no different from a character in Sinclair Lewis’ novel, *Arrowsmith*, who “was so devoted to Pure Science...that he would rather have people die by the right therapy than be cured by the wrong.”¹²⁶ For technicians, villagization “is the result of scientific and technical laws, and the implicit assumption is that, once built, the task then

¹²⁴ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 244.

¹²⁵ John M. Cohen and Nils-Ivar Isaksson, “Villagization in Ethiopia’s Arsi Region,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 25, no. 3 (1987): 449. Certainly, as was the case in Tanzania, the villagization process in Ethiopia had analogous effect for rural peasants. The drought and famine coincided with the forced villagization; however, this time it was made worst due to the dismantling of communal ties, family bonds, local charities, communal reciprocities, and cooperation all of which hitherto helped societies overcome periods of famine or drought. The massive forced resettlements along with consequent devastation of communal ties made local population especially vulnerable to starvations and for the drought to have immense humanitarian consequences. See, Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

¹²⁶ Sinclair Lewis, *Arrowsmith* (Cutchogue, NY: Buccaneer Books, Inc., 1976), 88. Hence, technicians of development would rather follow dogmatic methods of scientific rationality and hence put their entire meager intellectual prowess to abide those methods—as exemplified in the episodes of MDGs, transmigration, and villagization. Technicians as well as the developed world assume, as long as any phenomenon is examined scientifically, reality will conform to its results and predictions; in other words, reality will behave and conform as indicated by the scientific study.

becomes one of maintaining its form.”¹²⁷ Therefore, for technicians, nothing is more unprofessional than to question the validity of scientific methods, reasoning, or schemes. Yet, these blanketed uniform criteria of villagization ignored not only the actualities of everyday life, but they went “against all the very grain of Tanzania’s experience.”¹²⁸

Apart from the uniformity mentioned above, another uniform criterion was the necessity of villages to be constructed along the main roads regardless of its consequences on people and agriculture. People were forced to move from fertile lands to arid regions and roads were built on the fertile soil, thus hampering agricultural yield.¹²⁹ Hence, the result was an elongated rectilinear pattern of settlements hugging the main roads with houses on either side like wagons of a locomotive.¹³⁰ As was the case in Indonesia, where new settlements were constructed along the main roads in order to bring indigenous groups under the legible and monetized system, the villagization program in Tanzania similarly aimed to “integrate the non-monetarised (or so-called ‘subsistence sector’) within the cash economy. Given the overall neocolonial structures of the territorial economy this means integration within the world capitalist system.... Almost all existing *Ujamaa* villages have been formed in ‘marginal subsistence areas’ – as yet

¹²⁷ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 255.

¹²⁸ Shao, “The Villagization Program,” 235.

¹²⁹ Kjekshus, “The Tanzanian Villagization Policy.” The necessity of villages to hug the main roads was argued under the pretext to provide government services and welfares—such as schools, dispensaries, or to provide reliefs during bad years—so as to make villagization more palatable among local population. See, Coulson, “Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania.” Also see, Bernstein, “Notes on State and Peasantry”; Shao, “The Villagization Program.”

¹³⁰ Juma Volter Mwapachu, “Operation Planned Villages in Rural Tanzania: A Revolutionary Strategy of Development,” *African Review* 6, no. 1 (1976): 1-16.

only inadequately involved in the cash economy.”¹³¹ Certainly, bringing traditional and largely subsistence (and self-sufficient) societies into a rationalized system has been one of the primary aims of any civilizing or developing process.¹³²

Traditional settlements maintained delicate man-land balance; however, villagization eroded and depleted the soil by overcrowding the land with people and cattle. The resettlement overtaxed land’s carrying capacities, thereby, worsening the conditions for peasants. Locals were self-sufficient prior to their resettlements, but villagization made them dependent on government welfare and support; their housing conditions were deplorable; in addition, they were greatly exposed to communicable and infectious diseases. The resettlement disrupted agricultural productions and also decreased the availability of cultivable lands.¹³³ The villagization process gave no attention to the importance of water, livestock services, availability of land for cultivations, etc. because the main priority was fulfilling the uniform criteria: uniform housings, land plots, soil preparations, techniques, procedures, and so on.¹³⁴ The villagization was essentially a point-by-point negation of existing traditional practices based on collected wisdom: polycropping, shifting cultivation, pastoralism, kinship and lineage authority, small and scattered settlements, living well-off the main roads, opaque

¹³¹ Issa G. Shivji, *Class Struggles in Tanzania* (London: Heinemann, 1976), 106-107.

¹³² Vide, Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

¹³³ Kjekshus, “The Tanzanian Villagization Policy”; Coulson, “Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania”; M. Hirst, “Recent Villagization in Tanzania,” *Geography* 63 (April 1978): 122-25; and Linda Freeman, “CIDA, Wheat, and Rural Development in Tanzania,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 16, no. 3 (1982): 479-504.

¹³⁴ John E. Moore, “The Villagisation Process and Rural Development in the Mwanza Region of Tanzania,” *Geografiska Annaler* 61, no. 2 (1979): 65-80.

modes of production and hence outside of state's control.¹³⁵ To the scientific mind, such contextual counterpoints are anathema to the logical, undiluted pattern of rational geometric formulae and schemes on paper.

Furthermore, the villagization process, when it was not going as planned, resorted to force and coercion, these became the norm. Between 1969-1974, when villagization was progressing at too slow a rate, 13 million people were resettled by force.¹³⁶ Homes were destroyed, burned, bulldozed; crops were burned; doors, windows shattered; villages burned. People were dumped indiscriminately into village sites with no shelter for the dispersed population. What is more, people were moved from well-watered to permanently dry areas. The majority of the resettled population was moved to dry savanna and coastal regions.¹³⁷ Villagization also broke hitherto communal harmony, charity, family and kinship ties, communal reciprocity, and conviviality. Traditional settlements allowed people to help each other as women helped in weeding and harvesting, while men help each other for the periodic rebuilding of their mud huts.¹³⁸ With resettlements, however, all communal solidarities were broken. Indeed, such human

¹³⁵ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

¹³⁶ Shao, "The Villagization Program." Certainly, the speed with which villagization was carried out only shows how technicians disregarded peasants' accumulated wisdom that contained centuries of experiences with their land. See, Shao, "The Villagization Program." Not only the Peasants from the rural areas, but those unemployed in the urban areas were compelled to relocate to desolate areas which were hardly suitable for any human settlements. The unemployed were rounded up and dumped in arid, waterless or mosquito infested areas as their new place of residences. People were even put to prison under pretext of tax violations or minimum acreage violations. Even parts of the country were sealed-off to foreigners to conceal the worst excesses of the development project. See, Ergas, "Why did the Ujamaa Policy Fail?"; and Hirst, "Recent Villagization in Tanzania."

¹³⁷ Kjekshus, "The Tanzanian Villagization Policy"; Coulson, "Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania"; and Rodger Yeager, "Demography and Development Policy in Tanzania," *The Journal of Developing Areas* 16 (July 1982): 489-510.

¹³⁸ Ergas, "Why did the Ujamaa Policy Fail?"

needs were irrelevant to the mechanical, one-dimensional mind of technicians equipped with the narrowest version of science, who found refuge in the neatness of Cartesian geometric coordinates and abstract statistics.

Certainly, villagization process was nothing new, for it had its origins in the colonial policies in Tanzania. The colonial government embarked on “closer settlement” which was seen as a precondition for real progress. They saw local peasants to be lazy, good for nothing agriculturalists whose primitive agricultural tools, practices depleted and eroded the soil.¹³⁹ Furthermore, Tanzania’s agricultural policies were greatly influenced by (as in the case of Indonesia) the World Bank. The bank suggested the continuation of previous colonial policies and urged increases in production of cash crops.¹⁴⁰ It also insisted Tanzania focus on increasing production per acre by intensive methods instead of prevailing traditional modes of agriculture. Thus, “villagisation cleared the way for the World Bank’s preferred form of agricultural development, an intensive strategy dependent on the investment of purchased production inputs in order to produce higher yields per unit of land.”¹⁴¹ Certainly, World Bank wasn’t alone in

¹³⁹ Kjekshus, “The Tanzanian Villagization Policy.”

¹⁴⁰ Kjekshus, “The Tanzanian Villagization Policy”; Coulson, “Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania.” The World Bank, under National Maize Project, selected 1000 villages for intensive maize cultivation using enhanced seeds and fertilizers. See, Bernstein, “Notes on State and Peasantry.”

¹⁴¹ Payer, “Tanzania and the World bank,” 794. As this was made clear in 1977 World Bank report, “the choice between intensive, non-shifting agriculture and extensive, shifting modes of farming has been tilted decisively in favour of the former by villagisation.” See, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), *Economic Memorandum on Tanzania*, report no. 1567-TA (April 1977), 37.

supporting such projects in Tanzania; as was the case in Indonesia, there were hordes of other technicians from the developed world.¹⁴²

Scientific Rationality and Societal Atrophy

The above episodes illustrate the reductionist, simplified view of a complex, chaotic human world. However, such a simplified view, or a simplification of realities, very easily leads one to suppose a uniform world with standardized universal values applicable to every society. While diversity, on the other hand, becomes an anathema to the geometric simplicity of scientific uniformity. Context of societies becomes superfluous, while distinctness of each society is nullified. Just as rigid methods dictate scientific rationality or how scientific studies should be carried out, numerous aspects of society are compartmentalized, where none hitherto existed, into variables or parameters, as evident in the three episodes examined in this chapter: their ubiquitous inclination to standardize societies, as if there exist some perfect human values in perfect algebraic form. Hence, the three episodes examined, by virtue of being products of scientific rationality, standardized every aspect of society precisely to nullify diverse local accumulated knowledges because in the presence of polyphonic knowledges, goals conceived by the MDGs, or schemes implemented in transmigration and villagization will hardly seem sensible or even acceptable to the natives. By negating local knowledges, traditional societies are left forlorn and anguished, thereby, enabling these societies to be manipulated and changed as envisioned by technicians.

¹⁴² Vide, International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *Economic Memorandum on Tanzania*; Payer, "Tanzania and the World bank"; Bernstein, "Notes on State and Peasantry"; Kjekshus, "The Tanzanian Villagization Policy"; Coulson, "Agricultural Policies in Mainland Tanzania"; International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *The Economic Development of Tanganyika*.

The wontedness to standardize, evident in the three episodes, is indispensable to scientific rationality and its methodologies. Therefore, standardized goals and applications are the logical consequence of scientific schemes, because if every society had the same societal (social, economic, political, or cultural) conditions, same values or practices, same mode of thoughts, then a *single paradigm*, a *single model*, a *single standard* could be applied to all regardless of the particularities of each society. This way local knowledge, unique to each society, becomes superfluous. As a consequence, complex actuality is reduced to a simplified reality consisting of concepts, variables, parameters, with statistics (after ousting the *Muses*, thereby, holding the beacon of reason) lighting the way towards infallible truth. Otherwise, how can one justify jettisoning vast diverse realities: numerous societies possessing different tribes, cultures, memories, languages, and histories made all the more complex by the subtle differences even within these vast arrays of variations—disregards evident in Tanzania (villagization), Indonesia (transmigration), MDGs, and the scholarships. Furthermore, standardization, and with it its quantification, makes comparison a necessity, since it provides the *single standardized model* from which to compare every society according to society's fulfillment of targets set by the scientific model. In other words, comparison means societies' conformity to idealized aim or target set by scientific models, where *the society is lacking/underdeveloped* means it is still not conforming to the model set by technicians; while *society is meeting the aims/developing* means it is conforming to idealized standards envisaged by the standard model. No wonder, disciplines in social sciences are plagued by standard models and theories, where academics take great pride in pettifogging over which theories or methods have more merit.

More importantly, evident also from aforementioned scholarships and episodes are the almost neurotic-like obsession with results of scientific models, predictions: unmistakably manifested by the manner in which rational organizations were engineered by technicians in Tanzania, Indonesia, MDGs as well as the scholarships proselytizing such predilections. Why are technicians so interested to assuage prediction of their theories or models? When prediction occupies the crux of any social examination, actual human needs are neglected because it conflicts with the demands of scientific theories. In such case, empirical observations and measurements triumph over actualities of living society. There is, in other words, a move away from the *living* world to the *imaginary* world of the empiricists, where human needs are no longer of concern; they aren't even in the vicinity of the scientific models. These models or theories proposed by technicians are impersonal, alien, supernatural, and even lead to violent dehumanization of persons. The dehumanization and objectification of human societies through scientific theories are never far from history. In the name of *truth*, derived from measurable experiments and observations, technicians are willing to ignore human concerns. Take, for instance, a group of scientists in the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. These scientists (led by director of the laboratory) were against a comprehensive nuclear test ban. Surely, one could hardly reason banning of nuclear test not to be a good step towards a more stable world, however this was not the case for the scientists, for them *détente* was less important than the *experiment*. They saw comprehensive test ban as a *threat* to their *experiments*; because, for them, genuine human concerns, the risk of total human annihilation, are not reasons to ban nuclear testing. These scientists, therefore, in a letter to the Congress, wrote: "Weapons design experts would inevitably leave the weapons

program because they could not verify their *theoretical ideas* with *experiment* (italics added).¹⁴³ As one can see from their statement, models and fulfillment of theoretical predictions are more valuable than human survival. Hence, how can one genuinely argue scientific theories backed by experimental observations address human realities? Isn't this dehumanizing of human society? This kind of behavior is no different from Nazi technicians, doctors of Auschwitz.

Contemporary technicians of development inculcate efficiency of their technical experiments and empirical observations; this is worrying because this emphasis eerily parallels technicians of Auschwitz, for they emphasized, "...the technicality of everything," as "...doctors and others spoke only about how to do things most efficiently, about what worked best."¹⁴⁴ Or take Adolf Eichmann a non-thinking, hard-working, bureaucratic murderer who saw his responsibility for genocidal killings as a problem of *efficiency, objective planning, and organization*.¹⁴⁵ Presently, technicians of development busy themselves with these same elements of efficiency, organization, and objective planning spewed out by scientific models predicting results which are deemed practical and good. Of course, one is not suggesting contemporary technicians are doctors or technicians of Auschwitz, but their utter neglect for real human concerns are no different from doctors of Auschwitz or bureaucratic genocidal murderers like Eichmann.

¹⁴³ Hugh E. DeWitt, and Gerald E. Marsh, "Weapons design policy impedes test ban", *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* 3 (November 1985): 13. Similar reasoning drove the villagization and transmigration programs; it is what, presently, drives the MDGs. This is further encouraged by numerous scholarships in 'social sciences,' augmented by corrupt, narrow view of science.

¹⁴⁴ Robert Jay Lifton, *The Future of Immortality* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1987), 91. Also see, Robert Jay Lifton, *The Nazi Doctors: Medical Killing and The Psychology of Genocide* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1988).

¹⁴⁵ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1968).

It could indeed be argued, scientific rationality and its methods afford one to derive formal rules from which to infer practical, pragmatic means to understand social phenomena. This may, indeed, be a practical means to answer or solve *abstract problems, questions* one has in one's mind; yet, the solution is appropriate only to the questions one has in *mind*, i.e. abstract realm of the mind, not the real world. In the actual world or *the world*, however, the practical solutions conceived for questions one poses to one's mind is neither practical nor pragmatic, nor even relevant. The questions or problems one tries to resolve in a theoretical, philosophical, empirical, or research study, as in one's mind, has little whatever to do with the same questions' applicability to the real world. There always is and always will be an immense unbridgeable chasm between *ideas* and *reality*, just because unresolvable problems or contradictions can be assumed away, solved, reconciled through one's rational faculties, it does not necessarily mean such issues in the actual human world can be easily written off as one has in one's mind or paper. Human reality always has the tendency to show the vacuity of ideas; problems or contradictions will always remain, neither can be resolved nor harmonized; rather we must accept their presences as part of this complex human world. No amount of ideas, formal rules, methods, theories, or practical policies can tame diverse human realities.¹⁴⁶ For instance,

¹⁴⁶ This is certainly true if one is pensive about various mass ideas in vogue, presently. Marxism runs to an utter illusion evident from its idea of society where everyone is (or would eventual become) equal—in every sense possible—and to hope such society will ever come to pass is to expect capitalists to be conscious of their actions. Or take Capitalism, for instance, its utopic ideas of prosperity based on individual self-interests run into fantasy when one considers the actual working of capitalist economies, in all its aspects, where much of it has nothing to do with logic behind the stated idea and much to do with external or internal interventions—be it uncertainties, human psychology, or state's interventions to correct the market. Consider also the idea of democracy, where the idea promises equality, liberty, political (and economic) freedom, along with all other phantasmagoric human values. But democracy

the futility of ideas in the form of formal rules in reality is vividly exemplified by Parisian taxi drivers' *work-to-rule strike*; they sometimes launch such strikes when they want to make a point to their municipal authorities concerning fees or regulations. It involves *meticulous following of all formal regulations* in the *Code Routier*, thus, bringing traffic to a grinding halt throughout central Paris. What the action of taxi drivers illustrates is the hopelessness of formal rules conceived from rational standardized model, i.e. an idea that following such and such sets of rules or guidelines ensures the smooth flow of traffic. They demonstrate through their action: in the *real world* circulation of traffic is only possible not because they meticulously follow the formal guidelines, but because they have learned or grasped a certain set of practices evolved contraveningly and *outside* of the instructed guidelines.¹⁴⁷ Surely, rationalized scientific plans may look systematic; they may even give the appearance of order to a chaotic reality. Yet, to make rational guidelines work requires something outside of what is inculcated, as shown by Parisian taxi-drivers, as well as by the failures of Villagization in Tanzania, Transmigration in Indonesia, MDG's, among many others. The above example shows: society is not an abstract entity lying perfectly on Cartesian coordinates, rather it is complex, it is animated with human caprices, it is lively, it is dynamic, and it is

itself requires, for its existence, a certain amount of—conscious (as in authoritarians) or unconscious (as in mass democracies)—mass manipulation and control. Consider even Plato's Socrates (or for that matter, even Kant's *noumenon*) perfectly abstract, objective world from which to invoke the universality of a true form of ideas—be they forms of rule, beauty, truth, virtue, justice, etc. Still, such kinds of ideas run hopelessly into fool's paradise, when one tries to apply it to the everyday realities of a person's (or society's) life. Of course, the examples here are simplified but they do get the point across: the vast difference between an idea that is conceived and the human reality.

¹⁴⁷ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 256.

meaningful, unlike Kant's idea of *noumenon*, on its own. Hence, Sartre was veracious when he proffered ideas can never subsume reality.¹⁴⁸

Moreover, traditional societies, mentioned in this chapter, along with their accumulated wisdoms have long since disappeared (or are disappearing) even from their own local consciousness by the modernizing and its acculturating processes. What is more, these episodes and societies may even seem as dated evidence. Yet, they beg an important question which demands our urgent attention. The principal question here is: why should these societies and their accumulated polyphonic wisdoms disappear, i.e. why are they disappearing (or have disappeared)? The answer: they are disappearing (or in many cases have disappeared) in the name of human progress and development; they are waning or have waned because certain minorities of the world have decided scientific rationality to be the only mode of thought fit for human society, while other modes of thought are seen to be a sign of backwardness; they are vanishing or have vanished because it seems only material prosperity or wealth defines what progress is for every society; they are fading or have faded because it only seems prudent for technicians as well as the developed world to reduce complex distinctiveness of diverse societies to some standardized norms under the umbrella of modern institutions, which serve as the emblem of humanity, and make every society *conform* to them.

¹⁴⁸ One can see the verity of Sartre's dictum if one looks into the abstract ideas about 'lines' and how they still are the source of much sorrow in numerous former imperial colonies. The imaginary lines drawn based on an idea by the colonial masters only show the folly of conceiving a reality devoid of lived experiences. So, lines drawn on pieces of paper on an imaginary map of the world are what development or 'social science' theories presently are. In here, the natives are removed from any social context and their actual concerns are put into the dustbins of irrelevant 'normative values'; hence, the abortive plebeian ken, which is the gist of development and 'social science.'

Indeed, Bodley shows why development brings about nothing but misery; he directs us to the origins of misery plaguing much of the developing world, presently: the destruction of native societies' ways of life in order to accommodate the needs of market economy.¹⁴⁹ In the name of progress, traditional societies and their ways of life are ruined. The idea of development is seen to be good only when it is seen through a material lens. New values, needs, desires are created giving rise to novel dissatisfactions. New wants and needs impress upon the natives' an inferior reflection about their own culture. Development therefore becomes creation of new material needs, desires, wants and how to satisfy them. The idea of progress in development, furthermore, lures traditional cultures, as they are "increasingly pulled by the exciting blandishments, assumed job opportunities, and unrealistic hopes of the city. These rapid changes combine to cause the loss in a single generation of arts and crafts that have been transmitted by social inheritance for centuries, but now are restricted to the passing generation, forgotten in the break-up of varied preindustrial cultures being replaced or overlain by relatively unvarying versions of a western model."¹⁵⁰ In this process, the native's ways of life are destroyed, utterly.

Bodley shows how independent, self-sufficient indigenous societies were made dependent on commercial market systems. Because native societies showed very little desire in obtaining foreign material goods except for those of immediate practical uses, such as axes, knives, etc., the usage of which is by no means the rejection of their culture, outsiders quickly learned that in order to bring these societies into a cash economy, the material satisfaction hitherto provided by their culture had to be undermined. This is

¹⁴⁹ Vide, Bodley, *Victims of Progress*.

¹⁵⁰ Heyneman, "Development and Disease," 7.

possible only by enticing natives to reject material satisfaction hitherto provided by their culture and make them desire more commercial goods. Furthermore, outsiders also realized the need for special pressure to be pressed against these societies in order to overcome their built-in resistance against foreign material goods, since “acquisitiveness is not a universal trait and small-scale cultures have developed numerous means of limiting the over accumulation of material goods.”¹⁵¹ So, what better means than to depopulate these societies, force them into corvée labor, tax them, and reduce their land bases thus depriving them of their indigenous food source. This way natives were made dependent on external goods—as among the many cases were: the Azande by the British, the Tradjas by the Dutch, the aboriginals and New Guineans by the Australians, the Philippines by the Spanish, the Micronesians by the Americans, Papuans and Southwest Africans by the Germans, and Senegal and West Africans by the French.¹⁵² All these helped in transforming *self-sufficient societies* into *cultureless, faceless masses* of people dependent on commercial commodities. Indeed, this is analogous—such as: mass resettlements, depriving locals of their land and food source, making them reliant on market or cash economies, destroying their cultures, creating dissatisfactions, creating new needs for material goods, corvée labor, etc.—to what we have hitherto examined: transmigration in Indonesia, villagization in Tanzania, the incessant noise of MDGs, as well as the unremitting blare of development scholarships examined in the previous chapter.

¹⁵¹ Bodley, *Victims of Progress*, 146. For mechanisms of limiting over accumulation of material goods, see, Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1971).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*

Why does a small minority of humanity gets to define what rationality means; decide, once and for all, how every society, every individual, every culture should think, how to organize society, how and where to live, what to eat, what to wear, and what to believe? Technicians as well as the developed world assume traditional societies to be in dire need of progress; and because the world is viewed through a narrow ethnocentric lens, *their* mode of thoughts *ought* to prevail and *ought* to be disseminated. This is usually justified by eviscerating traditional shibboleths: their beliefs in supernatural, myth, deified object, ancestor, and so on. Only scientific rationality, it is argued, can rescue these unenlightened societies. Of course, implicit in such argument is the idea of *uniformity* and *sameness*.¹⁵³

One could, indeed, thank Descartes, who gave us the *modern* scientific methods and who also declared his philosophy to be independent of any tradition, for the advancement of *sameness*; for he proclaimed, there is *only one way* to know a phenomenon, it is the *same* everywhere; the only way to know is for one to be *rational*, which is present in *all* of us and is the *same*.¹⁵⁴ He further solidified these aspects by declaring “*cogito, ergo sum.*” However, just as he can think, so can everyone else; he disregards polysemous of thoughts. Just because one thinks or that everyone thinks, it does not mean, what is being thought is the same for every one; each person thinks, but

¹⁵³ The *sameness* is apparent in the manner in which developed society as well as technicians of development view the world. Just because traditional societies are materially poor, they instantaneously assume every society should have standards of living, at least, at a level acceptable to them; material consumptions must be encouraged; production for profits must be promoted; and individual independence must be stimulated because communal harmony hampers economic (material) productivity.

¹⁵⁴ Rene Descartes, *Discourse on Method and Related Writings*, trans. Desmond M. Clarke (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1999). In fact, the notion of *sameness* or *changeless* of an idea can be traced back to pre-Socratic thinkers.

what one thinks, how one thinks, why one thinks differ and vary from person to person, even the thought processes differ from person to person depending upon the contexts of one's societal milieu.

With scientific rationality firmly based as the only mode of thought to dictate human thoughts or actions, it necessarily leads to preeminence of *expert professionals*. As Descartes had once stated, “since there is *only one* truth about each thing, whoever discovers it knows as much as it is possible to know about it (italics added)”;¹⁵⁵ professional technicians, thus, invoke congruent scientific basis as the justification of their existence: to serve and guide traditional society. Since, according to them, there is only *one* way to think rationally as human beings; they are experts, they know what is best for backward societies, they know how to develop native cultures, for they know all there is to know “as much as it is possible to know.” As such, they claim to possess special technical skills to *plan* and *engineer* progress, development. Invariably, the organic nature of society is eviscerated; the term, *development*, becomes perverted. As one development agent writes: “Development, as in Third World Development, is a debauched word, a whore of a word. Its users can't look you in the eye. Among biologists, the word means...the realization of an innate potential. The word is good, incontestable, a cause for celebration. In the mouths of politicians, economists and development experts like myself, it claims the same approval, but means nothing... It is an empty word which can be filled by any user to conceal any hidden intention, a Trojan horse of a word.”¹⁵⁶ By disemboweling the organic nature, not only the term but society

¹⁵⁵ Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, 19.

¹⁵⁶ Leonard Frank, “The Development Game”, in *The Post-Development Reader*, eds., Majid Rahnema, and Victoria Bawtree (New York, NY: Zed Books, 1997), 263.

is transmogrified into something mechanical, as imagined by Descartes. In a mechanical world, then, there is nothing expert professional technicians can't do or fix. Nothing is beyond their motorized ken, the schemes they offer are covered in nimbus of science, emitting an aura of an impartial god—indeed, in modern society, professionals replaced gods, priests, churches, and religions.¹⁵⁷ The importance of scientific rationality only elevates the importance of expert professionals, the human aspects are by necessity, of this preeminence, disregarded.

Thus, “whole armies of international experts and consultants work together to demonstrate, in all fields, the scientific and superior aspects of modern technology, modern management and modern economy. No occasion is missed to prove that

¹⁵⁷ It is quite obvious why professionals—in every aspect of a society from cradle to the grave—are now the church in modern market-intensive industrial societies. From birth to death, a person in modern society is forever institutionalized. The professionals and their institutions—in politics, economics, health care, education, etc.—decide for the society *what it needs, what it wants*, how to produce them, how to consume them, what to eat, who to elect, who to listen to, how to make love, how to die, how to give birth, what constitutes as life, what constitutes as health, what counts as education, what counts as legal or *natural* death, etc. In industrialized society, professionals instruct, advise, direct, prescribe what is good and right, for they are the keepers of and interpreters of the modern technical knowledge. Life is *standardized, planned, and engineered; people* transmogrified into *clients*; and they alone have the knowledge to save the ‘*clients*,’ for they alone possess the unquestionable special sapient about human society. Society is hooked into unlimited ‘need’ for consumptions; every aspect of life is turned into a ‘*resource*’ to be utilized to meet demands of material products. A person is transmogrified into a consumer. Alternative to market-based consumer lifestyle is suspected and labelled as ‘*anti-social*’; to renounce consumerism is to renounce oneself as a sane person in the eyes of consumerist society. The essence of a person is consumption of standardized material and living a standardized life (with standardized mode of thoughts). This way human autonomy, to think for oneself, is lost, and with it human freedom. See, Illich’s, *The Right to Useful Unemployment; Deschooling Society; In the Mirror of the Past; Limits to Medicine*; and Illich et al., *Disabling Professions*. Certainly, development of a society is but the acme of standardization of life, of thought, thereby making societies completely dependent on market economy; bringing them under the monetized system; and turning persons into consumers—as envisioned by technicians.

monetarized economy and professionally devised technology (whether high-tech or ‘appropriate’) are essential for human survival, under the present conditions. Even with the dearth of means and resources makes it sometimes economically valid for certain projects to follow local ways of doing things, these are recognized only when they are approved on ‘*expert advice*’ (italics added).”¹⁵⁸ The above statement is quoted at length because the author vividly illustrates the ill-effects of scientific rationality, which we have been elucidating thus far. When schemes are embellished with terms such as *expert*, *professional*, or *science*, any critical examination of development becomes impossible; anyone who criticizes it is considered an enemy of humanity, poor, and developing societies.¹⁵⁹ Must development be understood without any concern for those who actually have to accept the brunt of abstract policies and theories? Must development be imposed by *experts* upon helpless societies who have no say in the manner in which developmental schemes are implemented? Must expert professional be *cordon sanitaire* over lives of those they do not understand? Must scientific rationality be the sole arbiter of what is good for every society?

¹⁵⁸ Majid Rahnema, “Development and The People’s Immune System: The Story of Another Variety of AIDS,” in *The Post-Development Reader*, eds., Majid Rahnema, and Victoria Bawtree (New Jersey: Zed Books, 1997), 123.

¹⁵⁹ It is argued that development is a human right—but, of course, forgetting the fact that what human right is, is defined not by societies concerned, but by the developed world. Certainly, every society has rights, the definition of which are defined by each society; however, just because one wants to export development into every society, this does not justify that one should equate these processes to ‘human rights.’ It is like reasoning: one likes cake, one should, therefore, equate cake to human rights and impose upon every society to like cakes. Indeed, replace the term ‘cake’ with any current vogue ideologies such as ‘democracy,’ ‘individual freedom,’ ‘freedom of speech and press,’ etc. one will see the banality of such reasoning. If the developed societies are sincerely concerned about defending human rights, which they incessantly claim to be doing, then they would leave traditional societies as they are. It is a violation of human rights to change societies, especially those societies which one does not understand.

Technicians intoxicated with the most perverse form of science dictate what should be done to traditional societies: eviscerate existing shibboleths with modern societal institutions; this is to be attained through economic development and growth because development of society is economic, i.e. market-intensive, in nature. In other words, *economy* along with any and every activity as well as institutions predicated on it becomes the catch-all phrase of what is defined as *development*. Every aspect of the society, culture, and person is directed towards the fruition of economic growth. In such a subtle manner, every aspect of society including human beings becomes a *scarce resource* which is to be managed by expert technicians (or scientists), since to economists, *value* is derived from *scarce*-resources—after all, economics, as its most ubiquitous description goes, is the study of *scarce* resources and their *efficient allocations* or *utilities*. Society as well as man is altered into a marionette, tailored for consumerism. Development, which hitherto referred to species, thus, acquires an economic connotation, with it the assumption of *scarcity*,¹⁶⁰ thereby giving the modernizing process legitimacy with an air of *naturalness*. Anyone who opposes economic growth, in general, is denounced as a romantic, a fool, a psycho-path, an enemy of peace and human progress. Even Gandhi was reduced to a romantic and a fool; his philosophy perverted—perversion such as *non-violence as economic weapon; non-violent strategies for development*; and his *Khadi*, i.e. homespun or handspun cloths, which for Gandhi represented an idea of a self-sufficient, subsistence-oriented society not dependent on market-economy, *redefined as commodity*.¹⁶¹

¹⁶⁰ Illich, *In the Mirror of the Past*, 20.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 21. Development is also soon linked with *peace, equality, and democracy* making it all the more difficult for anyone to oppose it, because anyone who

The perception of scarcity, which forms the basis of economics, became the principal assumption for development. Everything in society was scarce; society must, for this reason, be *managed* and *planned* by *expert professionals* for the *efficient* and *effective* use of *scarce resources*. In practice as in theory, development means expansion of market-oriented economic systems, viz. to bring under its umbrella, traditional societies and activities that hitherto escaped its grasps. Development, therefore, affords limitless expansion of market-intensive systems, and the destruction of subsistence-oriented societies and activities;¹⁶² after all, as Heyneman puts it, “High levels of environmental pauperization and widely distributed *homogenization* characterize industrialized societies in all political and economic systems throughout the world (italic added).”¹⁶³ It propagates *scarcity*-dependent goods and services *perceived* to be scarce¹⁶⁴—the perception conceived from Mandeville, Locke, Hume, Bentham, Adam Smith, Malthus, Ricardo, James Mill to Marx.¹⁶⁵ As the result of same modes of thought urging for the same kinds of institution propagating the same kinds of market-intensive society, what one eventually begets is the highly *standardized* human actions *within* and *among* societies. This way, as Illich reasons, “The standardization of human action grows

opposes it is label as an enemy of freedom, peace, equality, democracy, modernity, progress, etc. See, Illich, *In the Mirror of the Past*.

¹⁶² Ibid., 21-22.

¹⁶³ Heyneman, “Development and Disease,” 6.

¹⁶⁴ Illich, *In the Mirror of the Past*, 21-22.

¹⁶⁵ The perception of *scarcity* and, thus, the *economic* view of *man* is a modern phenomenon, a mental constitution deeply rooted in the mind of a modern Western man. Vide, Elie Halevy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1928); Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, [1944] 2001); Louis Dumont, *From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); and Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

apace.”¹⁶⁶ Certainly, development is more or less the regurgitation of *same uniform*, i.e. *standardized*, human responses and actions. Everywhere, societies dance to the *same* uniform, unvaried tune played from the *same* mechanical instrument. The idea of development brings with it rising expectations, yet, at the same instance, there is a dwindling of trust in one’s own autonomy and competence, invariably leading one to lose the ability to care or feel concern for oneself as well as for others.¹⁶⁷ Development has *selfsame* effect everywhere: societies are made dependent on *uniform* commodities made from the *uniform* sort of equipment, clinics, schools, universities, and other bodies of experts using *identical* manufacturing apparatus.¹⁶⁸ Such reliance is further satisfied by manufacturing more of the *uniform* standardized products. While the future generation of consumers is proselytized by professional technicians on *how to need* commodities and *why* they are *good* and of *value*, they are also trained to devalue anything which cannot be measured by money or in terms of monetized value.¹⁶⁹

Development, in other words, becomes a *levelling-off* of human societies, the distinct particularity of what it means to be, for instance, a Javanese, a Balinese, a Hopi, a

¹⁶⁶ Illich, *The Right to Useful Unemployment*, 21.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 21-23. Furthermore, the extension of a market-intensive system obliterates those forms of work that fall beyond the purview of the system—the so-called ‘unemployed.’ In other words, any form of activity, say for instance, handicrafts, taking care of one’s or neighbors’ child, subsistence agriculture, building one’s own home in traditional manner, or any activity not based on monetized system is looked down upon. Therefore, “Work is productive, respectable, worthy of the citizen only when the work process is planned, monitored, and controlled by a professional agent, who insures that the work meets a certified need in a standardized fashion. In an advanced industrial society it becomes almost impossible to seek, even to imagine, unemployment as a condition for autonomous, useful work... Only with a license may you teach a child; only at a clinic may you set a broken bone. Housework, handicrafts, subsistence agriculture,...learning exchanges, and the like are degraded into activities for the idle, the unproductive, [or] the very poor.” See, *Ibid.*, 84.

Mbuti, a Nuer, an Azande, a Zomia, a Meratus, a Melanesian, or an Ilongot is lost. Instead of socio-cultural diversity, we get a universalized *homo economicus* with *standardized* thought processes, *standardized* needs, *standardized* values, *standardized* actions or responses, and one who is dependent on *standardized* goods and services obtained from the *standardized* perceived *scarce* resources. The scholarships along with the three examples examined in the previous and this chapter, respectively, substantiate what is being hitherto reasoned. Technicians of development, intoxicated on scientific rationality, proffer what counts or constitutes as the right mode of thought, what forms of modern institutions will elevate natives from their primitive backwardness, and what societal activities constitute as correct means toward progress. Certainly, to a (modern developed) society deeply habituated and trained to *choose* among pre-packaged standardized products, goods or needs, the *traditional* indeed seems a highly impoverished *option* or *choice*. For people in an industrialized society are “conditioned to *get* things rather than *to do* them; they are trained to value what can be purchased rather than what they themselves can create. They want to be taught, moved, treated, or guided rather than to learn, to heal, and to find their own way (italics in the original).”¹⁷⁰ In a way, *standardization* of everything, which development affords, is only the logical approach or solution from an already *standardized* society. It is interesting to note how the mindless fixation on *certainty*, *predictability*, or *probability* parallels the values of modern industrialized society: instant gratification. Therefore, contemporary social analyses are forced to provide an *instant* prediction about future events. In doing so, technicians (i.e. today’s academics) disregard one fundamental human aspect: social

¹⁷⁰ Illich, *Limits to Medicine*, 213-14.

phenomena can never be properly understood on a basis of formulae, predictions, or probabilities, rather each social event or phenomenon unfolds on its own and in its own fullness of time, the interpretation of which is as polyphonic as societies themselves.

What is more, vicissitudes of progress are seen to be necessary because technicians err to categorize the accompanying changes as bad.¹⁷¹ What this *implicitly* means is problems brought about by development ought to be tolerated, while problems that are and have been part of traditional societies for hundreds of years cannot be tolerated, even if natives have found ways to deal with such problems, because, for technicians, instituting traditional societies with novel modern problems are of immediate concern, rather than leaving these societies alone or *as they are*. To the developed world: why should traditional societies be exempt from the problems of modernity, which are much more malicious? At least, in this sense, developed societies are truly not prejudiced, in the strict sense, to spread the problems of modernity.

The scholarships, thus, examined in the previous chapter and episodes examined in this chapter vividly direct one's attention to the primacy of scientific rationality, thereby inverting human's relations with the outside environment, viz. human relations

¹⁷¹ Because if any scholar is to categorize changes brought by development (as well as the accompanying problems which are much more malignant than the existing problems in most traditional societies, prior to their exposure to 'development') as bad, it would mean one's alienation from the scholarly community and he is, forever, rendered either as a madman or crank. This is brilliantly elucidated by Erich Fromm and Paul Feyerabend.

Furthermore, developed society (as well as technicians) perceives vicissitudes accompanying development to be necessary, because, for them, traditions have no meaning and communal harmony is regarded as a hurdle to liberate individuals from their community and their dependence on the soil. Indeed, nothing must stand in the way of spreading *uniformity*. Because to be different in a uniform world is not acceptable nor can it be tolerated; this mentality has its edifice deeply rooted in the most perverse interpretation of science, which is presently in vogue.

are seen as tertiary to the vicissitudes of progress.¹⁷² Besides, the examined works and episodes also hold the view that there exist one, more or less, perfect policy, institution, or norm, just like the perfect triangle, square, or circle envisaged by Socrates and Plato.

¹⁷² An astute reader would have no doubt noticed congruence between leitmotifs in the MDGs, Transmigration in Indonesia, Villagization in Tanzania and the scholarships. The generalized view taken in MDGs (generalization and quantified view on poverty, health, education, environment, etc.), Transmigration and Villagization (generalized view on cultures, ethnic groups, ecologies, beliefs, application of single models, quantification of realities, etc.) can be vividly seen in scholarships discussed in Chapter Two. Note, for instance, the congruence between what has been discussed in three episodes with the scholarships: In regards to scientificity as seen in the three episodes, the scholarships state, just to mention very briefly: Malinowski (1944) calling for scientific study of culture; Parson's (1951) emphasis on how social inquests must have clear logical clarity, empirical validity, generality of principles, variables, and adhere to scientific standards; Lipset (1959) notes the importance of testable hypotheses and empirically testable statements; North (2005) insists 'generalization' enables construction of models, to understand society, which are then exposed to empirical verifications; Sachs (2005) asserts the necessity of a "clinical" approach to development; Easterly (2006) insists on the importance of rigorous testing or experimenting with scientific methods and tools; while Collier (2007) emphasizes the importance of statistical evidence. In respect to societal changes as seen in the episodes, the scholarships note: Rostow (1960) maintains the inevitability of progress, development signified by his stages of growth; Collier (2007) asserts on how developed societies must institute standards as well as help those in developing societies demanding for societal change; North (2005) advocates for fundamental changes in traditional societies by establishing modern institutions so as to overcome rigid "erroneous beliefs"; Parsons (1951) insists on societal changes to be in "homeostatic equilibrium"; Inglehart and Welzel (2005) reason societies invariably move toward modern institutions thus making them democratic, and economically more developed; while Malinowski (1944) argues traditional societies should be "enlighten" in the ways of modern institutional values. (Not to forget how all of the scholarships examined emphasize the need for conformity to makes the new institutional values normal, i.e. new normal). With regard to the episodes' justification for development and economic growth, scholarships note: for Malinowski (1944) and Parsons (1951), economic aspects of society are indispensable for scientific understanding society; Easterly (2006) maintains the scrupulous nature of economic principles for development and growth, while blaming lack of economic progress not on economics but on the failure to properly "apply principles of economics"; Rostow (1960) insists on transforming societal activities for economic purpose; Inglehart and Welzel (2005) argue economic growth to increase existential security of societies; Sachs (2005) maintains the importance of globalized modern economic activities as a "ladder" towards development; or North (2005) reasons incentives and pay-offs of rationalized modern institutions ignite economic productivity, activity, growth and development.

But, alas! for modern technicians, even these philosophers (even Aristotle) are *laymen*, since they are not *trained* in the ways of today's over-specialized, narrow academic disciplines.

CHAPTER IV

THE POLYPHONY

Polyphonic Thoughts

The preceding two chapters tried to ascertain how development is rooted in scientific rationality, thus influencing its scholarships, schemes, and applications. One of the principal purposes of the previous chapters was to show how understandings in disciplines of *social science*, such as development, are based on deliberate, conscious creations of what constitute the *developing* or *traditional*. Development as an academic discipline rooted in scientific rationality is the penurious interpretation of societies whose object of study is the *traditional*, its peoples, societies, and cultures. The *objective facts* thus conceived are but limited to what is included or excluded from what is regarded as scientific (or computable) aspects of society. The *objective facts* are then equated to *scientific truths*; yet, what is “truth” but, as Nietzsche once remarked, “a mobile army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms... which after a *long use seem firm, canonical, and obligatory* to a people: *truths are illusions* about which one has forgotten that *this is what they are* (italics added).”¹ Technicians of development, therefore, hold parochial descriptions to be truth or fact of what counts as the *developing*. In other words, the objective truth acquired through scientific means, utilized in development, is the *illusory* “army of metaphors, metonyms, and anthropomorphisms” the developed world has for the *traditional*.

¹ Friedrich Nietzsche, “On Truth and Lie in an Extra-Moral Sense,” in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York, NY: Viking Press, 1954), 46-47.

Before we begin, it is essential to note the verb-based language structure of most traditional societies (augmented by their oral based traditions), as opposed to noun-based Indo-European languages where aspects of the world are categorized and fixed into stable concepts. Traditional societies, because of their verb-based structure, view everything in the world, universe, cosmos to be dynamic, a world in perennial vicissitude, never fixed, and always in movement. Hence, terms such as *knowledge*, *rationality*, *modes of thought*, *belief* become highly fluid, interchangeable, and never retain, for themselves, specific meanings. Moreover, their rationalities cannot be categorized into theories, because to fix them into *theories* will only *constrain* what is a highly fluid experience. What traditional societies ascertain as knowledge or rationality is always based on direct lived-experiences, their rationalities cannot be fixed into a specific theory nor concept (which are, by virtue, not only context-less but remain fixed in space and time) because to fixed them into a concrete concept is to jettison the aborning contexts from which they arise, in the first place. *Knowledge*, *rationality*, *thought*, *belief* in English (or in other Indo-European languages) are nouns, they have fixed concrete meaning. However, in most traditional societies, these terms are never fixed. Rather they are fluid, synonymous. In fact, there is no delineation of knowledge from rationality, or of belief from knowledge, and so forth. Traditional societies procure their knowledge, belief, rationality through lived experiences—which are (verbs, not nouns) in *acting*, *knowing*, *processing*, *participating*, *ongoing*, *sensing*, *encountering*, *occurring*, etc. To understand traditional rationality in Indo-European terms—as something *frozen*, *fixed*—is to completely misunderstand what they are and what they signify to the natives. Therefore, in this chapter, the terms knowledge, rationality, modes of thought, belief are used

interchangeably and synonymously. Moreover, to put polyphonic rationalities into concise systematic theory is to deliberately limit, confine, and, thereby, jettison traditional societies' fluid view of the world. The present study has, thus, refrained from setting out to classify or label *polyphonic rationalities or modes of thought* as theory, or theorize them in a concise theoretical manner. Nevertheless, polyphonic knowledge is, here, explicated in such a way as to reflect traditional societies' fluid, ever changing view of the world, this way staying true to reflect, as much as possible, their profound actual existential significance to those adhering to it.

The preceding chapters provide the *context* for the present chapter in which one can appreciate the essentiality of polyphonic rationality in social inquests. The tyranny of scientific rationality necessarily pauperizes social inquests, in which adherence to canonical doctrines become the *sole* matter of course. Under such circumstances, human expressions are all but eviscerated in the name of science and objectivity.

In contrast, polyphonic rationality signifies the essentiality of reality in any societal query: the centrality of human person. The term *polyphony* is borrowed from Mikhail Bakhtin's study on Dostoevsky's literature.² Bakhtin utilizes polyphony, the term he borrowed from music, to show the rich diverse unmerged voices in Dostoevsky's works. The essence of polyphony, as Bakhtin suggests, is the independence of voices, in which each voice or each "point of view on the world" stands beside each other and interacts without merging into one another.³ Just as polyphony in music illustrates the rich interlaces of harmony among manifold melodious expressions or counterpoints

² Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1984).

³ *Ibid.*, 21, 39.

(Johann Sebastian Bach being the foremost genius in polyphony music, attested in his heavenly music of celestial harmony), so are Dostoevsky's characters, where each is given an independent unmerged voice, yet spelling out, at the same instance, the need for harmony and coexistence among diverse interactions, which are, for Dostoevsky, an indissoluble aspect of human conditions.

As mentioned in Chapter One, polyphonic is the plurality of knowledge; it accords all rationalities place in social query, where none is privileged over any other. The numerous polyphonic rationalities are essential within their differing contexts. Polyphony implies acceptance of all modes of thought *as they are*. More importantly, polyphonic rationality entails the essentiality of the nature of the questioner. Put differently, the whole question of prober's identity or *being* is intricately tied to the phenomenon probed, the very nature of the questioner—influenced by prober's *direct lived* experiences—makes all the difference as to the manner in which the phenomenon is questioned, understood, and approached.⁴ This is because polyphonic rationality germinating out of direct experiences contains the very being of a person in which one is inextricably involved in and tied to the very processes of understanding. This is why Edmund Husserl argued lived experiences to be the principal source of human knowledge and understanding. For Husserl, human knowledge, or what we call *objective explanation*, is ultimately based on one's subjective lived experiences. These lived experiences or “world-life” are differently comprehended by each person and each

⁴ Vide, Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, trans. Katharine Farrer (Westminster, UK: Dacre Press, 1949).

culture in accordance to its distinctive views of the world.⁵ Certainly mathematical science, presented in Chapter One, presents us with an example of such distinctiveness: ω $(\psi_a) \pm (\psi_b) = v$ $(\psi_a) \pm (\psi_b)$...eq (1). What the given equation signifies is the manner in which one solves the equation depends upon the nature of the prober, viz. the question of what solves for ω or to solve for ω will differ invariably from prober to prober; the prober's nature, in other words, is intimately affixed to the examined query. As such, the way an inquirer comprehends or solves the equation will invariably differ. Even the value for ω will vary, from prober to prober, for there are many ways to attain the equally diverse values that solve and balance the equation. Hence, the values themselves will be diverse. More importantly, what this equation evinces is, there exists no one *universal* value of ω , all the values, as conceived by various inquirers, are equally valid. This in a way shows the polyphony of nature.

The essentiality of a person's character or nature probing into a phenomenon is even suggested by Aristotle. Aristotle saw how individuals, in order to gain understanding of nature, universe, or things, must rely or act on their corporeal organs of senses, without which reasoning becomes impossible.⁶ The senses, which Aristotle alluded to, are one's lived experiences, after all, one experiences the world through one's sentience, i.e. touch, smell, sight, taste, hearing, etc., which are, in turn, predicated on actualities of one's concrete, animated society, in accordance to a particular place and

⁵ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditation: An Introduction to Phenomenology*, trans. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), 19.

⁶ Vide, Aristotle's, "Physics," in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 1 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); "Metaphysics," in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 2 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984); and *De anima* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1987).

time. This is to say, one's sentience is historical or contextual, not ahistorical or acontextual. One of the greatest painters during the *Renaissance*, Raphael, was aware of Aristotle's allusion to the importance of concrete understanding of the world based on a person's corporeal senses, which are themselves contingent on one's lived expressions. In one of Raphael's most well-known frescos, *School of Athens*, we see at the center, two towering figures of Western philosophy: Plato and Aristotle. Plato, holding *Timaeus*, points upward toward the heavens (or *Kosmos*), toward the abstract, toward the world of ideas. While Aristotle, holding *Ethics*, points toward the viewer, toward the concrete human world, toward the world framed by human sentience. Indeed, anyone acquainted with the works of Plato and Aristotle would know that the contrast between Plato and Aristotle, as indicated by Raphael in his fresco, is expressive of the differences between the two thinkers.⁷

Plato represents and presents us, in *Timaeus*, the world of abstract ideas, the world devoid of vicissitudes, the world of *becomed*, an ordered universe created out of preexisting chaos and disorder by imposing rational mathematical order. This is the world in which all seats of ideas are placed, the world understood only by rational souls.⁸ This is the world akin to the world of technicians, even though theirs is a world much narrower than Plato's. In this world, technicians see mathematical order being imposed

⁷ For detail analyses on Raphael's paintings, see Christiane L. Joost-Gaugier, *Raphael's Stanza della Segnatura: Meaning and Invention* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Marcia Hall, ed., *Raphael's School of Athens* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Robert Haas, "Raphael's School of Athens: A Theorem in a Painting?," *Journal of Humanistic Mathematics* 2 (July 2012): 2-26; Glenn W. Most, "Reading Raphael: *The School of Athens* and Its Pre-Text," *Critical Inquiry* 23, no. 1 (1996): 145-82.

⁸ Plato, "Timaeus," in *Plato: Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc., 1997).

upon the chaotic human world, thereby nullifying the world of its vicissitudes. Thus, the human world becomes fixed, static, and devoid of flux. Technicians dwell in their world of abstract ideas ruminating about the *traditional*. For them, real human expressions are but “adventitious happenings”; human senses or appearances, they argue, are deceitful, hence, not to be trusted. Aristotle, on the other hand, points (and presents us in *Ethics*) to the world of the viewer, the human world, world that is alive, animated, dynamic. This is the world of everyday human conduct within the contexts of society, viz. upon each lived experiences. These lived expressions frame human sentience that in turn affects the conduct of societies, cultures, persons.⁹ This is the world akin to the world as experienced by numerous traditional societies, the world where attention is given to everyday human realities. This is the world in which human senses, based on particular societal experiences, frame one’s understandings of the world. This world affords each society with its own particular practical tools to deal with its own particular everyday lived realities. This, in other words, is the world of *polyphony* or the *world*.

Even the physical universe is context dependent or polyphony, where knowledge, fact, truth of phenomena is intimately tied to the uniqueness of the prober. Quantum physics substantiates the essentiality of the nature of the prober, thus the polyphony of nature itself. It points to the inextricable “observer effect,” meaning, *the very act of measuring affects the measurements*. This signifies the fundamental indissoluble role played by the observer in affecting the measurements. Hence, in the micro subatomic world, electrons are both, at the same time, waves and particles. As such, whether

⁹ Aristotle, “Nicomachean Ethics,” in *The Complete Works of Aristotle: The Revised Oxford Translation*, ed. Jonathan Barnes, vol. 2 (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984).

electrons behave as waves or particles depends on the particular prober (as well as the particular instrument used in) carrying out the observations. This understanding of nature violates the Newtonian concept of (natural) science that gyrates around fixed, rigid concepts of absolutism—such as absolute rigid separation of space from time, fixed concepts, universal truths, etc. In modern physics, systemizations of concepts or truths in a predetermined manner have become problematic, if not a fundamental error. Therefore, one will find modern physics doing away with the Newtonian predetermined universal concepts and ultimate understanding of nature.¹⁰ They now embrace the multivariate, polyphonic view to understand nature, universe, phenomena, etc. Since the twentieth century, natural sciences, especially physics, have embraced a polyphonic instead of a monological interpretation of the physical universe, for monologism only hampers scientists from properly understanding natural phenomena.

The message of what has been expounded hitherto is to show the diverse ways to attain understanding on social (or natural) phenomena. Understanding of what is probed is much less the product of a single standardized method, rule, or doctrine; rather it is the product of diverse, even contradictory, thoughts violating the very idea of monologism. Before expounding any further, it is proper to first provide an essential caveat with regard to polyphony knowledge. It is essential for the reader to note the existence of equally

¹⁰ It is interesting to note how much of natural sciences, at least much of modern physics, have moved out of Newtonian science to the multivariate, polyphonic world of quantum physics and general relativity. However, ‘social sciences,’ as usual, have been slow to leave the absolutism of Newtonian philosophy; after all, much of social sciences are deeply immersed in a Newtonian ‘absolute’ concept of the world, nature, universe. For detailed analysis on modern physics, see David Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order* (New York, NY: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980); Werner Heisenberg, *The Physicist’s Conception of Nature* (New York, NY: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1958); F. David Peat, *Blackfoot Physics* (Boston, MA: Weiser Books, 2002); Vine Deloria Jr., *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence* (Golden, CO: Fulcrum Publishing, 2012).

diverse polyphonic knowledges among equally diverse traditional societies. Just because societies are traditional or developing, it does not mean their knowledges are the same. What is knowledge in one traditional society will *invariable* differ from another, even the way people think among these societies will inextricably differ. The present study is under no illusion about the diversity of thoughts, knowledges, languages, environmental ecologies, landscapes, myths, songs, dreams, and so on that intimately play the principal role in how one understands the world. The study, therefore, utilizes the term *polyphony* only as a metaphor or a catch-all phrase, if you will, to encompass the diverse knowledges of diverse traditional societies.¹¹ Concurrently, the term is used to differentiate knowledges of traditional societies from scientific rationality.

Given the polyphonic understanding of society, what becomes superfluous is the systematized, clear-cut knowledge, theories, truths, etc. The structure-less and system-less explanations or descriptions are what make polyphonic rationality non-dogmatic. This way, it is open to multivariate modes of thought in attaining holistic understanding of phenomena. But, most importantly, it signifies the *wholeness* of human society. Human society cannot be properly understood in a piecemeal manner. As Michael Polanyi notes, to isolate and concisely describe an aspect by separating it from a complex whole only, “destroy[s] our understanding of complex matters. Scrutinize closely the particulars of a comprehensive entity and their meaning is effaced, our conception of the

¹¹ In blanketing diverse rationalities under the term polyphonic, the present study to a certain extent makes the same mistakes as scientific rationality. However, the study is resorting to this recourse only in so far as to explicate what is ignored and the awareness of how according polyphonic rationalities will enrich our sense of understanding. Moreover, it is impossible for anyone to come up with terms that do not in one way or the other generalize that which is being examined.

entity is destroyed.”¹² In sub-dividing society into numerous isolated aspects (such as economic, political, social, cultural, religious), the understanding one derives from such blinkered examination highly distorts the actuality. Indeed, for Goethe, understanding is attained in experiencing the animated *wholeness* of phenomenon, not in isolation.¹³

Indeed, this is what Bakhtin meant, in regards to polyphony, when he identifies the unfinalizable, indeterminant, indefiniteness, and unpredictable of persons.¹⁴ They are unfinalizable because they are always in symbiosis with everything: world, cosmos, ecologies, landscapes, etc. Human beings are not some isolated fixed concepts who can be understood regardless of their contextual world, nor are they determined, finalized, or concluded as to what they are as persons, communities, groups, cultures, or societies. What human society or person is is never static; instead it is dynamic, lively, colorful, mysterious, and filled with infinite potentials; potential to accommodate, contradict, harmonize various realities of society, nature, universe, cosmos, and so on. Scientific rationality, on the other hand, has a frozen abstract concept of human society and person, thereby, rendering society determinable, finalizable, i.e. definiteness. On the contrary, for polyphonic rationality, there is never a *conclusion* to what a person or society is or can be. The indefiniteness or unfinalizability hence makes linear structuring of polyphony knowledge superfluous.

Bakhtin, commenting on Dostoevsky, rightly insist, “it is futile to seek in it [Dostoevsky’s world] a *systematic monologic*... finalization—and not because the author

¹² Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966), 18.

¹³ Henri Bortoft, *The Wholeness of Nature: Goethe’s Way Toward a Science of Conscious Participation in Nature* (Lindisfarne Press, 1996).

¹⁴ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*.

has failed in his attempts to achieve it, but because it did not enter into his design (*italics in original*).”¹⁵ For Bakhtin, the unfinalizable, unsystematic exposition along with negation of monologic view enabled Dostoevsky in aborning a new genre of polyphony literature. Dostoevsky himself saw persons to be indefinite, unpredictable, and unfinalizable. This enabled him more than anyone else prior, with the exception of Dante, to hear and understand all diverse voices, thereby enabling him to see the “man in man,” for it conveyed to him the multifacetedness of complex, contradictory, even ambiguous, internal image of society, person.¹⁶ For Dostoevsky, man is never static, *obvious*, nor predictable; he saw beneath the shallow exterior image there resides a complex interior being filled with contradictory qualities that render any *stable* concept about man erroneous; hence his creation of polyphonic literature to show the heterogeneous, ever-changing man and society. In order to show the polyphony of man, Dostoevsky had to break away from the usual *structured monologic* way of writing and understanding that limited, froze, determined, and finalized man. What is more, structured monologic, he realized, was incapable of accommodating diverse complex voices because of its single lens from which to understand man. As a result, structured monologic had to give way to structureless dialogic understanding. This, structurelessness, enabled Dostoevsky to finely illustrate the unfinalizability of persons. By the virtue of being unfinalizable, man is no longer frozen, nor restricted to stable concepts. In doing so, he highlighted the essentiality of diverse, unmerged independent voices signifying the complex polyphony in person, society, and phenomena. His view is congruent to the manner in which traditional societies view themselves, their world, society, nature, etc. For them, nothing

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 61.

ever remains fixed; instead everything is in a state of constant flux, i.e. *unfinalizable*, exposed to vicissitudes of everyday realities and circumstances of world, nature, spirits, universes, or gods.

Therefore, polyphonic rationality, with regard to the present query, cannot be concisely systematized into a single model or theory: polyphonic rationality cannot be categorized into *frozen* universal concepts, nor can it be the basis for ultimate truth derived logically through coherent measurements or experiments. Rather, what polyphonic rationality is cannot be put into words. Ludwig Wittgenstein once verily reasoned, of which one cannot speak of or put to words, of that one must pass in silence.¹⁷ Likewise, polyphonic rationality will make sense only within the contexts of society, it cannot be put to words, yet it can only be understood through silence, i.e. through direct life *experiencing* and by *engaging* with people, society, nature, spirits, myths, songs, ceremonies, etc. And *direct lived experiences* can neither be put to words nor cogently explicated, but can only be *experienced* in-person along with profound feelings and emotions accompanying such *experiences*. Even the present effort of this present study to explicate polyphony is a poor, pitiable translation of what is *indescribable*. This is why Michael Polanyi believed *experience* can never be represented in or by any theory.¹⁸ For Michael Polanyi, experiences cannot be stated in formal propositional terms or lucidly put into a theory. Rather, one is always led tacitly or involves a, what he identifies as, tacit dimension, to know and understand a phenomenon. Moreover, he reasons, the tacit dimension or one being led tacitly is always based on

¹⁷ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. F. Pears and B. F. McGuinness (New York, NY: Routledge, 1988), 7.

¹⁸ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*.

one's daily experiences encountered through one's sentience or "intimation." And because experience cannot be theorized, it remains *tacit* and continuous to sway the manner in which one's attains knowledge or understanding.¹⁹

St. Augustine remarking on the nature of time, insists, "I know what it is, but when you ask me I don't."²⁰ Here, Augustine is alluding to the *indescribable* understanding on the nature of time not because he does not know what it is, but because it cannot be lucidly systematized, categorized, or catalogued in order to be conveyed. In other words, it is a personal understanding depending on the nature of each individual. So, similarly polyphonic knowledge is blatantly obvious to *each* traditional society and even to any astute observer; however, in asking to define, theorize, systematize itself, it loses its very essence: its unsystematic, non-theoretical nature. Organizing or cataloging will not only distort polyphonic rationality, but, more seriously, it will begin to make no sense, even to itself—just as St. Augustine's remarks on the nature of time. Werner Heisenberg once remarked that explanation at the sub-atomic level stops to explain anything at all;²¹ likewise, *explanation* of polyphony knowledge ceases to explain anything. It is only through *direct lived experiences* that one can understand polyphonic knowledges. This point needs to be understood by the reader, for without taking this into consideration, what is to follow will make absolutely no sense; indeed, without noting the above points what is to follow will look like a motley assemblage of isolated observations

¹⁹ Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension*. It is worth noting Polanyi's "Tacit Dimension" not only influenced Thomas Kuhn in formulating his ground breaking work "*The Structure of Scientific Revolution*," but also influenced modern physicists, like David Bohm, to search for new ways to understand and describe the quantum world.

²⁰ Quoted in Alan Watts, *Does it Matter* (Novato, CA: New World Library, 2007), ix.

²¹ Werner Heisenberg, *Across the Frontiers* (New York, NY: Harper & Row, 1974).

with no cohering leitmotif, thus misunderstanding the unsystematic, non-theoretical nature of polyphonic rationality.

No doubt, one may oppose the *structurelessness* of polyphonic rationality, and claim theories—be they in natural or social sciences—are systematic, with logically coherent concepts enabling scientists to rationally discover abstract universal *truths*, and how findings from crucial experiments, which are reproducible, dictate the rise and fall of scientific theories. Still, polyphonic knowledges cannot be measured, they are never meant to be measured. Furthermore, the neat methodical, logical conceptions of theory as well as the discovery of abstract universal *truths* or *realities* are *retrospective* stories *constructed* to defend the theory and give an air of objective reality untampered by human subjectivity and sentient.²² In other words, the lucid coherent explanations along with the linear unfolding of hidden *truth* or *reality* behind a phenomenon are *ex post facto* constructed to legitimize and boost the verity of a theory. Neither the linear unfolding of events, reality, truth, nor the logical coherence of theory is *intrinsic* to the process of scientific inquests.²³ Instead, it is only the romantic ideals of any discipline, trying to qualify as *science*, to claim the objective, dispassionate, detached, systematic ethics of its adherents where the fate of even the most beloved theories, as is claimed, depends upon the results of crucial experiments validating or falsifying their verity. And scientists accept new facts, even those falsifying their much adored theories, honestly and courageously. So, the argument goes.

²² Bruno Latour, *Science in Action* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

²³ *Ibid.*

Yet, one will find such romantic views of science, of objectivity, of impartiality, of courage, of honesty to be far from what actually occurs. To take one example: on March 1989, announcements were made claiming the discovery of cold fusion. This discovery was made, independently, by two teams: Martin Fleischman and B. Stanley Pons at the University of Utah, Salt Lake, and Steven Jones at Brigham Young University. The announcements claimed the discovery of cold fusion at room temperature—fusion created inside a test-tube. These caused a furore among the scientific community because the claims violated existing beliefs held by most conventional fusion scientists, where it was assumed nuclear fusion can only be carried out at high temperatures, required highly elaborated technical instruments, machines, equipment, and as such required an international team of scientists with massive budgets. It can hardly be carried out at small universities with minimal budgets, much less in a test-tube; hence the claims were rejected outright without even proper investigation.²⁴ No one bothered to consider the claims seriously since conventional wisdom dictated cold fusion just could not happen. So, the initial reaction, as one can see, goes against the romantic view of dispassionate, objective scientists honorably accepting the fate of their beloved theories. Fleischman and Pons, furthermore, did not help their case, either. Instead of disseminating their findings and data, like honest, dispassionate scientists as standard view of science suggests, they became reclusive and circulated their materials to very few of their colleagues. As such, most scientists had to *guess* about how the experiments were carried out and set up careful experiments based on those *guesses* to disprove the *guessed* claims. Moreover, there were other less than objective,

²⁴ Peat, *Blackfoot Physics*.

dispassionate, rational reasons as to why the claims of cold fusion were rejected. This included the fact that the discoveries or announcements came from small Midwestern universities, rather than large universities, with bigger budgets, grants, and large international teams. By making the announcements, they threatened the numerous grant pulling skills of large universities. The assumption was science could, indeed, be carried out at smaller universities, but it must be done under the supervisions or leaderships of larger universities. Thus, when small universities challenged the orthodox wisdom, large universities banded together to put the renegades in place.²⁵

The above episode suggests the view of dispassionate, impartial, rational, honest, courageous scientists accepting the fate of theories based on the results of crucial experiments is a far-cry, a phantasmagoria constructed to embellish the image of science, just as institutionalized religions aggrandize their images by constructing idealistic views of their catechisms. Certainly, Ptolemaic geo-centric world system was not replaced by Copernican heliocentric system based on findings of a single crucial experiment, nor did a single crucial experiment replace Newtonian physics by Einstein's relativity and Quantum physics.²⁶ Rather what is science or accepted as science, theory, etc. is much the product of personal emotional feelings, beliefs, vogue institutional dogmas, and acceptable orthodoxies of scientists than the otherwise suggested views of rational, detached, courageous scientists accepting new facts, realities, truths.

As far as the testability or reproducibility of the observations is concerned, which contemporary social sciences are deeply fascinated with, it must be duly noted that such idealistic view is never what actually happens. As one physicist reasons verily, "And, far

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid.

from all experiments being reproducible...it is well known that *some individuals can get a particular experiment to work, while others never will*. Hence, the very basis of science, *its objectivity, repeatable, quantitative observations and experiments, is an unattainable ideal*, for the way scientists are able to design experiments and carry them out is influenced in so many subtle ways by their feelings and sensitivity to the complex universe around them (italics added).²⁷ Even for Heisenberg, science was more about one's participation, being involved, and understanding the phenomenon, thus signifying one's relation to the cosmos, rather than scientists' dispassionate, detached observation.²⁸ His view is far from the standardized view of the cold objectivity of observer, as held by many of his acolytes—be they social or natural scientists. Goethe himself saw the artificiality of scientific experiments, where the prober (along with equipment utilized) is detached from the wholeness of phenomenon. By distancing oneself from the fullness of phenomenon, one isolates narrow aspects of nature, whereby understanding gained from such observation or experiment is bound to be distorted.²⁹ To demand polyphonic knowledge to present itself just as any generic theory in a logical concise manner with room for empirical observations is to contradict the very meaning of polyphony. Therefore, one hopes the astute reader will appreciate the structureless and indescribable nature of polyphonic rationality.

Because polyphony rationality cannot be systematized into theory or into any coherent categorical structure, *truth or knowledge* of thing, society, nature, universe becomes *context* dependent. Put differently, knowledge or truth depends on the context

²⁷ Ibid., 246.

²⁸ Heisenberg, *The Physicist's Conception of Nature*.

²⁹ Bortoft, *The Wholeness of Nature*.

under which it is acquired. As mentioned earlier in this section, the personality of the prober invariably makes all the difference in the manner in which phenomenon is understood and probed. This is one of the essential aspects of polyphony rationality as well as in its understanding. In other words, knowledge will vary from prober to prober, society to society, culture to culture, and as strange as it may sound, all such perceptions are valid, after all, one's perception of phenomena is one out of infinite other interpretations, as Nietzsche maintained. The *uniqueness* of the inquirer, as Marcel maintained, where the very identity of the inquirer is inextricably linked to the questioning of the phenomenon, makes all the difference as to the understanding of that which is probed. For the manner in which one probes into a phenomenon is indissolubly enmeshed to one's very being that is, in turn, influenced by one's life experiences. Besides, one's direct life experiences rely on, as Aristotle maintained, the corporeal organs of sense—sight, smell, touch, taste, hear, and feelings. Human reasoning, according to Aristotle, is not possible without our reliance on such organs of sentience. Furthermore, what is sensed by the senses is very much contingent on unique socio-cultural contexts framing the daily life expressions of a person, society, group, or community. Dostoevsky accordingly held this view, for him, as Bakhtin maintains, “The *truth* about the world... is *inseparable* from the *truth of the personality* (italics added).”³⁰ Hence, context is principal for one's understandings of direct lived experiences. More importantly, Bakhtin commenting on Dostoevsky's polyphony, maintains, such personal truth derived from lived experiences “[i]n the mouth of another person, a word or a *definition* identical in content *would take on another meaning and tone*, and would no

³⁰ Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, 78.

longer be the truth (italics added).³¹ This is to say, one's knowledge of phenomenon will always take on a different nature, content, quality, when the same *truth* or knowledge is exported out of its aborning context, viz. what holds to be true in one society will invariably hold not to be so in another. Hence, knowledge is always contextual to experiences. Surely, to assume, as scientific technicians, the absences or irrelevance of context as well as intimacy of knowledge to the nature of the prober is to assume the infallibility of human knowledge concerning the profoundest depths of society, person, and community. Dostoevsky, according to Bakhtin, wanted to show this fallibility of concrete, fixed truths finalizing the concept of man. So, for Dostoevsky, "Truth is unjust when it concerns the *depths of someone else's* personality (italics in original)."³² For so long as we are humans, one can and will never know the most profound intimate realities of another human being or, for that matter, society. Indeed, it is precisely this that makes man *unfinalizable, unpredictable*. Even Michel de Montaigne, one of the great Renaissance thinkers, saw the *unfinalizability* of *self*. He realized man, society, and nature never to be static or fixed; instead, things were invariably fluxed, ever-changing, ever-flowing, and never complete.³³

In an ever changing society, therefore, context becomes essential, for what counts as truth, knowledge, or understanding will indissolubly depend on the aborning socio-cultural, personal circumstances. Here, the term *context* may be understood as, what Gilbert Ryle identified as, the "thick description." Ryle, in explaining thick description, dichotomizes between a twitch and a wink: consider, Ryle says, two persons swiftly

³¹ Ibid., 55.

³² Ibid., 60.

³³ Michel de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, trans. M. A. Screech (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1987).

contracting their right eyelids: in person A, the contraction is an involuntary twitch; in Person B, the contraction is a deliberate conspiratorial signal to a friend. An outside observer passing by will be unable to discern which is a twitch and which is a wink or whether both are twitching or winking, for the two movements, externally, appear to be the same. From the outside, or what Ryle calls “thin description,” there may be not much of a difference between the two movements, yet (in thick description) there is a vast difference between a wink and a twitch: one being a deliberate conspiratorial gesture, a wink, and another being an involuntary movement, a twitch. But consider, he says, a third person C, who tries to parody the wink of person B. Here, (in terms of thick description) the contracting of person B’s right eyelids is neither a twitch nor a wink, for he is jesting to amuse his friends. Yet, from the outside appearance (thin description), these three contractions of right eyelids are indifferentiable.³⁴

The point here being: in thin contextless description, the three contractions of right eyelids appear the same, however, in thick description or context description, there are vast differences between the three contractions of eyelids, after all, contexts provide one with essential elements to discern whether a movement is a wink, a twitch, or a jest: one being involuntary contraction, another a conspiratorial signal, and third being a parody or a jest to amuse some friends. Likewise, a contextless description, to use Ryle’s term, “thin description,” of traditional polyphonic rationality may appear the same: as assemblage of primitive myths, superstitions. Yet, in terms of “thick description,” or from contextual lens, these are not some trivial, insignificant mythical understanding of phenomena. Rather they provide traditional societies with meaningful understanding of

³⁴ Gilbert Ryle, “The Thinking of Thoughts: What is ‘Le Penseur’ Doing?” in *Collected Essays: 1929-1968*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), 494-510.

their world, nature, and phenomena within their own socio-cultural contexts. So, the *generality* of knowledge, which is one of the key aspects of scientific understanding, only distorts the actual existential experiences of diverse societies because *generality* is possible only in the absence of *context*. Certainly, in its unsullied form, scientific theorizing and understanding are invariably contextual, in nature.³⁵

Hence, polyphonic rationality cannot be understood without the contexts in which it is perceived. And because of the essentiality of contexts, to structure polyphony rationality in a generalizable manner is to distort the meaning it affords to diverse societies. It is now only prudent to illustrate episodes of polyphonic modes of thought with the help of few handfuls of episodes. This is done in order to explicate what has been hitherto discussed. The following episodes will perhaps illuminate the unsystematic, unfinalizable nature of polyphonic rationality. Moreover, the episodes from various traditional societies may appear unsystematic, even chaotic, yet there is an underlying leitmotif providing a context from which to understand the direct life experiences of societies: diverse peoples, cultures, societies thinking differently.

Societies Think Differently

Societies do not think alike. It is one of the fundamental errors of scientific rationality as well as of modern developmental progress to insist the sameness in ways societies think; or to insist uniform linear progression of thought, universally applicable

³⁵ Joseph Rouse, *Knowledge and Power: Toward a Political Philosophy of Science* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987). Indeed, as Rouse most astutely notes, even the ‘generality’ of *theories* in the natural sciences is *limited* to the *specific contexts* from which they are extracted; in other words, the ‘generality’ of scientific theories cannot be extrapolated beyond their aborning contexts. See, Rouse, *Knowledge and Power*.

to every society, from primitive superstitions to scientific beliefs.³⁶ No doubt, to insist uniform thinking is only the logical consequence of scientific rationality since, as we have seen in the previous two chapters, uniformity is necessary to it. Yet, such a monologic view eviscerates the manner in which each society thinks, ruminates, or interacts uniquely with its world, people, culture, community, landscapes, cosmos, and nature. There is polyphony of voices (thoughts) among diverse societies. They frame the context under which each society's existential realities are to be understood, for they afford meaning and purpose to the community as a whole. To discount polyphonic thoughts, however, is to distort societies' meaningful existential experiences. Socio-cultural experiences cannot be *detached* from their aborning traditions and made into an objective truth or knowledge. Astute observers since the earliest of historical human existence have duly noted the importance of diversity in thoughts. Herodotus, arguably one of the first writers from the west to contemplate over this issue, in his *Histories*, proffers the following episode:

When Darius was king of Persia, he summoned the Greeks who happened to be present at his court, and asked them what they would take to eat the dead bodies of their fathers. They replied they would not do it for any money in the world. Later, in the presence of the Greeks, and through an interpreter, so that they could understand what was said, he asked some Indians, of the tribe called Callatae, who do in fact eat their parents' dead bodies, what they would take to burn them. They uttered a cry of horror and forbade him to mention such a dreadful thing. One can see by this what custom can do and Pindar, in my opinion, was right when he called it 'King of all.'³⁷

³⁶ Societies hardly think alike, otherwise how could, for instance, one explain—apart from the superficial geo-political explanations—not only the ubiquitous tensions, but also the constant misunderstanding between the Western democracies and the Middle Eastern societies on issues regarding freedom, democracy, development, progress, modernity. If every society thought alike then there wouldn't be tension in regard to these ideas in the first place, in fact, they would have been embraced wholeheartedly.

³⁷ Herodotus, *Histories*, trans. Aubrey de Selincourt (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 2003), 3.38.

The point being: for Herodotus, each society arranges its experiences uniquely, with each affording its own understanding, as well as its own ways of dealing with the world, people, community, and cosmos. There are, in other words, diverse modes of thought. He rightly saw customs dictated the ways one viewed and understood the world, as one can see from his evocation of Greek lyric poet's, Pindar, dictum that custom is "king of all." And what is *custom* but the accepted knowledge or truths of each society. Hence, notions such as universally detached objective truths, applicable to all human realities, are alien to Herodotus since each society thinks differently, lives differently. After all, for him, to consider one way of thinking or living to be better than others is to disregard lived actualities of diverse societies.

Ultimately, what is deemed to be the correct ways of living or thinking depends on societies. Nietzsche, who shook not only the very foundations of western philosophy but also of western thought, verily saw this to be so. From the mouth of Zarathustra, Nietzsche notes:

Zarathustra has seen many lands and many peoples: thus he has discovered the good and evil of many peoples. Zarathustra has found no greater power on earth than good and evil.

No people could live without evaluating: but if it wishes to maintain itself it must *not evaluate as its neighbour evaluates*.

Much that seemed good to one people seemed shame and disgrace to another: thus I found. I found much that was called evil in one place was in another decked with purple honours.

*One neighbour never understood another: his soul was always amazed at his neighbour's madness and wickedness (italics added).*³⁸

³⁸ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra: A Book for Everyone and No One*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1969), "On the Thousand and One Goals."

For Nietzsche, good, correct, rational, evil, etc. will invariably vary from one society to another. Truth or knowledge independent of any tradition is indeed impossible in human society. Certainly, what is seen to be primitive superstition in one may be, to use Nietzsche's words, "decked with purple honours" in another. This is to say: according to Nietzsche, each society has its own rationality. The way each society makes sense of its world ultimately depends on its direct experiences with everyday realities: customs, beliefs, values, etc. These different forms of knowledge, in other words, must be understood within the contexts of the aborning society. Furthermore, for Nietzsche, there can be no reconciliation between these various viewpoints. Yet, for Nietzsche as well as for Herodotus, just because these diverse views cannot be reconciled, it does not mean the end of humanity; rather such differences can live in harmony beside one another, without merging (certainly, Dostoevsky and Bakhtin also held this view). This view is vividly exemplified in the Javanese shadow-play or *Wajang*, which Geertz animatedly illuminates.³⁹

The play depicts the struggle between *good* and *evil* over the fate of the world. In *Wajang*, there is no *ultimate* good or evil, after a long struggle between the opposing forces, both sides give in and depart with neither side claiming victory over the fate of the world.⁴⁰ Moral of the play: good and bad are both an essential part of daily life and illustrate the perennial human fallibility. The Javanese accepts the world as it is, in relation to the world in its totality, with each society invariably occupying a microcosm within the larger context of the universe. They do not categorize the good from the bad,

³⁹ Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 1973).

⁴⁰ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*.

nor seek to eliminate everything that is bad or evil from the world (or their society); they see the essentiality of everything (good and bad, rational and irrational, subjective and objective) that makes up human society. Thus, Javanese see every aspect of their society essentially linked and tied to one another; and by appreciating these intricate ties, they are better able to find meaning and hence deal with uncertainties of daily life—which they have been doing for hundreds, if not thousands, of years.

Surely, the stalemate of good and evil, in the *wajang*, may sound irrational to a scientific mind, but such irrationalities (i.e. *irrationality* from scientific person's perspectives), nevertheless, do play a part in the manner in which Javanese view their world and their society. Here, good and evil are harmonized, not merged nor reconciled, for each is dependent on the other. And, of course, Derrida has argued how oppositional terms—such as good/bad, right/wrong, light/darkness, etc.—are not only complementary, but are also dependent on each other for the completion of each other's meanings.⁴¹ One cannot simply disregard such rationality simply because it does not concur with one's rationalized system of thoughts that demands good must always triumph over evil. Most traditional societies, indeed most Asian and African societies, do not see the primacy of either *good* or *bad*; for them both are essential aspects of daily life, i.e. accept things for what they are, be they good or bad. And, of course, this is what it means to be polyphonic: diverse independent voices or consciousness co-existing in harmony without merging into one another. Surely, what makes this planet, earth, the jewel in the universe is not its (physical or chemical—organic or inorganic) uniformity with billions of other planets, rather this *insignificant* of a planetary body in one corner of this vast universe is

⁴¹ See, Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 1997).

inhabited by *diverse* peoples, societies, cultures with equally diverse languages, histories, myths, dreams, songs, religions, landscapes, poetries, and beliefs make it the *chef-d'oeuvre* of the cosmos. Just the fact that we are *aware* of such polyphonic diversity is itself wondrous.

Because societies think differently, it becomes essential in any meaningful social inquest for one to acculturate with the existential actualities of society. Intimacy with society eviscerates the distancing between the prober and the probed, viz. intimacy dissolves the cold detached view the prober has of the probed, or what twelve century philosopher Ibn ‘Arabi identifies as the *unification* of the knower with the known. Knowledge, according to Ibn ‘Arabi, cannot be attained without this unification: The highest degree of knowledge is attained by *unifying* the knower with the known in such a way that they become *one* and the same, and there remains no difference between the two.⁴² The Neapolitan thinker Giambattista Vico held similar views. He reasons human beings are historical, i.e. contextual, beings and create their own history, or, what we today term as, society. Therefore, knowledge of these societies can be properly understood only from the lens of each individual society, from the point of view of the society, i.e. context. In other words, knowledge about other societies entails one to become intimate with the daily life experiences and realities: to see, feel, hear, and experience the world as they do.⁴³ Indeed, intimation or unification is the only way to transcend the diverse modes of thought, in a subjective manner, thereby enabling one to properly understand whatever phenomenon one is inquesting.

⁴² Ibn ‘Arabi, *Divine Governance of the Human Kingdom*, trans. Shaykh Tosun Bayrak (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 1997).

⁴³ Giambattista Vico, *The New Science of Giambattista Vico*, trans. Thomas Goddard Bergin and Max Harold Fisch (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1984).

Perhaps one of the profoundests and, at the same time, much neglected truths of mankind is societies think differently. *Profoundest* because societies do not think alike (the processes of development, certainly, make this even more apparent). *Much neglected* because modern developed societies have somehow managed to convince themselves, despite the obvious differences, that societies do think alike, or, at least, they assume that given enough developmental progress, every society will converge towards one universal, standard mode of thinking, i.e. developed world's mode of thoughts.⁴⁴ However, such conviction seems rather misplaced, as Ruth Benedict reasons:

In the higher cultures the *standardization* of custom and belief...has given a *false sense* of the *inevitability* of the *particular forms* that have gained currency... Most of the simpler cultures did not gain the wide currency of the one which, out of our experience, we identify with human nature, but this was for various historical reasons, and certainly not for any that gives us as its carriers a monopoly of social good or of social sanity. *Modern civilization*, from this point of view, becomes *not a necessary pinnacle of human achievement but one entry* in a long series of *possible adjustments* (italics added).⁴⁵

Benedict is, here, making an important point. In the light of socio-cultural diversity, to shoulder the inevitability of *particular thought* through *particular form of progress* and *development* only seems illusory.⁴⁶ Certainly, Benedict was veracious to reason modern civilization to be only one out of numerous other recourses available to human societies. Indeed, it is only obvious for modern civilization to be one out of numerous other recourses because societies think differently. Hence, it is only

⁴⁴ On one hand, it seems only obvious for modern society to think societies think alike. This is because life in modern developed societies is so *intensely standardized* that it seems only proper for people to think as such.

⁴⁵ Ruth Benedict, "Anthropology and the Abnormal," *The Journal of General Psychology*, Vol. 10 (1) (1934), 59.

⁴⁶ An astute reader will remember from Chapter Two that Rostow (stages of growth), Sachs (ladder of development) and Inglehart and Welzel (modern rationalized self-expressive society) believed in inevitability of modernity and progress.

commonsensical for each society to think and, thereby, follow different paths in terms of what it sees to be appropriate for itself based on its own cultural realities. However, modern societies seem reluctant to notice the Cartesian error of one mode of thought. Descartes' famous dictum "Cogito, ergo sum" seems entrenched in their mode of thinking, to act as if differences in thinking do not exist among societies. Developed societies, just like Descartes, fail to realize that just because one can think, it does not mean the way people think, why people think, emotions and feelings connected with thinking, events conjuring up the thought processes, existential experiences and realities of societies, cultures, and so forth are analogous. To think as such is to ignore human reality and diversity.

The scholar philologist Auerbach, in one of the most important works of the twentieth century, reasons societies do not think alike. The manners in which people think vary in accordance to time and place. Even the language used to articulate one's knowledge or understandings is inextricably tied to the structure of one's thought processes; language itself is tied to one's modes of thought.⁴⁷ Therefore, to have any knowledge at all entails intimate understanding of everyday lived realities: hopes, aspirations, characters, languages, histories, and so forth. Similarly, modern linguists have arrived at congruent conclusion. Linguist Edward Sapir suggests human languages influence cultures and manners of thought. Languages change or evolve in such a manner as to sway the point of view from which societies interpret, elucidate and represent their

⁴⁷ Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

natural world, culture, community.⁴⁸ Indeed, one of the most obvious and basic substantiation of the differences in thinking among societies is language. Anyone speaking more than one language will easily recognize how sometimes translation fails to do justice to what is conveyed in another language; or how sometimes certain words, moods, feelings, actions, terms, changes, or concepts fail to be expressed in another language and so one ends up using approximate words—even though the *approximate words* or concepts selected in no way actually convey the actual meaning of the translating words—closest to that which one is trying to translate. One ends up resorting to such recourse not because one is incompetent, but rather the way people think or articulate the world is different and languages reflect that differences. Hence, languages express the protean nature of society. This way even language itself becomes kaleidoscopic, thereby evincing the multivariate socio-cultural realities and views. Indeed, psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan argues: a third interlocutor, i.e. intercession of unconscious cultural elements (be they terminologies, concepts, or assumptions regarding what constitute as real, imaginary, symbolic, along with syntaxes of one's language and other nonverbal systems of behavior), is always present in conversation between two interlocutors.⁴⁹ Expressed in a different way, for instance, even in this present conversation between myself and the reader, the third interlocutor, i.e. our unconscious cultural elements (our different cultural aspects), nevertheless intervenes in the manner in which we each approach and understand a topic or phenomenon. Differently put,

⁴⁸ Edward Sapir, *Language: An Introduction to the Study of Speech* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1921).

⁴⁹ Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007).

language manifests the manner in which one thinks, and one's thinking is very much related to one's socio-cultural realities.

Linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf, likewise, argues language is indissolubly tied to culture and its ways of thinking. Languages evince societies' predilections or views of their world.⁵⁰ Manifested in the language of a society are its views of the world. Language sums up the shared experiences, ideas, and beliefs of society. And through it society represents, elucidates, and interprets existential actualities of its world. Jacques Derrida certainly believes languages to be interpretation of ideas, beliefs, or opinions by human subjects. In other words, language has meaning simply because we, i.e. human subjects, allocate meaning to it. The meanings, furthermore, which each language reflects, are the elucidation or representation of its modes of thought, i.e. human subjects' views of their world.⁵¹ After all, "We dissect nature along lines laid down by our native language," and "[w]e cut nature up, organize it into concepts, and ascribe significance as we do, largely because we are parties to an agreement to organize it this way—an agreement that holds throughout our speech community and is codified in the patterns of our language."⁵² Our orientation or how we view the world truly goes on to frame the languages we speak. The words, concepts, sentences, metaphors, syntaxes of our language evince the way we understand the cosmos and our place in it.

⁵⁰ Benjamin Lee Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality: Selected Writings of Benjamin Lee Whorf* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1964).

⁵¹ Derrida, *Of Grammatology*. Surely, the findings of philologists, linguists, or linguistic anthropologists, apropos to language and its relation to thoughts and cultures only make one appreciate the substance of Herodotus and Nietzsche's remark: culture is "king of all," and diverse cultural truths, respectively.

⁵² Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality*, 213.

An astute reader will recognize that because societies do not think alike, the very notion of absolute objective universal truth, as proselytized by scientific rationality, becomes superfluous. Each society decides for itself its own knowledge based on its own existential realities. Here, one could no doubt protest to what has been hitherto reasoned: if there is no universal truth then there is only disorder. However, just because there is no room for absolute universal truth, it means neither chaos nor disorder.⁵³ It is important to realize, traditional societies do not pettifog about categorization, division, or isolation of the natural and social world. Here, everything is seen in its wholeness, everything is in relation with everything, and everything is in a constant state of flux. Moreover, the social world is seen in its organic whole, traditional societies do not quibble about subdivisions of worldly phenomena. They do not categorize events into social, cultural, political, economic, natural, religious, or philosophical aspects. Unlike modern developed societies, with over-specialized divisions between the abstract and practical, traditional societies do not delineate between metaphysical-abstract and practical affairs of society. Rather every event or activity that happens is the *daily realities* of society and signifies

⁵³ Of course, the present query is not suggesting 'relativism' is the only available recourse. Rather, the query is against 'absolutism' and 'relativism,' since both are an excuse to evade dealing with complexities of the human world. In other words, both convictions burgeon not only from one's lack of understanding of our complex human world, but also from one's inability to accept the world for what it is. Therefore, when one claims 'absolutism' or 'relativism,' one instantly shut-offs any meaningful dialogue from ever taking place. In other words, we must accept the world for what it is, with all its contradictions, faults, imperfections, uncertainties, vicissitudes, and chaos of everyday life. Human society is not perfect and is never meant to be perfect, no matter how hard one may try to convince oneself with petty scientific reasoning. One mustn't try to change the world, societies, cultures, or people. Rather the world, society, culture will change and do what it has to do in its own merry ways. There is no right or wrong way, each society must navigate through its beliefs and knowledge to deal with problems of its own; each will have to decide the future path for itself in accordance to its existential realities.

what it means to be part of the cosmos. There is no demarcation between specific religious activities from ordinary day to day activities. Nor do they require justification for whatever activities they happen to carry out, or to justify their views of the world. Furthermore, traditional societies do not quibble endlessly with regard to resolving or avoiding contradictions in their world views. They do not pettifog as to whether their beliefs are objectively true, are logically consistent, are internally and/or externally valid, are measurable using the latest scientific models and theories, are differentiated into independent and dependent variables, are consistent with the methodologies of science, are statistically significant, can be predicted and succinctly described by hypotheses or theories, or can hold against impartial scientific scrutiny. Such pettifogging only takes place and takes a principal role only in (modern developed) societies fixated with scientific rationality. Still, for traditional societies, their beliefs are what they are, as the product of their direct life experiences. For them, their beliefs and views on their world provide meaning and a sense of purpose to each and every one in the society. After all, *life* is above all about *living*, caring, sympathy, feeling, celebrating, helping, and conviviality. Life is *not* about whether one's beliefs or feelings are objectively true, scientifically valid, statistically measurable, and can be cogently described by scientific theory or hypothesis. Life in traditional societies is about living, where life is full of irreconcilable views, contradictions, and where everything is in constant flux.⁵⁴ The

⁵⁴ There is no such concept as 'contradiction' or 'logical fallacy' in many traditional societies. Instead, everything is inextricably tied to everything, i.e. *relationship*. As such, everything is in *relationship* with every other thing, and the essential purpose for each society is to maintain this harmony of relationships. According to Derrida, even the contradictory or oppositional terms—such as: good/bad, right/wrong, correct/incorrect, logical/illogical—are not something *real* but instead they are complementary to one another in order to realize one another's meanings. Indeed, for

meaningful practicalities of everyday life are most essential to human life and society. Society, or even life, without meaningful purpose is indeed a society in absolute malady. If traditional societies find meaningful purpose in myths, dreams, gods, spirits, or songs, then let them continue in their beliefs, for these afford life to be meaningful and purposeful. No one in the world has any authority or right to deprive any society of its meanings. Just because modern developed societies have rid themselves of any meaningful myths through scientific inquiry (and thereby also deprived themselves of their own meaning to their lives), it does not mean they have the right to deprive others of what is meaningful. Modern developed societies incessantly talk about human rights, but don't they realize to deprive meaning from peoples' lives in other societies is itself a violation of human rights. Societies have the right *to be*: to be what they are, as they are. This world is large enough to accommodate polyphonic voices of every society. Human society along with the natural ecology is the wonder of cosmos; the *diversity* makes it distinctive and splendid, for the diversity among human societies is itself the reflection of the wonders of the cosmos. Hence, the issue of absolute objective truth becomes superfluous. Nor does it mean without absolute universal truth there is only disorder. The world without universal objective truth or knowledge may indeed seem disordered to the scientific minds or societies, yet for traditional societies, the diversity of cultures or peoples makes it all the more essential for each society to retain its own knowledge.

Diverse modes of thought are reflected in languages of societies. The diverse languages succinctly underpin different modes of thought based on existential realities of

Derrida, the contradictory or oppositional terms must be understood for their *metaphorical* usage. They must not be mistaken as something *concrete* in existence. See, Derrida's, *Of Grammatology*.

each society. How society perceives the world and how it articulates those views is expressed in the syntax of its language. Accordingly, what is considered good, bad, evil, normal, abnormal, etc. will inextricably vary. Anthropologist Ruth Benedict, likewise, argues what is normal or ethical behavior ultimately depends on beliefs of society.⁵⁵ And what are beliefs but thoughts or views of society on the world expressed through language rendering certain behaviors normal, good, ethical.

Surely, how can one meaningfully understand other societies, or, indeed, how can social inquest be meaningful at all when the different ways people think are disregarded? The way one perceives the world structures the language in such a way as to elucidate and represent one's experienced realities. Therefore, each language will elucidate its particular views. Thus, some societies will categorize and isolate their world into concepts, while others will view themselves to be in interaction or relationship with the world around them. Take, for instance, the Indo-European languages, because these languages are *noun*-based, they isolate and categorize the world into concrete, absolutely fixed *concepts*. What one finds here is the importance of naming, identifying, cataloging, categorizing of things, names, places, into specific concepts, classes, groups, etc. As a result, societies belonging to and/or speaking this family of languages (which much of developed societies are) view and perceive the world around in a manner most conducive for scientific rationality: isolating, categorizing, fixing absolute concepts about human and natural phenomena. And, without a doubt, the absolute fixed concepts, frozen for all space and time, are essential to scientific methods and reasoning. Now in contrast, most traditional languages are *verb*-based. Here, the world, as traditional societies see it, is

⁵⁵ Benedict, "Anthropology and the Abnormal."

always in flux; it is a world of happenings, of actions, of events, of relations, of interactions, of occurring, of actualizing. Nothing in their world is fixed, frozen, isolated, categorized, universalized, or absolute. This world view tends to go against the views of concept/noun-based societies. Knowledge in traditional societies is, therefore, based on everyday existential life experiences. Here, of course, direct experiences help form their views of the world, which then become their knowledge. In traditional societies, due to their disregard for categorizations or fixed concepts, “each thing is mentally experienced on its own merits, and for what it actually is.”⁵⁶ They experience the world in the profoundest of ways so as to understand their own place and duty towards the world, universe, community, people, spirits, plants, and animals.

While, on the other hand, “Western people have stepped out of the mainstream of our species’ traditional way of recording and remembering experiences. Western thinkers have erected a series of absolute concepts, some dealing with the physical world, others describing the world of human affairs. As a consequence, Western people have been taught to think in a restricted manner.”⁵⁷ This restricted manner is beginning to serve as a serious source of impediment in describing the physical universe. Benjamin Whorf believes native languages, due to their less restrictive nature, is better suited to describe modern physics.⁵⁸ One of the co-creators of quantum theory, Niels Bohr, saw noun-based Indo-European language to restrict physicists from properly describing the eccentric quantum world. Since Bohr, some of the leading modern physicists, like David Bohm,⁵⁹ have looked to traditional knowledge to elucidate and represent the physical world,

⁵⁶ Peat, *Blackfoot Physics*, 234.

⁵⁷ Deloria, *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence*, 279.

⁵⁸ Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality*.

⁵⁹ Bohm, *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*.

because some of the most profound explanations require terms that evince the flux realities of quanta (such as: electrons being both waves and particles, or identifying either the position or the speed of electrons one at a time but never both, ambiguity of the quantum world, and so forth). And verb-based languages of the traditional world, where the world is ambiguous, in flux, in harmony among opposites/contradictions with no fixed absolute concepts, afford physicists terms enabling them to better describe the physical world.⁶⁰

What the current trend of natural sciences turning to traditional knowledge shows is not how one thought is better than others, but rather how every form of thought, of knowledge, of rationality is equally valid, meaningful, and how each has something to contribute, in its own unique ways, to advance human understanding. It shows our world as well as the whole of the universe is large enough to accommodate all forms of rationalities: polyphonic modes of thought. No matter what forms of rationality societies' adhere to, each is meaningful within the contexts of its society. Truly, languages are important means to properly understand societies, mainly because the tropes around which much of traditional languages are based evince views most essential to each society. Society's views of the world and those views expressed in its language tend to illustrate their indispensable relation with culture, people, world, cosmos, landscapes, myths, dreams, etc. Differently put, the way a given society thinks and understands the world is expressed in its language. Language is the manifestation of society's rationality. The Hopi people, for instance, have in their language no talks of past, present, future, or

⁶⁰ Given modern physics' turn toward and utilizing terms from traditional languages to describe the physical world, it seems the hitherto scientific description seem to look more like myths than the 'myths' of the traditional world.

of duration. Their concept of time is not an uninterrupted, mechanical linear stream of time divided into hours, minutes, seconds, milliseconds, etc., instead theirs is a time where everything is in the moment of actualizing, manifesting, or *coming into being*, time itself is one continuous movement of community, spirit, and energy vibrating across the cosmos in harmony connecting people with the life-force of their ancestors and the living world. Time, for Hopi, is alive, it is in intimate *relation* with people's feelings, emotions, intuitions, and the whole of cosmos; it is not some abstract entity existing independent of society.⁶¹ Time, in other words, is itself a matter of contextual relationship, thus a continuous *whole*: the moment of *coming into being*, where the living society is in relation not only to the cosmos but also to rest of the world, animals, ancestors, landscapes, plants, stones, etc.

Or, take, for instance, the Mohawk people: to understand their worldview or mode of thought is to involve oneself into a web of relationships with families, clans, relatives, kinsmen, etc. Therefore, the Mohawk language contains more than 120 terms just to express family relationships. Hence, to be Mohawk, to speak Mohawk is to participate not just physically but also emotionally in the intricate complex web of relationships with the whole community, who are not just members of society but members of the same family.⁶² The way they think, approach, understand, and view their world is based on this aspect of their daily life. While the Yupik people, on the other hand, stress the importance of maintaining a balanced relation among the spiritual, human, and natural worlds. Because of this, the Yupik orientation to the world is colored by its emphasis on maintaining its relations and responsibilities to the natural (ecology) world. This world

⁶¹ Whorf, *Language, Thought, and Reality*.

⁶² Peat, *Blackfoot Physics*.

view is epitomized by the word, *ella*, a root word whose meaning is modified by adding suffixes to it, such as, as Cajete indicates, ““Qaill’ ella auqa?” (How is the weather?); “Qaill’ ellan auqa?” (How are you feeling?); “Ellapak nunii” (The world’s land); “Ellagpiim Yua” (Spirit of the universe); “Ellapak” (Universe); and “Ella amigligtuq” (The sky is cloudy).”⁶³ As one can see, the variations of the root word, *ella*, are used in reference to signify *awareness* to person, weather, creative forces, gods, sky.⁶⁴ This is to say, Yupiks are always *aware* of their inextricable *relation* to the world, cosmos, ecology, society, and tribe, since it is from this relation that they finds their meaning and purpose. Indeed, the Yupik culture developed values, beliefs, and knowledges based on “*ella*” thereby enabling them to maintain and protect their ecological conception of their world.⁶⁵ Likewise, the Navajo language is intimately tied to the landscapes that inspired its development. Hence, the orientation of the Navajos is inextricably tied to the creative living force reflected in the landscapes and its *reciprocal* relationships with nature. Moreover, Navajos derive their cultural beliefs, values, ethics, and knowledge from this orientation to their landscapes.⁶⁶ The word, *ho’zho*, for instance, comprises Navajos’ notion of natural beauty and balance. Inherent also, in this word, is the whole orientation of Navajos to their landscapes signifying their reciprocal relations with nature. As a consequent of this view, Navajos see every event, place, etc. to be in unceasing state of

⁶³ Gregory Cajete, *Native Science: Natural Laws of Interdependence* (Sante Fe, NM: Clear Light Publishers, 2000), 66-67.

⁶⁴ Cajete, *Native Science*.

⁶⁵ Oscar A. Kawagley, *A Yupik Worldview: A Pathway to Ecology and Spirit* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1994).

⁶⁶ Cajete, *Native Science*.

motion, and their (verb-based) language reflects this mode of thinking elucidating their beliefs and rationalities.⁶⁷

Similarly, in order to understand the Nuer, E. E. Evans-Pritchard argues, one “must first master a vocabulary referring to cattle and to the life of the herd.”⁶⁸ And, truly, this importance of cattle in the lives of Nuer is epitomized by the manner in which they think and comprehend their world, from the manner in which a person is given names to their notion of time. For instance, men are addressed by names that refer to the color or form of their favourite oxen, while women take their names from the cows or oxen they milk, and young boys are given the names of the oxen they play with in the pastures. A person is usually given a cow or ox name at birth, but, sometime names handed down to posterity are oxen names, not their birth names. Also, the name of a person changes through-out his life, it is never static: a name given at birth changes when a person attains boyhood, he then acquires a new name during his adulthood, and when he attains manhood or becomes a family man his name accordingly changes.⁶⁹ Even their notion of time is indissolubly tied to cattle: indeed, the Nuer’s have no notion of time. For Nuer, time (for a lack of a better term, because they have no such concept as *time*) is not time in a sense of unit of time: as in day, month, year, hour, minute, second, etc.; instead, it is an activity or some outstanding activities in process, since time, for Nuer, is relation between activities: such as, at the time of early camps, milking, taking cattle from byre to kraal, driving cattle to pastures, time of harvesting, and so forth; “Thus, a man says, ‘I

⁶⁷ Gary Witherspoon, *Language and Art in the Navajo Universe* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1977).

⁶⁸ E. E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1969), 19.

⁶⁹ Evans-Pritchard, *The Nuer*.

shall return at milking,” or “At early camps,” or “I shall start off when the calves come home.”⁷⁰ This, of course, does not mean the Nuer are primitive, backward, or they cannot think, rather it illustrates how one’s knowledge or rationality is a reflection of one’s views of the world.

Take also, for instance, how traditional societies stress the perennial importance of communal harmony, i.e. the primacy of communal collective identity over individual personality, by dropping the first person singular pronoun, *I*. Languages spoken in collective societies (which most traditional societies are) drop the pronoun *I* from sentences when referring to themselves, while in individualistic societies the pronoun *I* is used in reference to individuality of a person.⁷¹ This pronoun drop, certainly, does not mean collectivist societies are incapable to think in an *enlightened* manner or are oblivious to human freedom. Instead, each society has its ways to best assemble its community within its context (contingent on existential realities of society, ecologies, and so forth) to maintain harmony, thereby ensuring its survival. Its beliefs or knowledge are tied to its views of the world, which are themselves based on direct expressions of its society. Thus, one will find, for instance, Samoan language to have no corresponding terms signifying, with regard to Indo-European concept of, the *individual* or *self*; therefore, “instead of our [i.e. European] Socratic “know thyself,” Samoans say “Take care of the relationship”; instead of the European image of a rounded, integrated personality, like a sphere with no sides, Samoans are like gems cut with many distinct sides. The greater the number of sides, or parts, defined by relationships, the more

⁷⁰ Ibid., 102.

⁷¹ Yoshi Kashima, and Emiko S. Kashima, “Culture and Language: The case of Cultural Dimensions and Personal Pronoun Use,” *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology* 29 (May 1998): 461-86.

brilliant the form, the greater the craft and skill of the person. Personal qualities are relative to context rather than descriptive of a persistent and consistent quality or essence.”⁷² As one can see, for Samoans, the personality of a person derives its meaning as well as its notion as a *person* only in relation to members of the society. What this suggests is the ever flexible and shifting notion of personhood (but always based on *relations*) as one forms relations with other members under various contexts even within one’s own community.

Indeed, for instance, most cultures in Asia view *individual-self* only within the context of one’s *relatedness* to others in the community, as opposed to individual-centric societies, where the individual personality maintains a *separate self* apart from others and thereby seeks to focus on one’s inner attributes.⁷³ For instance, the Chinese word for man, *jen*, signifies not the *individual-self*, but rather it evinces a person’s conducts and interactions with respect to other members of society. Thus, for Chinese to say of a person, “he is not a jen (t’a pu shih jen),” does not mean a person is not a human being/man, instead they mean a person’s behavior, in respect to other human beings (*jens*) of his society, is not acceptable.⁷⁴ *Jen* highlights not only the importance of interpersonal relationship, but also harmony among persons’ (*jens*’) conduct in respect to other members. In other words, the personality of a person comes into meaningful existence only in contextual relations with others. This stands in contrast to the western

⁷² George E. Marcus, and Michael M. J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press), 65.

⁷³ Hazel Rose Markus, and Shinobu Kitayama, “Culture and the Self: Implications for Cognition, Emotion, and Motivation,” *Psychological Review* 98, no. 2 (1991): 224-53.

⁷⁴ Francis L. K. Hsu, “Psychosocial Homeostasis and Jen: Conceptual Tools for Advancing Psychological Anthropology,” *American Anthropologist* 73, no. 1 (1971): 29.

concept of individual, where a personal self is seen as an entity standing outside of society and others. Hence, in collective societies, the notion of what is good or bad is the product of culture rather than something universally given;⁷⁵ or as one Chinese proverb says: “Man is born good; but his nature is changed by association.”⁷⁶

What has been reasoned so far in is not about language, but how one’s views about the world are influenced by one’s social, historical, or cultural circumstances, and how the language one speaks ultimately reflects one’s views. The point here is to explicate why it is essential to properly understand societies, especially pertaining to development or any other social query, for societies think differently, and this difference in thinking is reflected in the language one speaks since languages elucidate, represent societies’ world views. In other words, what constitutes, according to Hans-Georg Gadamer, as human knowledge or understanding is invariably contingent on society’s cultural circumstances; they are neither independent of society nor culture.⁷⁷ Indeed, how can societies who think differently ever harmoniously embrace alien (*noun*-based) ideas or concepts—such as development, modernity, civilization, progress—that have no equivalence, i.e. do not even exist, in *verb*-based traditional societies. In light of such polyphonic views, it is even more illusory to go on imposing or proselytizing concepts—such as, modern development and progress—as if they are universally valid. Moreover, how could societies highlighting communal identity make sense of concepts—primacy of economic-man, individual initiatives, self-interests—proselytized by individualistic societies. Put differently, how could modern development stressing the importance of

⁷⁵ Hsu, “Psychosocial Homeostasis and Jen.”

⁷⁶ From “*San Tzu Ching*” quoted in Hsu, “Psychosocial Homeostasis and Jen,” 29.

⁷⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (Seabury Press, 1975).

individual initiatives, i.e. Social Darwinism, through economic accumulation of material wealth, competition, efficiency, or “survival of the fittest” attitude make sense to societies highlighting cooperation, sharing, helping, and communal harmony? It is no wonder, in order to make alien concept palatable in traditional societies, it becomes necessary to displace the existing beliefs with new beliefs backed by enticing *goodness* of material wealth, which is established as an emblem of universal human right. It is therefore not surprising for indigenous societies to be devastated in the name of modern progress—as seen in the previous chapter: transmigration in Indonesia and villagization in Tanzania. In order to make some alien concepts *normal*, the old beliefs in traditional societies have to be abandoned. Then, with new beliefs normalized, they make concepts—such as development, progress, etc.—or make societies strive to attain idealized aims of such concepts as a matter of course, as something commonsensical, as something that *always existed, but* only brought to light by scientific rationality and modernity.

What may be a simple straight forward concept, “development,” in one society may be an alien concept in another or it may require complex interpretations, with *analogous* (not *homologous*) terms being brought in simply to make comprehensible the term “development.” The following episode may perhaps convey to the reader what is being reasoned. “[A] judge makes a brief remark and waits while the translator begins a long oration in an indigenous [i.e. Native American Indians] language. The judge asks in surprise, “Did I really say that?” The translator replies “Yes,...more or less.” “But,” the judge will say, “I only spoke a couple of sentences and you went on for about twenty minutes!” A little later, when asked a question, a native witness will begin a long speech,

at the end of which the translator may simply report, “The witness says, ‘No’.”⁷⁸ The meaning behind this episode being:

What is going on is not simply a matter of moving between two different languages but of translating between *profoundly different worldviews*. What to the judge was a single sentence may have contained words that are related to *concepts*, that touch on issues, that are *never found within the traditional indigenous worldview*. The translator will have to set the scene, as it were, and provide the context in which the judge’s brief remarks can be understood. Likewise, the *act of saying no*, within some cultures, may *depend upon a variety of factors that are not thought to be relevant in ours* (italics added).⁷⁹

As one can see, interpreting is not as simple as many assumes. Rather it involves elucidating, interpreting, representing, understanding of complex and subtle cultural traits supplemented by polyphonic contextual circumstances, which may or may not be present in the translating language, in order to convey what is being translated. Non-traditional societies take it for granted the polyphonic worldviews of diverse societies. They simply assume everybody thinks as they do or ought to think as they do because they are modern and technologically advanced societies. They assume what they are represents the emblem of humanity or universal good, something which every society should emulate. Hence, what for the developed world may seem a concept decked with, to borrow from Nietzsche, “purple honours” may not be seen in the same light or such concepts may not even be found in traditional societies.

Certainly, goals and demands evident in the episodes examined in the previous chapter (transmigration in Indonesia, villagization in Tanzania and goals proposed in the MDGs), from forced resettlements to standardization of societies, are conceivable precisely because the diverse rationalities predicated on each society’s unique socio-

⁷⁸ Peat, *Blackfoot Physics*, 220.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 220-21.

cultural realities are brushed aside. This is why when millions of peoples were moved, during transmigration and villagization, from their traditional lands and resettled elsewhere, the technicians of development could not fathom the profound significance of what traditional lands evinced for the natives. Just as the Hopi, Navajo, Yupik, and Nuer's views of the world were based on their land and ecology that rendered their existence meaningful as society and human beings, the natives in Tanzania and Indonesia likewise based their views of the world and derived their beliefs, knowledges, and the whole basis for their existence from the lands they were forcefully removed, in the name of developmental progress. The technicians *could not* have and *cannot* fathom such significance precisely because they assumed every society thought alike and that every society, sooner or later, would adhere to one mode of thought. For the natives, however, their ecology and their lands located within are more than just lands, they signify the very singularity of their existence, the basis for their moral growth and spiritual uplift, the basis for their knowledge, their source of comfort, their source of history, their source of culture. For each native person, the lands, landscapes, trees, stones, ecologies, birds, fish, and leaves are part of one's very being and, consequently, one is part of them. There is a union between the natives and their world in such a way that they become one and the same. However, for technicians, the natives were ignorant, who had to be sanitized and brought into the rationalized systems dictated by scientific reasoning, after all, what can the natives do, in a highly globalized world, with their primitive education based on superstitions, agricultural practices that destroyed the environment, and backward healing practices based on magic and myths. Similarly, the standardized objectives set by the MDGs conveniently discounted the existence of other modes of thought. The goals set by

the MDGs are *good* only from the perspective of the developed world and technicians that created them. They failed to apprehend how the *good* in one society or from one perspective may not hold to be so in another.⁸⁰ This is why the MDGs blanketed traditional societies with standardized goals and universalized steps to alleviate problems. Of course, by *problems*, it means, what the technicians and developed world defines as *problems*. And because *they define* what *the problems* are, they also set up *standardized steps* and *goals* to remedy the *problems*. Furthermore, by defining what *the problems* are, they *implicitly* define also what is *good* or *desirable*. Certainly, inherent in such thinking is the assumption that there exists only one mode of thought, scientific rationality, appropriate for all humanity.

Since societies think differently, polyphonic experiences signify the expression of this diversity in thoughts. Not only do societies think differently, but what constitutes as knowledge indissolubly vary, even the manner (method) in which knowledge is acquired will differ. Meaning: just because what counts as knowledge, in the developed world, is reserved only for those that utilize scientific reasoning, it does not mean the same method is used, or valid even, in other traditional societies; or that what constitutes as knowledge is the same. In fact, even the word *knowledge* or *rationality* is a misnomer when signifying traditional knowledge. Due to traditional world's views of the world, which are never frozen, the noun, *knowledge*, or *rationality*, freezing and categorizing the word becomes highly misleading. Instead, like their worldview of constant change, evinced in their verb-based languages, *knowledge*, for traditional societies, is something always in

⁸⁰ And Nietzsche, Herodotus, Benedict, Dostoevsky, Bakhtin, Auerbach, Whorf, Lacan, Gadamer (along with the Hopi, Nuer, Yupik, Navajo, Mohawk), among many others attest to it.

the *acting*, *experiencing*, *knowing*, *processing*, *participating*, *understanding*, *coming into being*, *ongoing*, *sensing*, *encountering*, *occurring*. The *-ing* differentiates between knowledge as something *past*, stable, or a dead concept, fixed for all time and space, and knowledge as something always in *present*, in movement, in flux, in happening, in direct experiencing. Knowledge for traditional societies is never (i.e. never becomes) fixed or settled, instead it is an event of *unfolding*. Of course, even the term *polyphonic knowledge* or *rationality*, utilized in this query to show this diversity, is itself a misnomer. However, to avoid confusion, this term is, nevertheless, employed. It would be helpful for the reader to view *polyphonic knowledge* as something *experiencing*, *encountering*, *understanding*, *ongoing*, *knowing*.

Indeed, for Native American Indians, knowledge is not *knowledge* as in a *fixed* concept (or static noun), but knowledge as in something one is “coming-to-knowing.”⁸¹ For Native American Indians, knowledge is always in the acting, of knowing, of experiencing, of feeling, of participating, of engaging. Because *knowledge*, in Indo-European language, is categorized as a stable noun, it invariably leads knowledge to be viewed as something fixed. Thence, the concept or categorization-centric nature of the Indo-European language becomes a fecund aborning ground for scientific rationality. Indeed, the language itself is tied to the manner in which societies belonging to this family view the world: they categorized, catalogued, systematized, organized their world. Consequently, knowledge becomes fixed and hence the emphasis on *universally objective truth* or *knowledge*. In fact, look at the manner in which the term *Indian* has remained *fixed* even to this day to define the identity of Native American nations. In relation to the

⁸¹ See, Cajete, *Native Science*; Peat, *Blackfoot Physics*.

outside world, they are not known as the Cree, Mohawk, Blackfeet, Apache, Hopi, Navajo, and so forth, but as Native/American Indians. The realities of these people were displaced by erroneous mistake of one European explorer who foolishly thought he discovered a new route to the land of spices, and referred the people in the new world by the term, Indians. Or, even take the abstract maps drawn by the colonial empires. The colonial empires, after pillaging their colonies, left by drawing *fixed* arbitrary maps on drawing boards thereby constructing new realities (realities defined by the colonial empires), by virtue of which actual living local realities were displaced by abstract maps fixing people (regardless of their tribes or communities) by instructing where they should live, where everyone must stay put or fit in, i.e. how everyone must abide by the imposed reality. Yet, the porous boundaries among many of the former colonies, and the continuous civil wars and ethnic violence perennially defying the fixed abstract boundaries not only mock the imposed reality of abstract concepts denying cultures their reality, but also show the adverse consequences of categorizing human societies. Thus, to insist on the applicability of single rationality or single form of knowledge in every society is to disregard others' existing realities. It denies the very humanness of other societies, as if they were incapable to think, or lead meaningful lives.

Because polyphonic knowledge is that which is *experiencing*, *participating*, *understanding*, *sensing* and never of one kind, it becomes essential to understand it in its polyphonic nature. In other words, there are no strict rules or methods as to how knowledge is attained. Knowledge, on the other hand, is attained through direct experiences involving one to sense, feel, perceive events, activities thus *occasioning* one to understand the day to day realities of life. The following episode will perhaps illustrate

the participating, sensing, understanding nature of polyphonic knowledge. James C. Scott notes of the following episode while doing fieldwork in Malaysia, he recalls:

Growing in the compound of the house in which I lived was a locally famous mango tree. Shortly, before my arrival, however, the tree had become infested with large red ants, which destroyed most of the fruit before it could ripen. It seemed nothing could be done short of bagging each fruit. Several times I noticed the elderly head of household, Mat Isa, bringing dried nipah palm fronds to the base of the mango tree and checking them... He knew that small black ants, which had a number of colonies at the rear of the compound, were the enemies of large red ants. He also knew that the thin, lancelike leaves of the nipah palm curled into long, tight tubes when they fell from the tree and died... Such tubes would also, he knew, be ideal places for the queens of the black ant colonies to lay their eggs. Over several weeks he placed dried nipah fronds in strategic places until he had masses of black-ant eggs beginning to hatch. He then placed the egg-infested fronds against the mango tree and observed the ensuing week-long Armageddon. Several neighbors... and their children followed the fortunes of the ant war closely. Although smaller by half or more, the black ants finally had the weight of numbers to prevail against the red ants and gain possession of the ground at the base of the mango tree. As the black ants were not interested in the mango leaves or fruits while the fruits were still on the tree, the crop was saved.⁸²

The traditional knowledge used in remedying the problem of red ants destroying the fruits was not through the usage of bio-chemical pesticides or any other modern scientific insecticides, which only harms the soil. Rather, at their disposal was organic traditional collected wisdom, attained through the long process of intimate experience and participation with nature, passed down for generations. Indeed, Mat Isa had no use of biological or chemical theories, botany, zoology, agronomy, entomology, pomology; nor did he carry out experiments to see if his traditional knowledge concurred with his empirical experiences; nor did he measure using sophisticated scientific instruments; nor did he concisely outline his theory or hypothesis; nor did he follow any scientific methodologies; nor did he lay out his falsification criteria for his experiences; nor did he

⁸² James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 333.

use statistical measurements to see if what he experienced was statistically significant; nor did he apply for grants in order to study how to remedy the problem; nor did he employ opinion or survey polls, like social scientists, to give an air of science to validate his experiences. All Mat Isa did was to understand the nature of black and red ants by participating and sensing, knowledge that, no doubt, has been passed down for generations, by keeping in mind the context of his local ecology. As Scott notes of this episode:

This successful field experiment in biological controls presupposes several kinds of knowledge: the habitat and diet of black ants, their egg-laying habits, a guess about what local material would substitute as movable egg chambers, and experience with the fighting proclivities of red and black ants. Mat Isa made it clear that such skill in practical entomology was quite widespread, at least among his older neighbors... What is clear to me is that...[i]t is hard to imagine this knowledge except in the context of lifelong observation and a relatively stable, multigenerational community that routinely exchanges and preserves knowledge of this kind.⁸³

Just because polyphonic knowledge of traditional societies does not utilize scientific methods, it does not invalidate the reality that the community was able to rid the red ants from destroying their crop. Moreover, even the means utilized to remedy the problem was not modern scientific insecticides or pesticides (which are more harmful for the soil). Instead the problem was remedied using local, organic, or natural techniques: black ants and dried leaves. In other words, nature or the local milieu provided Mat Isa's society with enough knowledge and organic (natural) apparatus to remedy any local societal problems.

⁸³ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 333-34.

Similarly, the Native Indians in South America knew that chewing the bark of cinchona tree was an effective means to cure malaria.⁸⁴ Or native societies in Africa knew how to avoid malaria within their community simply by living in small groups in high and dry land over large areas.⁸⁵ Also, modern science boasts about the fact that it discovered vitamin C. But evidence reveals native societies were already aware of such knowledge. Native Indians in North America, for instance, already had knowledge on how to cure scurvy, a malady caused due to deficiency in Vitamin C, while the white mariners were dying of scurvy not knowing how to cure the disease. The first recorded cure of this disease was made in Canada. The native Indians in Canada taught British soldiers, who were dying in the thousands, to use tea made from the shoots of the spruce tree to cure scurvy.⁸⁶ What is more, Masai, the Eastern Africa tribe, is reported to have known the carrier of malaria: mosquitoes. They also knew how to prevent serious spirochetal infections, caused by syphilis, by exposing those infected with syphilis to malaria, thereby preventing further infections.⁸⁷ The Aboriginals in Australia, the Central African tribes, and indigenous societies in South America, used clay, i.e. kaolin (aluminum silicate) for treating allergies and other serious digestive maladies. This knowledge is well known among many traditional societies all over the world. Persons within these societies always carried balls of clay which they tipped into their foods and drinks before consuming. Modern science latter found the clay (kaolin) helped prevent

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Jared Diamond, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997).

⁸⁶ Weston A. Price, *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration* (Le Mesa, CA: Price-Pottenger Nutrition Foundation, 2004).

⁸⁷ Price, *Nutrition and Physical Degeneration*.

serious digestive ailments, other bacterial infections of the gut, and even help in remedying allergies.⁸⁸

Moreover, traditional societies also knew how best to utilize their ecologies to attain their wherewithal everyday essentials: such as crops, agriculture, etc. The polycroppings, shifting cultivation, and so forth (thoroughly discussed in the previous chapter) were based on the conditions of their local ecology. Such practices had generations of careful observation, participation, and understanding of local environments; they weren't just primitive, mythical agricultural practices. Traditional societies understood how to preserve nutrients and fertilities of the soil, how to regenerate forests, protect against erosions, insects. They were also well aware of their local conditions: climate, ecology, types of soil, as well as types of vegetables, fruits, and plants best suited to their needs and conditions. Knowledge of traditional societies is based on generations of careful observation and direct experience and, as Scott maintains, "*no research scientist can hope to duplicate (italics added)*" such local experiences; yet, more importantly, because lives of their families directly depend on the outcome of their experience and knowledge, it would be thoughtless to consign this knowledge as myths.⁸⁹ As Howard reasons, "The approach to...farming must be made from the field, not from the laboratory... The views of the peasantry in all countries are worthy of respect; there is always good reason for their practices; in matters like the cultivation of mixed crops they themselves are still the pioneers."⁹⁰ Indeed, local farmers are continuously in close

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 305.

⁹⁰ Albert Howard, *An Agricultural Testament* (London: Oxford University Press, 1940), 221.

interaction with their ecology, soil, climate, etc. affording intimate understanding on seeding, planting, harvesting, soil preparation, and so forth.

The point behind these episodes is: traditional societies did not carry out experiments using scientific methodologies to remedy against malaria, scurvy, syphilis, soil erosions, etc. Instead their collected wisdom, passed down for hundreds of generations, taught them how to care for the well-being of their society: be it natural (crops, soil, etc.) or physical (health). Does this mean traditional rationalities not adhering to scientific reasoning are, therefore, unsound or mythic, even though they provide cure against diseases and help preserve crops? Of course, the answer is No. To assume every kind of knowledge must be attained through one means, i.e. scientifically, is to assume every society thinks alike. Polyphonic rationality of indigenous societies is scorned for its unscientific nature because any form of knowledge procured independent of scientific methods, instruments, doctrines and not codified in formal scientific theories is dismissed as superstition, myth, supernatural, etc. More importantly, polyphonic knowledge is denigrated precisely because it undermines the religious like catechisms of the academics, technical experts, specialists and their institutions. Certainly, what use is there for the academics, expert technicians, specialists if they don't flaunt their inept technical skills to the *primitive* societies, skills that are of no relevance, whatsoever, to the realities of the traditional world?

Indeed, the demands made in the MDGs (uniform agricultural practices, education, health concerns, diseases, etc.) and standardized agricultural practices cajoled in Tanzania show how different rationalities are eviscerated, thereby disregarding polyphonic knowledge that hitherto sustained traditional societies. The uniform

agricultural practices proselytized, by the MDGs (and utilized in Tanzania), using machineries, pesticides, insecticides, scientifically or genetically enhanced seeds, monocroppings, etc. in the long run deprive soil of its fertility and essential nutrients. Traditional societies have for centuries, if not for thousands of years, utilized their accumulated wisdom to developed a system of agricultural practices best suited to meet the demands of their ecological milieu. Yet, such realities were discounted by technicians under the justification that native societies' practices were backward and primitive. Moreover, by dismissing polyphonic accumulated knowledge of societies in favor of scientific rationality, technical experts viewed with contempt anything not modern or that which is not a product of scientific rationality. As such, traditional ways of healing and curing are ridiculed and stigmatized as irrational superstitions and magic. In other words, principal of one mode of thought, scientific rationality, makes everything that has been done prior to modernity appear backward and primitive, i.e. incorrect. This is vividly illustrated by the manner in which the MDGs, transmigration, villagization, and development scholarships make it appear as though it is only through scientific reasoning and modern technology that diseases are cured, environments protected, agricultural yields increased, societies enlightened or educated in the right fashion, status of women elevated, and so forth. When existing knowledge of societies is decried, it not only undermines societies' foundations but it also leaves societies helpless to care for themselves. For instance, by removing local peasants, in Tanzania during the compulsory villagization, from their local milieu and imposing on them standardized agricultural practices in order to increase the country's agricultural output, the agricultural yields

actual decreased.⁹¹ This was augmented by the fact that peasants who hitherto knew well about farming—where to farm, what crops to plant, how to prepare the soil, how to retain soil fertility and nutrients, how to read the soil and weather conditions, and so forth—within their local ecology were left as mendicants dependent on state for assistances because they were thrown out from their environment (where they were not only competent, but were also proficient in what they did) and resettled in a new ecological milieu utterly alien to them.⁹² Hence, to dismiss diverse modes of thinking, of living, of knowledge is to ignore societies' realities.

Diversity undeniably makes each society think differently or retain for itself modes of thought relevant within its socio-cultural contexts. Given the diversity among societies, it makes very little sense for every society, irrespective of its contexts, to adhere to *one* universal mode of thought applicable for all place and time. Thus, the ways in which each society thinks will vary inextricably. And each mode of thought, i.e. polyphonic rationality, is valid within the contexts of its society. Besides, just because societies do not adhere to scientific rationality, it does not mean their modes of thought are nonsensical. Ultimately, what constitutes as rational will depend on societies' cultural experiences. The pacific island societies, for instance, believe the sun revolves around the earth. Certainly, this belief of theirs is not justified by myths; rather, it is thought through

⁹¹ Jan Kees van Donge, "Agricultural Decline in Tanzania: The Case of the Uluguru Mountains," *African Affairs* 91 (January 1992): 73-94; Linda Freeman, "CIDA, Wheat, and Rural Development in Tanzania," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 16, no. 3 (1982): 479-504; John Shao, "The Villagization Program and the Disruption of the Ecological Balance in Tanzania," *Canadian Journal of African Studies* 20, no. 2 (1986): 219-39; M. Hirst, "Recent Villagization in Tanzania," *Geography* 63 (April 1978): 122-25; John E. Moore, "The Villagisation Process and Rural Development in the Mwanza Region of Tanzania," *Geografiska Annaler* 61, no. 2 (1979): 65-80.

⁹² Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

rationally and even substantiated empirically by their lived experiences. As one pacific island navigator reasons:

I am aware of the foreigner's claim that the earth moves and the sun stands still, as someone told us; but this we cannot believe, for how else could it happen that in the morning and evening the sun burns less hot than in the day? It must be because the sun has been cooled when it emerges from the water and when toward setting it again approaches the water. And furthermore, how can it be possible that the sun remains still when we are yet able to observe that in the course of the year it changes its position in relation to the stars?⁹³

It is understandable why the island navigator thinks it is rational for him to believe in his knowledge about the sun revolving the earth. This is because he (along with other members of his society, since time immemorial) has used this celestial navigation to sail across vast open oceans and this rationality/knowledge of his is further substantiated by his lived experiences: sailing across vast open oceans navigating from one tiny island to another, that are sometimes hundreds of miles apart, in their small canoes.⁹⁴ “However wrong from our point of view,” Goodenough reasons, “his belief was well considered and quite adequate to his needs. We can understand in the light of his reasoning and experience why he considered it foolish to accept a foreigner's belief that seemed so thoroughly contradicted by the fact.”⁹⁵ Indeed, from the view of the native navigator, how can the *fact*—the sun moving across the sky, the change in the sun's relative position to stars, the navigator navigating with the aid of the stars' positions—confirmed by his experience—using the *facts* to sail hundreds of miles of open seas to tiny islands in his small canoe boat—be incorrect. For him, his reasoning is sound, while the foreigner's rationality or belief is unsound. Tyco Brahe, Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, not even

⁹³ Ward Hunt Goodenough, *Cooperation in Change* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1963), 158.

⁹⁴ Goodenough, *Cooperation in Change*.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 158.

Ptolemy, are of any relevance pertaining to this native navigator's sense of truth, after all, who can blame him for holding on to his rationality since his knowledge is verified by his experiences. No society has the right nor the *duty* to deprive him (or his society) of his truth that affords meaning and purpose to his life. Let him live the life that makes sense to him.

Traditional societies hold their wisdom, belief, knowledge to be true not because their myths tell them to, nor out of blind faith, but because their knowledge is based on actual lived experiences (and surely not based on academics, technical experts' journal articles, books, statistics, hypotheses, theories, etc.). Because societies are bound to think differently, even the manner in which knowledge is attained will equally be polyphonic in nature and equally valid. The Beaver Indians, a hunting people, in Northern Canada, for instance, highly emphasize the issue of truth since their society's survival depends on it. As Brody reasons, "Precision and accuracy in all aspects of land use have obviously been integral to survival. It is not surprising, therefore, that among the Inuit, Beaver, and many other hunting peoples, there is great hostility towards any unreliability about resource-harvesting activities. It is striking that in some *hunting peoples' languages there is no very clear distinction between making an error in judgement and telling a lie*. In a society where information about the land and its animals can make the difference between life and death, there cannot be much tolerance for errors of judgement (italics added)."⁹⁶ Given the essentiality of truth—how to track animals, where to and how to spot them, how to set traps, the food animals eat, their behaviors, predilections, which animals to be trapped, knowledge of their landscapes, weather, ecology, and so forth—for the survival

⁹⁶ Hugh Brody, *Maps and Dreams* (New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1981), 175.

of their entire community, it is highly imprudent to simply dismiss their beliefs, knowledge, or truths as myths or product of unscientific thoughts with no real basis.

Also take, for instance, the Trukese in Micronesia. They believe elephantiasis is caused by malevolent spirits. “They [evil spirits] are especially active at dawn and dusk, when they are said to rise from the ground and bite human beings, thereby making them ill. People are warned not to go to work in their taro patches before the sun is well up and to stop working before the sun gets too low.”⁹⁷ From the stand point of scientific rationality, this belief of Trukese may be dismissed and viewed as another traditional myths (as far as most social science definitions go) affording native societies to deal with phenomena beyond their control. Yet, this belief or *myth* of theirs is based on rationally sound judgments and, as one will see, for very good reasons. Certainly, from scientific point of view, this belief is false, after all, how could malevolent spirits cause elephantiasis. However, “Empirically, it would seem, the ancestors of these people have learned to associate elephantiasis with swampy ground, especially at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes, which actually carry filarial, the responsible parasite, are especially active. By staying away from such places at these times people minimize their exposure to filarial infection, thus lowering their chances of...infection.”⁹⁸ One can see natives’ beliefs or *truths* are not *mythical*; rather their beliefs are based on sound rationality within the context of their own society. It also demonstrates how every society or culture thinks differently/polyphonically. Furthermore, what the outsiders identify traditional truths as myths are not some fantastic stories or *magic* made up to control or deal with phenomena beyond one’s control, but instead these *myths* are always based on sound reasoning and

⁹⁷ Goodenough, *Cooperation in Change*, 158.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 158-159.

based on lived experiences containing within themselves lessons or knowledge—pertaining to health, food, caring, sympathy, cooperation, crops, responsibility towards each other and towards nature, etc.—for present society as well as for its posterities.⁹⁹ Of course, for traditional societies, their truths aren't *myths*, nor are they known or identified as *myths*; rather they are recognized as collected wisdom/knowledge. In many ways, the term *myth* and its pejorative tone is a modern construction to downplay polyphonic knowledge of traditional societies.

The polyphonic modes of thought may surely seem non-linear, unsystematic, irrational, unscientific, even silly and something to be laughed at, yet, for traditional societies, their modes of thought are not only sound, but are also based on their existential realities. Their mode of thinking makes sense to them, it affords them to make sense of their world as well as their place in it, even if it may seem abnormal to outsiders. Consider, for instance, decision making process of Athapaskan Indians in Northern Canada. Brody describes how decisions are made by taking into account the multifaceted relational elements that pervade daily existences:

To make a good, wise, sensible hunting choice is to accept the interconnection of all possible factors, and *avoids the mistake of seeking rationally to focus on any*

⁹⁹ 'Myths' are in many ways a misnomer of what one might identify as wisdom or knowledge of diverse societies. 'Myths' are not magic or supernatural, instead they are in fact knowledge that aids societies to deal with everyday practical realities and are always based on direct lived experiences, i.e. 'myths' are knowledges, truths passed on for generations based on actual lived experiences of society. Vide, Deloria, *The World We Used to Live In*; Paul Radin, *The World of Primitive Man* (New York: Grove Press, 1953); David Suzuki, and Peter Knudtson, *Wisdom of the Elders* (Bantam, 1993); Graham Hancock, *Supernatural: Meetings with the Ancient Teachers of Mankind* (New York, NY: Disinformation Books, 2007); Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1966); and Melissa K. Nelson, *Original Instructions* (Bear & Company, 2008). Also see, Brody, *Maps and Dreams*; Cajete, *Native Science*; Peat, *Blackfoot Physics*; Goodenough, *Cooperation in Change*; and Deloria, *The Metaphysics of Modern Existence*.

*one consideration that is held as primary. What is more, the decision is taken in the doing: there is no step or pause between theory and practice. As a consequence, the decision—like the action from which it is inseparable—is always alterable (and therefore may not properly even be termed a decision). The hunter moves in a chosen direction; but, highly sensitive to so many shifting considerations, he is always ready to change his directions (italics added).*¹⁰⁰

The Athapaskan's decision making process may not even be seen as decision by the standards of scientific rationality. And indeed, Athapaskans emphasize not only avoiding the mistake of rationally focusing on one isolated element, but also emphasize non-delineation between theory and practice, the alterability of decisions, decisions taken during the process/encountering, and always being prepared to change. All of these emphases violate the standards of scientific rationality that proselytize isolation of primary variables, fixation over one factor, preoccupation with their predetermined course of actions, fixed methodologies, and separation between theory and practice. Still, for Athapaskans, their rationality or decisions is based on fluid realities of the world, no events remain fixed, change is always present, the spirits of the forests or animals may not be in the mood to help the hunting expeditions, and so forth. Athapaskans always take into account the constant vicissitudes of reality. They neither put under bracket, nor put under the term *ceteris paribus*, i.e. other things being equal, the numerous flux aspects of reality that nevertheless sway everyday happenings. Does this mean the Athapaskan does not know how to think and so, they must be taught how to think or to think in the right manner, scientific rationality? Of course, the answer is No. The Athapaskan Indians have their own mode of thought. As Brody verily explains, "The hunter, alive to *constant movements of nature, spirits, and human moods, maintains a way of doing things that repudiates a firm plan and any precise or specific understanding* with others of what he

¹⁰⁰ Brody, *Maps and Dreams*, 37.

is going to do. His course of *action is not, must not be, a matter of predetermination* (italics added).¹⁰¹ Following such rationality, Athapaskans have survived for thousands of years. If their mode of thoughts was abnormal or superstitious, then, how could they have endured or survived for so long?

Surely, one would have imagined, since Athapaskans' life depends on hunting, they would have meticulously planned for days coming up with systematic organized schemes for their hunting expeditions. However, such is not the case. Instead, the unfolding of hunting expeditions usually involves blasé talks about issues that have nothing whatever to do with hunting, they wait to see how they feel, sense one's moods, check the weather, debate the rightness of time for the hunt, wait to see how things turn out, no planning, no methods, no preparations, occasionally there will be talks about where they *might* (if conditions are right or if they feel like it) go for the hunt or whether or not to abandon hunting and instead go fishing, or whether it would be better to abandon the expedition altogether, and so forth. As Brody notes: "A number of individuals agree that they will go [hunting]. But come morning, nothing is ready. No one has made any practical, formal plans. As often as not—indeed, more often than not—something quite new has drifted into conversations, other predictions have been tentatively reached, a new consensus appears to be forming. As it often seems, everyone has changed his mind."¹⁰² To an outsider, this would no doubt seem vexing, chaotic even, but for Athapaskans, this only *feels* right and *makes* sense. "The way to understand," Brody says, "this kind of decision making, as also to live by and even share it, is to recognize that some of the most important variables are subtle, elusive, and extremely

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 36.

hard or impossible to assess with finality.”¹⁰³ Athapaskans certainly seem to grasp the fluid nature of the world, where various aspects of everyday realities are open to vicissitudes and powers beyond one’s predictions.

Consider also the traditional navigation skills of the Bugis seafaring society in the Flores Sea. The Bugis’ navigation skills were developed prior to the invention of magnetic compass, sonar, sextants, etc. As Gene Ammarell shows the navigation skills of the Bugis, developed within the context of their society and ecology, to be remarkably accurate.¹⁰⁴ In the absence of scientific instruments, the Bugis utilized natural surroundings and astronomical phenomena to navigate through the Flores Sea. For instance, the Bugis sea captains rarely, if ever, use a navigational compass, charts, or maps. These Navigators navigate using stars, waves, and wind. By looking at the clouds, the Bugis can tell changes in the direction and strength of the winds, changes in tides, currents, etc.; they can also tell by the movement of the clouds whether to expect rain as well as convey strength and direction of the winds. Even by looking at the colour of rainbows and types of birds flying above, the Bugis can tell of impending rain and wind. They use astronomical phenomena to predict the coming east and west monsoons. Indeed, an experienced Bugis sea captain can tell the direction and course of the wind by feeling the wind on their ears and even when fast asleep, they are awoken the minute there is a change in currents, winds, directions of the ship, weather, etc. Moreover, the Bugis navigators keep their ships in the desired course by feeling the motion of their ships. They can tell by looking at the waves the water currents, direction of the wind, and

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 36-37.

¹⁰⁴ Gene Ammarell, *Bugis Navigation* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999).

even warn them of reefs and shallows. The navigators identify landfalls by type of clouds, birds, reefs, fishes, and dolphins. They can even tell by the movement of their ships whether they are over reefs. Sometimes, even by the smell of the water as well as by waves and surface turbulence, the Bugis can tell whether they are approaching or passing over reefs. Even the course and wind directions provided by Bugis sea captains based on sensing and feeling seemed to be more accurate than those provided by a magnetic compass.¹⁰⁵

What is remarkable about the Bugis' navigation skills is, this knowledge is learned orally, where one learns the navigation skills by *participating* and *doing* that occasions one to directly experience the realities involved in navigation: how to steer the ship, read and follow the stars, avoid reefs, avoid shallow waters, rocks; identify wind, its directions; how to tell change in water currents, waves; identify clouds to forecast any impending rains or change in winds, currents, tidal waves and so on.¹⁰⁶ Most of these skills are learned by experiencing first hand: by sensing and feeling (the waves, stars, wind, currents, reefs, clouds, rain, tides, even birds and fishes), but this does not mean their knowledge and mode of thinking is incorrect or mythical. Using these skills, the Bugis have sustained for centuries, after all, they are dependent on their navigation skills for their survival: trading, carrying cargoes and hopping from island to island. There must be and is verity in the Bugis' mode of thoughts. This is substantiated by their lived experience: the fact that they have used their knowledge to navigate from island to island in the open sea trading and carrying cargoes to be traded for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Hence, it makes little sense to dismiss these modes of thought simply because

¹⁰⁵ Ammarell, *Bugis Navigation*.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

they do not adhere to the catechism of scientific rationality, as if it were the only mode of thought preordained for entire humanity.

Furthermore, because societies think differently, it is only proper for there to exist rationalities which can only be understood or made sense through feeling, experiencing, sensing. Take, for instance, the BaMbuti people in Congo. BaMbuti, Turnbull notes, believe the forest to be good. BaMbuti say the forest is their father and mother, and like any good parents they provide food, shelter, warmth, affection, clothing, and love to their children (i.e. the BaMbuti, plants, insects, animals, birds). However, when something goes bad in their community—illness, death, or bad hunting trips—they reason the forest must be unhappy and must therefore be made happy again. They perform a ceremony called Molimo. Molimo is itself a musical instrument used during the ceremony. There the BaMbuti blow the instrument making sounds—of animals and birds—heard throughout the forest. The BaMbuti believe in performing the ceremony, the forest is made happy; thereby, everything returns to being good and people will not get sick, or have bad hunting trips.¹⁰⁷

Turnbull trying to grasp the significance behind this ceremony is helped by one of the elders, one Moke, whose statement is a glaring example of understanding through feeling, sensing, participating (something which cannot be put to words): Moke remarks to Turnbull, “You will soon see things of which you have never heard, and which you have never seen. Then you will understand things that I can never tell you.”¹⁰⁸ The elder is trying to show Turnbull, the meaning and significances behind the ceremony can be

¹⁰⁷ Colin M. Turnbull, *The Forest People: A Study of the Pygmies of the Congo* (New York, NY: Simon and Schuster, 1962).

¹⁰⁸ Turnbull, *The Forest People*, 93.

understood only through shared *experiencing*, *participating*, *engaging*, *performing*. It will make sense within the contexts (how they feel, think, sense, see, etc.) and wholeness of their society. Indeed, this way of understanding may perhaps be more in *harmony* with *realities* of the world than to understand in a scientific manner. As Turnbull notes his realization, thusly:

One night in particular will always live for me, because that night I think I learned just how far we civilized human beings have drifted from reality... Just before going to sleep... I heard a curious noise from the nearby children's bopi [playground]... There, in the tiny clearing, splashed with silver, was the sophisticated Kenge [Turnbull's BaMbuti guide], clad in bark cloth, adorned with leaves, with a flower stuck in his hair... I came into the clearing and asked, jokingly, why he was dancing alone. He stopped, turned slowly around and looked at me as though I was the biggest fool he had ever seen... "But I'm *not* dancing alone," he said. "I am dancing with the forest, dancing with the moon." Then, with the utmost unconcern, he ignored me and continued his dance of love and life.¹⁰⁹

Indeed, Turnbull's latter realization illustrates the ceremony cannot be understood in *isolation* or *by itself* independent of everyday realities, rather it must be understood in its totality, wholeness with everything that goes on in the society: in hunting, in picking berries, in searching for honeycombs, in singing and talking to the forest, in laughter, in celebration, in dancing with the moon and forest, in teaching their children, in their beliefs, in their views of the world. Because BaMbuti do not *isolate* nor *categorize* their world, a ceremony, an act, an experience, an event, a happening cannot be understood in isolation. This way every act, experience, event is part of everything that exists in the world, thereby signifying the harmonious interrelatedness of each with each other. BaMbuti's way of thinking and understanding the world surely seems to be in tangent with scientific ways of thinking, however, this does not mean BaMbuti's mode of

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 272.

thoughts is primitive, backward, or animistic. Their mode of thoughts makes sense to them; after all, the forest provides food, shelter, warmth, love, care, cloth, meaning, purpose all of which are important for any meaningful society. Thus, they have every reason to think as they do and even celebrate, talk, dance, sing to the forest. Hence, one who is unaware of contexts and ways of society (such as wholeness of events) can hardly understand the profound significance behind a ceremony or an experience. Thus, one will find numerous academics, from the developed world, observing *an event in isolation* and without understanding societal contexts, label traditional ceremonies as mythical rituals, witchcraft, supernatural, and magic.

To assume, there is only one mode of thought valid for all humanity means discarding the rest, irrespective of their relevance to other societies. By this standard, even Eskimos' mode of thought will make no sense at all to the scientific minds. In the Eskimo language, for instance, as Franz Boas notes, "the words...are born on the tongue on the spur of the moment. Where we [English language] possess finished, fully developed words or phrase, the Eskimo create new combinations specially *formed to meet the claim of every situation* (italics added)."¹¹⁰ Just because Eskimos create new words to meet the circumstances of their day to day experiences, it does not mean they cannot think properly, or that their mode of thoughts is primitive. Given their ecological circumstances in which they navigate, it is only proper for them to generate words to describe the aborning novel conditions. There is no point using terms that cannot properly describe what has been experienced or is being experienced. Indeed, due to the hazardous

¹¹⁰ Franz Boas, *Handbook of American Indian Languages*, Smithsonian Institution, Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 40 (Washington, D.C: Government Printing Office, 1911), 1055-56.

conditions in which they live, precision in conveying the experience or what was experienced will make all the difference (now and in the future) between life and death—as they go hunting or perform other daily activities. In such a society, to assume everything or word has a fixed meaning is to court disaster. Still, just because Eskimos think differently, as illustrated by word creation in their language, it does not mean their mode of thought is any less valid. It is because their mode of thought is valid, within the context of their society, they have lived and sustained for hundreds, if not thousands, of years. Moreover, to impose alien modes of thought oblivious to Eskimos' realities will only spell calamity and ruination.

Even if one were to acquiesce to the conviction of scientific rationality being the only mode of thought universally applicable in every human society and societies not adhering to this mode of thought to be brought or shown the correct way of thinking thereby integrating them into civilization through modern developmental progress, then how could one explain societies going out of their way to stay away from any civilizing process: progress, development, modernity, nation-state, etc. Consider the *Zomia*, for instance. Stretching from Northeastern India to the Central Highlands of Vietnam, and traversing five Southeast Asian countries—Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia, and Vietnam—and four provinces in Southern China, James C. Scott veraciously shows how the *Zomia* have been deliberately moving away from civilizing process.¹¹¹ The *Zomia* or the hill societies, Scott argues, have been, for over the course of two millennia, fleeing any civilizing process—slavery, warfare, tax, epidemic, corvée labor, nation-state, etc. These hill societies are culturally and linguistically diverse. In fact, the porous nature of

¹¹¹ James C. Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009).

these societies makes any fixed identity futile, for they reformulate themselves, their identity, kin-groups, and the whole community in order to stay as far from any fixed stable state-forming or *civilizing* process. These societies resist any forms of effort to be brought under the rule of any civilizing state. Because the *Zomia* are highly mobile, they value freedom of movement, mobility, and base the lives of their society on hunting, gathering, foraging, swidden or slash-and-burn agriculture. This, of course, means they are egalitarian societies with common property land-tenure system with equal access to open frontier lands—indeed, this idea goes against any civilizing process that emphasizes individual property rights. The *Zomia* isolate themselves by living in remote areas beyond the vicinity of civilizing-states, thereby rendering any form of outside governing inefficacious. Curiously, these societies have not developed any durable state-like hierarchical structures, thus freeing themselves of the inconvenience to form (any modes of) government.¹¹² This does not mean there is only chaos, disorder within these societies, rather they are self-governing kinship units based on cooperation and consensus¹¹³ (of course, this does not mean they are *democratic*, which most contemporary academics, experts, specialists have the tendency to instantaneously and habitually label *anything* that is self-governing, consensual, cooperation as *democratic*, as though *democracy*—and even the *word* itself and its meaning—is something universal). Certainly, this is not out of the ordinary because many traditional societies “do not have a chief or headman at all, but are governed by a council of elders or family heads. It is common to find leadership roles in different activities in the same society calling for quite different persons and offices. The adjudicator of disputes is not likely to be the

¹¹² Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*

leader in war, for example.”¹¹⁴ What is more, their oral cultures afford them to delineate themselves from the civilized society. Their oral traditions, however, do not mean they believe in myths, rather the oral culture enables them to interpret experiences within the current contexts of their society: current interests, current relations with their neighbors, kin groups, etc.¹¹⁵

Does this thinking (staying away from civilizing process, foraging, hunting, swiddening, oral culture, porous/flexible identity, absence of any forms of government, etc.) of the *Zomia* make them raw, primitive, nescient? The answer is No. The *Zomia*'s modes of thought are the manifestation of polyphonic rationality grounded on their lived realities. Not only is there verity in their modes of thought, but they also have the paramount responsibility to be confident in the *rightness*, in the *truth* of their thought within the contexts of their society.

Inherent in the developed world's insistence on scientific rationality and how, once this has been embraced, it would afford traditional societies to progress is the, implicit and explicit, assumption that *inevitably* there is only one universal mode of thought, which each society invariably has to realize, and modern developmental progress—bolstered by market rationalities, scientific managements and productions, individual initiatives, competitions, private properties, wealth accumulations, market efficiencies, etc.—is *inevitable, inevitable* because scientific rationality is *universal*. Nevertheless, reality seems to suggest otherwise. Since societies think differently, there is bound to be divergent beliefs on knowledge, property, societal activities, and so on. For instance, in Melanesian societies, producing and acquiring wealth is done to fulfill social

¹¹⁴ Goodenough, *Cooperation in Change*, 509.

¹¹⁵ Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

obligations, responsibilities, or to underwrite big festivals, the realization of which leaves the underwriter *materially* impoverished, but at the same time gains in social standing and respect; while in the Gilbert Islands, as soon as someone accumulate material goods, the person voluntarily shares them with other members of the society; or take the Trukese notion of property, where, for instance, the plot of land is owned by one person, the tree by another, the territory by yet another person, and so forth.¹¹⁶ Similarly, the Kaoka of Solomon Island, the Trobriands and Kapauku of Papua New Guinea, see accumulation of wealth only for the purposes to share it or give it away to less fortunate members, and also to provide lavish festivals and feasts.¹¹⁷

Consider also the following episode from Tonga, as illustrated by one of Captain Cook's crew member, William Mariner. Upon arrival on the Island, the crew traded with the natives, but in this midst, there arose the natives' bafflement over the concept of money and its value, which they could not fathom. As Mariner explained to chief Finow what money and its value meant (for the Europeans, or as the Tongans called them, '*Papalangis*'), Mariner notes the subsequent reaction of the chief:

Finow replied that the explanation did not satisfy him; he still thought it a foolish thing that people should place a value on money, when they either could not or would not apply it to any useful (physical) purpose. 'If,' said he, 'it were made of iron, and could be converted into knives, axes and chisels, there would be some sense in placing a value on it; but as it is, I see none. If a man,' he added, 'has more yams than he wants, let him exchange some of them away for pork or gnato [i.e. cava root]. Certainly money is much handier, and more convenient, but then, as it will not spoil by being kept, people will store it up, instead of sharing it out, as a chief ought to do, and thus become selfish; whereas, if provisions were the principal property of man, and it ought to be, as being both

¹¹⁶ Goodenough, *Cooperation in Change*.

¹¹⁷ H. Ian Hogbin, "Social Advancement in Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands," *Oceania* 8 (March 1938): 289-305; Bronislaw Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1984); Leopold Pospisil, *Kapauku Papuans and Their Law* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1958).

the most useful and the most necessary, he could not store it up, for it would spoil, and so he would be obliged either to exchange it away for something else useful, or share it with his neighbors, and inferior chiefs and dependents, for nothing.’ He concluded by saying ‘I understand now very well what it is that makes the Papalangis so selfish—it is this money!’¹¹⁸

For Finow, material accumulation is desirable only in so far as the one who accumulates shares and helps those less fortunate than oneself. Furthermore, the concept of money and its value makes very little sense to Finow, and from the context of his society rightly so, because what is the use of some abstract concept or entity that cannot be put into actual *purposeful* physical use (knives, axes, chisels all of which can be utilized to gather wood, make huts, boats, hunt, fish, etc.) for society’s benefit. Finow also makes another key observation: he realizes that because money is inorganic, as it were, it does not spoil or rot, so instead of sharing, one stores it, accumulates it and this, says Finow, leads to selfishness like the Europeans. However, for Finow, because essential *provisions*—which are also and ought to be, according to Finow, the “principal property of man”—are perishable and hence susceptible to decomposition, it affords one to share with other members of the society; this way the needy are cared for.

Tongans do not see the primacy of material wealth because for them societal harmony and egalitarianism is much more essential in nourishing a community: affording meaningful purpose to their lives. Indeed, the words of Finow are a damning negation not just of the idea of the universality of one mode of thought, but also of the universality of capitalism and materialism.¹¹⁹ Certainly, Finow has not heard of Marx (or any of

¹¹⁸ William Mariner, *An Account of the Natives of the Tonga Islands*, vol. 1 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 250-51.

¹¹⁹ Indeed, the *en vogue* supposition about the universality of capitalism is only a modern construction, whose origination lies in modern Western society. Vide, Elie Halevy, *The Growth of Philosophic Radicalism* (New York, NY: The Macmillan

Marx's intellectual predecessors and contemporaries: Henri de Saint-Simon, Fourier, Hegel, Feuerbach, Engels), nevertheless, his analysis is much livelier than Marx's (or any of his predecessors or posterities) critique—in Finow's analysis, he, at least, retains the principal of the organic person. As Finow reasons, material benefits ought not to take precedent over society's needs, for ultimately what sustains a person are not material goods but society. Differently put, Tongans, like most traditional societies, see the importance of communal harmony and not leaving other members helplessly on their own. For them, society and its members are important, are meaningful; each has its human dignity, and everyone is cared for. It is the collective well-being of one's society that precedes over any other needs and certainly over any *abstract* concepts (such as money, scientific rationality, etc.). The superfluousness of money or accumulation of material wealth for the Tongans is only proper because it reflects their world view. Therefore, it is only appropriate for them to be indifferent to money, material goods or wealth.

Indeed, Tongans aren't the only ones to hold such antipode views. This is what Lorna Marshall, for instance, had to say about the !Kung of Kalahari apropos to their material needs (i.e. non-subsistence needs):

As the !Kung come [*sic*] into more contact with Europeans...they will feel sharply the lack of our things and will need and want more. It makes them feel inferior to be without clothes when they stand among strangers who are clothed. *But in their own life and with their own artifacts they were comparatively free from material pressure...* for every man can and does make the things that men make and every woman the things that women make... *They lived in a kind of*

Company, 1928); Karl Polanyi, *The Great Transformation* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, [1944] 2001); Louis Dumont, *From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977); and Albert O. Hirschman, *The Passions and the Interests* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977).

*material plenty because they adapted the tools of their living to materials which lay in abundance around them and which were free for anyone to take... With plenty of most materials at hand to replace artifacts as required, the !Kung have not developed means of permanent storage and have not needed or wanted to encumber themselves with surpluses or duplicates. They do not even want to carry one of everything. They borrow what they do not own. With this ease, they have not hoarded, and the accumulation of objects has not become associated with status (italics added).*¹²⁰

As one can see from the above statement, lack of one or the other material possessions becomes more apparent only in *comparison* with, in this case, the materially wealthy Europeans. However, on their own, the !Kung are not deprived of any material things essential for their daily societal activities, since the tools and materials are, as Marshall notes, always laying in “abundance around them... which are free for anyone to take,” thereby they are “free from material pressure.” If they require anything which they do not possess, they could with ease borrow from other members. Hence, they never had to hoard or accumulate materials beyond that which are absolutely essential to their everyday existence. What is more, the !Kung consider material possession *burdensome* as, they have the good sense to recognize, it interferes with their daily existences. The !Kung, like most traditional societies, value movement, motion, freedom; material possessions, on the other hand, only serve as a cumbersome burden to their freedom of movement. Thus, Sahlins was right to reason, “Mobility and property are in contradiction.”¹²¹ These are further vindicated by James Scott who has, most astutely,

¹²⁰ Lorna Marshall, “Sharing, Talking, and Giving: Relief of Social Tensions Among !Kung Bushmen,” *Africa* 31, no. 3 (1961): 243-44.

¹²¹ Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1971), 12.

shown how, in an effort to preserve their autonomy of movement, societies (such as, *Zomia*) deliberately shy away from any *civilizing process*.¹²²

Because most traditional societies do not value or hold dear material accumulation or wealth, one should not be surprised at their indifference to material goods. Sahlins notes of an European, one Martin Gusinde, assessment of (Yamana) Indians indifference to material possessions:

They do not know how to take care of their belongings. No one dreams of putting them in order, folding them, drying or cleaning them, hanging them up, or putting in a neat pile. If they are looking for some particular thing, they rummage carelessly through the hodgepodge of trifles in the little baskets. Larger objects that are piled up in a heap in the hut are dragged hither and yon with no regard for the damage that might be done them. The European observer has the impression that these Indians place no value whatever on their utensils and that they have completely forgotten the effort it took to make them. Actually, no one clings to his few goods and chattels which, as it is, are often and easily lost... The Indian does not even exercise care when he could conveniently do so. A European is likely to shake his head at the boundless indifference of these people who drag brand-new objects, precious clothing, fresh provisions, and valuable items through thick mud, or abandon them... Expensive things that are given them are treasured for a few hours, out of curiosity; after that they thoughtlessly let everything deteriorate in the mud and wet. The less they own, the more comfortable they can travel, and what is ruined they occasionally replace. Hence, they are completely indifferent to any material possessions.¹²³

The European's condemning views about the Yamana Indians are clear. He, Gusinde, is baffled at Yamana's indifference to material things; yet, instead of appreciating the difference between his and Yamana's modes of thought, the European views Indians to be primitive with no sense of proper conduct toward material goods. He looks down on the Yamana as if they were still lingering in the early stages of human development from animals. The European is shocked as to why the lives of Yamana do

¹²² See, Scott, *The Art of Not Being Governed*.

¹²³ Martin Gusinde quoted in Marshall Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1971), 12-13.

not gyrate around material goods; and for him the answer is apparent: the Yamanas are incapable of rational thinking because they are primitive, still lingering in stone ages and oblivious to the correct mode of thought that affords societies (such as Europeans) to civilize, after all, civilization itself rests on valuing or accumulating material goods, things, etc.

What the European fails to realize is: for Yamana, like most traditional societies, life does not gravitate towards nor gyrate around materialism. The “indifference” of Yamana to material things is seen to be *indifferent* only when viewed from the developed world’s perspective. From the perspective of the Yamana, they do not consider the way they treat material goods to be “indifferent.” Even the question of how material things ought to be treated or carried does not even arise because their worldview is different from that of the European. What is more, Yamana do not let material things get in the way of living life: fulfilling one’s societal responsibilities, activities, helping, caring, sharing, cooperating, etc. They realize, to value material possession is to deprive society of its humanity, whereby things, objects, goods become the principle from which moralities, beliefs, values, ethics are defined. In other words, (human and society’s) life is defined through material lens, where each person (including society itself) is redefined as an economic person (*homo-economicus*). And in this way, what is essential to traditional societies is undermined. The Yamana’s indifference to material possession is only proper within the context of their society, just as Europeans veneration for material goods is perhaps good within the contexts of their society. Because societies think differently, it is only proper for their beliefs or what is valued to be different.

Trying to make traditional societies embrace material possessions and money not only burdens them, but they also impede in fulfilling their social obligations, movements, responsibilities; thus, undermining the very fabric of their way of life. And this is not difficult to fathom. One astute outsider grasps this aporia: Laurens van der Post, as he was considering gifts for his Bushmen friends for allowing him to be part of their society while he was carrying out his study, realizes:

This matter of presents gave us many an anxious moment. We were humiliated by the realization of how little there was we could give to the Bushmen. Almost everything seemed likely to make life more difficult for them by adding to the litter and weight of their daily round. They themselves had practically no possessions: a lion strap, a skin blanket and a leather satchel. There was nothing that they could not assemble in one minute, wrap up in their blankets and carry on their shoulders for a journey of a thousand miles. They had no sense of possession.¹²⁴

Indeed, van der Post was right to think giving material things, no matter the intentions of one's generosity, will only burden those he wanted to thank. Certainly, one wants to be grateful to those who accommodates or helps one. Yet, no matter the profoundest of one's kind intentions, one's act of thanks will only impede those who are to receive one's gratitude from properly accomplishing their societal obligations and activities. What this event illustrated to us is the polyphony of thoughts among societies. It substantiates: societies are different, they think differently, hence even their values, beliefs, knowledge, rationalities will therefore vary. Moreover, what is good, proper, helpful, correct, honorable, virtuous, even one's sense of thanks, will invariably vary and depend on each society's views of the world.

¹²⁴ Laurens van der Post, *The Lost World of the Kalahari* (New York, NY: William Morrow & Company, 1958), 276.

One may certainly be sympathetic to van der Post, after all, he sincerely was grateful to his Bushmen friends. However, if, for instance, one was to nevertheless confer gifts to one's Bushmen friends, one will only manage to burden them, no matter the philanthropic magnanimity and generosity of one's intentions, with things that do not matter and that only hamper them from attaining that which is valued above all else, freedom of movement. Thus, one must realize what is good in one is bad in another, or what is bad in one is, to use Nietzsche's words, "in another decked with purple honours." Similarly, scientific rationality and its accompanying modern developmental progress—decked with economic rationalisms, private properties, competitions, individual initiatives, efficiencies, material richness, wealth accumulations, and so on—may, perhaps, be good and hold true for the developed world; yet, the same mode of thought and its accompanying values, beliefs will not hold to be so in traditional societies, no matter the conferrer's "decked in purple honours" benevolent intentions.

One cannot, therefore, for instance, insist the Bushmen *should be taught*, by instituting *correct* beliefs or modes of thought, how to embrace materialism so that they can appreciate the generosity of material gifts one is conferring onto them. Just because one's views and beliefs are in antipode to the views of others, it does not mean one's beliefs are universal, right, proper, or even more human than others; or that one's ways of thinking should triumph over other's modes of thought. From the eyes of the developed world, what they offer to the rest of the world may seem good and proper, but such benevolent kindness only undermines traditional societies' beliefs, knowledge, rationalities, and their whole ways of life. As one Native American elder notes: "The culture and civilization of the white man are essentially material; his measure of success

is, ‘How much property have I acquired for myself?’ The culture of the Red man is fundamentally spiritual; his measure of success is, ‘How much service have I rendered to my people?’”¹²⁵ Indeed, from developed society’s point of view, this view of the Native American elder will make no sense whatever; so will from the elder’s (or any traditional society’s) point of view, the primacy of material accumulations will make no sense. This, however, does not mean a hostile confrontation between different world views; rather, it only illustrates the polyphonic rationalities among societies.

The significance behind what has been hitherto reasoned is, societies think differently, this difference is in turn tied to the ways each view its world with each establishing its own beliefs, values, etc. Certainly, scientific rationality affording the developed world to arrange societal activities in terms of *scarcity*, rational economic system, rational behavior, rational activity of individuals, wealth accumulation, material production, is *only one alternative* out of numerous other possible alternatives available to human societies. This mode of thinking and arranging society is not universal. The bafflement over traditional societies’ indifference to material goods, accumulations, possessions is only the developed world’s ethnocentric views on the *other*, because for traditional societies, their indifference to material is neither bewildering nor something to be baffled about, rather it is only proper. In fact, it is not even “indifference,” because the term “indifference” arises only when viewed from the material lens of the developed world. As Sahlins notes of this blinkered view: “Scarcity is the judgment decreed by *our* [developed societies] *economy*—so also the axiom of *our Economics*: the application of scarce means against alternative ends to derive the most satisfaction possible under the

¹²⁵ Quoted in Ernest Thompson Seton, and Julia M. Seaton, *The Gospel of the Redman: A Way of Life*, (Happy Camp, CA: Naturegraph Publishers, Inc., 1997), 3.

circumstances. *And it is precisely from this anxious vantage that we look back upon hunters.* But if modern man, with all his technological advantages, still hasn't got the wherewithal, what chance has this naked savage with his puny bow and arrow? *Having equipped the hunter with bourgeois impluses and paleolithic tools, we judge his situation hopeless in advance* (italics added).¹²⁶ Truly, from the vantage point and standards of the developed world, traditional societies will indeed look hopelessly backward, primitive, and living at the very threshold of precarious existences. Therefore, the condemning outlook is only the developed world's interpretations on traditional societies, arising from its own *particular* mode of thought that is, in turn, tied to the manner in which it sees, thinks, and understands the world. In other words, money, competition, material accumulation, economic rationality are not universal, rather they are just *one* out of numerous other possibilities available to societies. What society values, its ideals depend on the contexts of its society. Thus, some will value money, wealth accumulation, while others will value conviviality, cooperation, harmony. It is imprudent to assume one's values to be universal. Nor are economic activities exclusively independent of other societal aspects. For traditional societies, economics is not the primary lens from which to understand the world. Nor do they categorize everyday societal activities into economic, political, cultural, or social aspects. They do not *isolate* certain aspects of everyday activities and render them as the sole primary lens from which to view, understand, represent, and elucidate their world.

Such tangential views on the responsibilities of person to one another, sense of property, of wealth, of material accumulation, of sharing, of helping, of money between

¹²⁶ Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, 4.

traditional societies and the developed world only vindicate humanities' diverse rationalities. In light of such diversity, how can one insist societies do not think differently or insist every society should conform to a single mode of thought?

Societies Are What They Are

Polyphonic rationality evinces societies' diverse ways of thinking. These polyphonic modes of thought among societies, on the other hand, reveal how each society views its world based on its direct lived expressions. Therefore, even the manner in which each society ascertains its knowledge, truths, beliefs, etc. will invariably differ. And because each has its ways to understand, elucidate, represent the world, polyphonic rationality, therefore, cannot be organized systematically nor can it be neatly explicated concisely. Polyphonic rationality above all else is an *awareness, awareness* of the human reality: diverse ways of living, of being, of knowing, of thinking, of experiencing, of understanding. It is *not* a theory and is never meant to be one. In other words, to categorize any understanding into a theory is to restrict its possibilities, its views by picking and choosing what counts, what doesn't, and is hence narrowed. To position polyphonic rationality into a theory is to truncate it, thus making it narrow just like numerous other existing theories in social sciences. However, one of the essentialities of polyphony rationality is its open-endedness, its, to use Bakhtin's term, unfinalizability. Polyphony affords each form of rationality to voice itself, all voices are heard, and all modes of thought co-exist beside one another. There is no privileging any one mode of thought, each rationality is valid within its contexts. Thus, it cannot be systematized. It is as one thirteenth century poet wrote: "Excuse my wandering./ *How can one be orderly with this?!* It's like counting leaves in a garden,/ along with the song notes of partridges./

and crows. Sometimes *organization/* and *computation become absurd* (italics added).¹²⁷ Here, the poet is talking about love and how it cannot be rationally understood. Perhaps the only way to comprehend love is not even through systematic rational calculation, i.e. weighing (to use modern platitudinous idiom) pros and cons of loving someone (“computation”), but by permitting oneself to be swayed and led by love wherever it may lead (“wandering”), because to do otherwise is to court absurdity. Likewise, polyphonic modes of thought cannot be systematically or computationally understood, for to do so is to court absurdity. Polyphonic knowledge will begin to not make sense even to itself when it is categorized. What is more, it would also be improper to ask for concise systematic description or theory, for no concept, word, or term in the human language of any culture, nor any theory, which the human mind is capable of, can ever constitute such diversities, or as Ibn Khaldun notes: “Complete knowledge does not exist in man. The world of existence is too vast for him.”¹²⁸ Indeed, the vastness of human existence affords societies to experience diverse existential realities, thus giving rise to different rationalities. Certainly, an eighteenth century thinker, Johann Gottfried Herder, held similar views. Herder asserts different societies have different knowledge or truths and all of these truths are valid within their own peculiar and differing contexts. His assertion comes from the fact that human society is diverse, thus, for him, the way each society thinks or reasons is not something *acontextual* independent of its historical, cultural realities, rather its modes of thought are highly contextual. He therefore forewarned not

¹²⁷ Jalaluddin Rumi, “Excuse My Wandering,” in *Rumi: The Book of Love*, trans. Coleman Barks (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, 2003), 3.

¹²⁸ Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005), 350.

to judge other societies according to one's societal or cultural standards.¹²⁹ Even Immanuel Kant, regardless of his *fidelity* to reason, nevertheless argues human mind to be capable of diverse conceptions of knowing, of being, of experiencing, and of understanding. And because, for Kant, experience is the only way thought which reason, knowledge, or truth is attained, what the human mind ascertains as reason is, thus, invariably tied to diverse human experiences.¹³⁰

Moreover, experiences—which are but forms of event, activity, occasion—are diversely perceived by societies, and what is therefore being perceived, i.e. experienced, is then interpreted in a way appropriate and meaningful within each society's contexts. One could here argue: perceiving is sensing, hence subjective, and such experiences have no place in human rationality. However, anyone familiar with rudimentary biology will know that human eyes are *physiologically* part of the human brain: eyes and brain are not two separate organs, connected by nerves and muscles, rather they are one organ of the human body—hence, one will find great *minds*, since Aristotle, to have always emphasized the importance of perception or sentience in ascertaining human knowledge. Thus, what one perceives is indissolubly part of what one thinks in the *mind*. And since the *mind*, which even Descartes and Kant admit, is the aborning abode of human rationality, what it therefore ascertains (in the mind) as truth, reason, thought, or knowledge is but the interpretation of experiences being perceived and comprehended

¹²⁹ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Johann Gottfried Herder on World History: An Anthology*, trans. Ernest A. Menze and Michael Palma (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014).

¹³⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

(by the eyes). Eyes are the window to one's soul, Shakespeare once noted,¹³¹ but now one can say, in addition to Shakespeare's dictum, they are also the window to one's knowledge.

Therefore, each society depending on its perceptions, elucidations, representations of experience will ascertain its own understanding of the events, activities experienced. As such, different societies are bound to think differently. This is why even the same event or experience is interpreted differently by different societies—evident in the manner in which freedom, democracy, market-based society, liberalism, etc. is understood differently by different societies. Indeed, W. H. Ittelson and F. P. Kilpatrick argue that two persons encountering the same event at the same time take away different understandings of the same experience. This is because, they argue, each person brings into his or her experience different expectations, fears, and hopes. And this makes each person seek different meanings or things from the same event.¹³² Such case is even applicable to societies and cultures, as Geertz notes with regard to traditional rituals being observed and the differing meanings they signify to local participants, on one hand, and visitors, on the other: “Where for “visitors” religious performances can, in the nature of the case, only be presentations of a particular religious perspective, and thus aesthetically or scientifically dissected, for participants they are in addition enactments, materializations, realization of it—not only models of what they believe, but also models *for* the believing of it. In these plastic dramas men attain their faith as they portray it

¹³¹ This saying is usually summarized from Shakespeare's *Richard III*: “To thee I do commend my watchful soul/ Ere I let fall the windows of mine eyes.” William Shakespeare, *Richard III*, ed. John Jowett (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008), 95.

¹³² W. H. Ittelson, and F. P. Kilpatrick, “Experiments in Perception,” *Scientific American* 185 (August 1951): 50-55.

(italics in original).¹³³ Here, the ritual ceremony will manifest, for native participants, the profoundest existential meaning and significance; for the visitors, however, the same ceremony will only be of interest only in so far as it concerns the visitors' expectations to experience the *exotic*. Outside of this quest for *exotic*, the ceremony experienced will have no profound existential significance for the visitors as it does for the natives. Thus, Goodenough was prudent to note, "An American tourist watching a Hopi snake dance does not see it as a Chinese tourist would, and neither will see it as a Hopi does."¹³⁴ Americans, Chinese, and Hopi will indeed experience the same event, Hopi snake dance, differently because each (society) has its own views of the world, and so the understanding and perception of the event are bound to differ as their views about the world.

Lastly, the significance behind polyphonic modes of thought is their attention to the basic human reality in its diversities. In doing so, they do not distract themselves from the needless embellishments—scientific methodologies and criteria—that get in the way of understanding and of social inquest. An eminent theatre director and one of the co-founders of the Royal Shakespeare Company, Peter Brook argues theatre can be a powerful, yet profoundly transformative and engaging experience for audiences. Indeed, all that is needed, for theatre to be a transformative experience, is an actor in an empty space with *someone* watching. This is all that is required. For Brook, an actor in a space with someone watching the actor is the *irreducible* element of theatre. The curtains, scripts, directors, stages, spotlights, darkness, etc. are unnecessary embellishments as

¹³³ Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 113-14.

¹³⁴ Goodenough, *Cooperation in Change*, 156.

they *distract* one from the principal concern: engaging theatrical experience.¹³⁵ This analogy is relevant to our present discussion because just as theatre embellishments distract one from properly appreciating a transformative theatrical experience, likewise scientific rationality—with its demands for scientific criteria: concise hypotheses/theories, variables, mathematical models, statistical measurements, methodologies, internal/external validity, justification for cases selected, (or as in social sciences) *balanced* citations of authors from both ends of *ideological spectrum*, etc.—only distracts one from the main concern of social inquests. This is where polyphonic rationality matters: polyphonic rationality avoids unnecessary embellishments that distract one from the principal concern of social inquests: understanding. And it does so by attending to basic human reality: diversity in thoughts. In other words, just as an actor in a space with someone watching is the irreducible element of theatre, the society, culture, and people in their diversity are the fundamental and irreducible elements of social inquest. Indeed, in many ways, each society is a human drama unfolding in its own social-cultural stage. Polyphonic rationality pays attention to the basic human realities by not distracting itself from the needless decorative embroideries that single-mindedly emphasize the need to satisfy the standards of scientific criteria.

By avoiding redundant ornaments, polyphonic rationality does not fall into the trap of, to use Alan Watts' words, *confusing* symbols, *concepts*, labels, categories, classifications *used to describe and measure the world with the world itself*.¹³⁶ For Watts, this confusion of symbols with reality is one of the fatal flaws of modern society. He

¹³⁵ Peter Brook, *The Empty Space: A Book About the Theatre*, (New York, NY: Touchstone, 1996).

¹³⁶ Watts, *Does it Matter*.

argues symbols, concepts, numbers, formulas, and standardized timetables, laws, rules, clocks used to describe the world are taken as reality itself. In other words, the world is abstracted into concepts, which are then accepted to be the reality.¹³⁷ Certainly, scientific rationality with its demands for strict scientific standards only confuses numbers, mathematical models, statistics, theories, and hypotheses with human reality: society, culture, people, etc. In fact, human society, culture, and people being replaced are nowhere to be found, or are merged into undifferentiated generalization of numbers, in scientific studies of society. This way the abstract numbers, concepts, theories, hypotheses, equations, symbols become more important and real than human reality. On the contrary to scientific mode of thought, polyphonic rationality does not confuse symbols with reality because it has in its focus the basic human reality. For, in reality, one does not see people, cultures, societies with numbers, concepts, numerical charts hanging over their head indicating the mathematical values, standard deviations, or symbols signifying their feeling, belief, happiness, wealth, education, income, standard of living, calories consumed, energy level, GDP per capita, freedom, spending habit, belief in democracy, health care, access to clean water, marginal productivity, efficiency, innovativeness, patent laws, etc. Yet, scientific rationality acts as if such is the case, vindicated by its demand for *scientificity*. Since societies are neither abstract concepts nor symbols, but real human beings, it is only prudent for each to embrace what it sees to be proper. No society should be pilloried because it thinks differently.

At this point, one may no doubt argue, ‘societies think differently, so what of it or why should this, polyphonic rationality, matter?’ It matters because to dismiss diverse

¹³⁷ Ibid.

rationalities is to make a mockery of real living societies whose lives are pilloried and devastated in the name of human progress. Each person and society has an intrinsic purpose and meaning. Therefore, it is only prudent to let societies and persons live life as they see fit and proper. It matters also because if social inquests are to become not only meaningful, but also worthy of intellectual rumination, then it is essential to understand societies in their unrivaled complexities, after all, what is the purpose of social analyses or intellectual contemplations if not to understand.

One of the implications of this study is that there cannot be universal concepts, truths, beliefs, institutions, rationalities, knowledge. Another implication is that if one is to accept what has been reasoned then one wouldn't do or espouse development. Both implications are, if understood, one and the same for they ultimately stem from the same aborning source. Since societies think differently, each society (as thoroughly mentioned in this chapter) is bound to have its own views of the world based on its own unique societal circumstances. Hence, what knowledge is will ultimately vary. It is imprudent to assume the universality of one mode of thought, scientific rationality, for all humanity. Furthermore, because each society has its knowledge, each will have its own beliefs, values, truths, etc. This is to say, what is valued or accepted as proper—be it moral, spiritual, social, cultural, or otherwise—will invariably differ as well. As such, modern developmental progress by foisting rationalized societal institutions—market economy, democracy, individual initiatives, competition, mass consumption and production, private property, etc.—is only one out of numerous other possible alternatives available to societies. Differently put, market system, material goods, accumulation of wealth, democracy are not universal. These are just one alternative out of numerous other

possibilities available for societies to embark upon. Surely, the episodes of scholarships, MDGs, transmigration, and villagization succinctly explicated the misplaced generosity and munificence of the developed world, who naively suppose the existence of universal modes of thought, beliefs, norms, and institutions. Indeed, to accept the *universal* is to dismiss diversity. Yet, reality shows the world is diverse, not uniform.

One could interject and reason: ‘should the developed world, then, not intervene and help developing societies affected by natural disaster?’ The answer, however, to this question is and can never be as straightforward as one would hope for, because: firstly, natural disasters have been occurring since time immemorial, they are part of the world, as a planet, due to the physical and chemical elements that constitute the landscapes, atmosphere, and geology, thereby affecting different parts of the world with equally varied forms of natural disasters—droughts, hurricanes/typhoons, earthquakes, volcanoes, and so forth. Secondly, disasters are part of every society; it has happened before and will continue to do so. However, at the same instance, societies have faced many disasters and have continued to survive. It must be noted that each society sustains itself by understanding their ecological milieu, which in turn provides knowledge on how to survive famines or other natural disasters, how to build homes specific to its ecology so as to withstand or protect people from the disasters *specific* to their ecological conditions, and so forth. In other words, local wisdom or knowledge accumulated for generations provides societies with necessary tools on how to care for their society, how to withstand local disasters, how to cure physical ailments, and how to procure everyday wherewithal. Societies endured and lived through disasters precisely because they had their accumulated knowledge. However, with rampant development and insatiable need

to modernize every society, the long held accumulated polyphonic knowledge that once sustained and guided societies is lost or destroyed. So, when disaster does strike, its effects are amplified due to the loss of local societal knowledge that hitherto advised societies on how to cope with nature's misadventures. During 1980s, Ethiopia, for instance, embarked on a compulsory villagization similar to those in Tanzania. Much of the rural population was moved from their traditional lands and resettled elsewhere. By virtue of being moved to an alien ecology, the skills and knowledge of rural peasants (specific to their lands) were all but invalidated. With large resettlements of population, the agricultural productions decreased. Moreover, to the anguish of the rural population, the drought and famine coincided with the forced villagization. Certainly, drought is not new to the region; however, this time the drought had monumental effect and triggered massive humanitarian crises precisely because the forced villagization, which Ethiopia embarked on in the name of development, dismantled existing communal bond, family ties, local charity, communal cooperation, conviviality, communal reciprocity, and sharing that hitherto held societies together and helped them overcome periods of drought or other famine. The villagization not only deprived local populations of their local knowledge that advised them how to overcome disasters, but the social structure holding the society together was dismantled as well. The consequence of massive resettlement with accompanying dismantling of social structure was the extreme starvation for a vast majority of the population, triggering one of the most deadliest disasters of the twentieth century.¹³⁸ This is indeed a rather long answer to the question 'should the developed

¹³⁸ Vide, Jason W. Clay, Sandra Steingraber, Bonnie Holcomb, and Peter Niggli, *The Spoils of Famine: Ethiopian Famine Policy and Peasant Agriculture* (Cambridge, MA: Cultural Survival Inc., 1988); John M. Cohen, and Nils-Ivar Isaksson, "Villagization

world intervene if natural disaster is to strike a traditional society?’ Yet, it is essential to remember the historical contexts that ultimately led traditional societies in their current predicament before answering such a question. One cannot simply answer *yes* or *no*, for that would mean resorting to mere generalization, and to do so would be imprudent. Moreover, questions concerning society and its well-being can never be answered by a simple *yes* or *no*.

It is only proper to conclude the present chapter by alluding to Cervantes’ *Don Quixote*. Don Quixote lives in his own world; he imagines himself to be Don (knight) and imagines Sancho Panza, his servant, to be his faithful squire. He rides out, with his squire, to right the wrong, undo the injustice, but most of all he is in quest for his (imaginary) beautiful damsel, Dulcinea.¹³⁹ In this quest, fantasy as it may be, after all, he is not a knight and some of his duels as a Don included jousting windmills which he supposed were giants, Don Quixote nevertheless manages to experience many adventures that poured meaningful purpose in his otherwise nonchalant life. Despite all his make-believes, he nevertheless led the life he saw fit, no matter its outward irrational absurdities or what others, including his squire, thought of it. Indeed, in many ways, he led a full life any man (or, for that matter, any society) could ask for—indeed, this is what Dostoevsky and Nietzsche so much admired about Don Quixote. Inwardly, his quests and the ways in which he led his life gave him meaning and purpose; after all, what is life or society without meaning. Likewise, from the outside, what has been argued, polyphonic rationality, in this chapter (or even the whole of this present study) may seem naïve; even

in Ethiopia’s Arsi Region,” *Journal of Modern African Studies* 25, no. 3 (1987): 435-464; Scott, *Seeing Like a State*.

¹³⁹ Miguel de Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, trans. Samuel Putnam (New York, NY: The Viking Press, 1949).

the fact that traditional societies, not adhering to developed society's mode of thought, may indeed seem as the vindication of naiveté of *primitive* societies not yet enlightened by the power of scientific rationality. Yet, like Don Quixote, inwardly, despite all its outward absurdity, how traditional societies lead their lives, the way they think and ascertain their truths give them meaning and sense of purpose, which cannot be otherwise attained. Their modes of thought afford profound existential meaningfulness to their society as well as to persons within. Life of human beings and societies is not about establishing the ultimate objective truths, knowledge, beliefs, or principles; rather they are about giving meaning and living a life that is purposeful, be it helping, sympathizing, loving, caring. Hence, it is only prudent to let each society live life in ways apposite to it.

CHAPTER V

The Faustian Geist

Verstehen: Understanding

The previous chapter elucidated on how societies think differently and how that difference in thought, rationality, knowledge, whichever one may wish to call it, depends on each society's lived existential experiences: its views of the world. So, the question that inevitably arises is what is the purpose of these differences, viz. what is the point of considering polyphonic modes of thought? The answer: polyphonic modes of thought afford one to *understand* societies, social phenomena; after all, understanding is the ultimate purpose of any social inquest, development itself being one. In fact, it is also the *raison d'être* of any scientific examination. However, what is this *understanding*?

Now, understanding will neither be congruent among persons nor will it be fixed. Indeed, it can never be a concept defining what it means to *understand*. Rather, each reader will have to attain his or her own understanding. Yet, on another level, *understanding* is itself an *experiencing* or, more precisely, *affecting*. It involves affection igniting certain emotions or ideas. Understanding of any phenomena, be in natural or social sciences, usually involves the prober being *affected* by probed phenomena by evoking, within him, certain ideas, just as a piece of music, especially music from the Baroque era, evokes certain emotions on the listener. Even Descartes, despite his rational outlooks, nevertheless emphasized how affections or passions—such as sadness, happiness, envy, hatred, melancholy, wonder, joy—were essential to human experiences (of course, human experiences were, for him, abode from which rational knowledge

aroused).¹ Certainly, understanding is not possible without such affections, for it requires one to immerse oneself—along with or bringing one’s life experiences—into one’s encountering (or probing) of an event (or a phenomenon). This is what Gabriel Marcel meant by the *uniqueness* of the individual;² or what Ibn Al’Arabi meant by *wahdat al-wujūd* (the *oneness of being*): union between the knower and the known.³ This is what understanding ultimately culminates into; it cannot be put to words, rather it can only be, on a subjective basis, hinted at as to what it can signify to the person who comes to an understanding. Carl Jung precisely had this in mind in regard to understanding:

What does lie within our reach, however, is the change *in* individuals who have, or create for themselves, an opportunity to influence others of like mind. *I do not mean by persuading or preaching*—I am thinking, rather, of the well-known fact that anyone who has insight into his own actions, and has thus found access to the unconscious, *involuntarily exercises an influence* on his environment. The deepening and broadening of his consciousness produces the kind of effect which the primitive call “mana.” *It is an unintentional influence on the unconscious of others*, a sort of unconscious prestige, and *its effect lasts only so long as it is not disturbed by conscious intention* (italics added).⁴

Understanding of whatever or whoever involves, as Jung argues, changes *within* the person, change evinced by one’s understandings, and as such one “involuntarily” influences one’s environment, be it through *appreciating* or *accepting* things *as they are*. And such *appreciating*, *accepting*, or *understanding* is then unconsciously and

¹ Vide, Benjamin Wardhaugh, eds., *The Compendium Musicae of René Descartes: Early English Responses* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2014); Jacob Opper, *Science and the Arts: A Study of Relationships from 1600-1900* (Cranbury, NJ: Associated University Press, 1973); Piero Weiss, and Richard Taruskin, eds., *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents* (Belmont, CA: Schirmer, 2008).

² Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, trans. Katharine Farrer (Westminster, UK: Dacre Press, 1949).

³ Ibn ‘Arabi, *Divine Governance of the Human Kingdom*, trans. Shaykh Tosun Bayrak (Louisville, KY: Fons Vitae, 1997).

⁴ Carl Gustav Jung, *Civilization in Transition: The Collected Works of C. G. Jung*, vol. 10 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 305.

involuntarily transmitted to one's environment, after all this is what *mana* means to the Polynesians. Truly, this is what science (at least an uncorrupted view of science) means by understanding. It is the acceptance of things as they are—such as the heliocentric view, stages/life cycle of stars, nature of quanta, properties of light, electro-magnetism, laws of energy, and so forth. Science does not proclaim, in advance, it is going to understand a phenomenon and that the rest of humanity must follow suit, rather science in its *eccentric* manner understands things *as they are* and when it understands, the rest of humanity, without even science's demands, follows the understanding: i.e. *understands what science understands*. In other words, science does not persuade nor preach others to follow its understandings, rather it is *its* understandings that unconsciously and involuntarily influence others to follow suit. Indeed, social inquest, in its proper sense with respect to understanding, is no different.

Inherent in understanding are the notions of *appreciation* and *acceptance*. Thus, genuine *understanding* kindles *acceptance* and *appreciation* of things (whatever they may be) *as they are* because this is what it means to be *objective*, impartial.⁵

Understanding encourages one to accept “things *as they are*, rather than as we want them to be; to overcome our fears of the unknown; and instead of claiming to be able to change the world and to save ‘humanity,’ to try saving ourselves from our own compelling need

⁵ Hence, ‘objective’ does not mean *change* whatever is not to one's liking; rather it means accepting things *as they are*: be they good, bad, myth, supernatural, and so forth. Physicists do not try to change compositions of atom to one sub-atomic particle just because existence of numerous sub-atomic particles makes understanding of phenomena even more complex and diverse. So, why should social scientists try to change societies they examine?

for comforting illusions (*italics in original*).”⁶ Differently put, understanding does not mean one already knows what *that* understanding is going to be even prior to one’s inquests, rather it means one would grasp what *that* understanding is only at the conclusion of one’s examinations. All the numerous aspects of one’s life from personal qualities, feelings, emotions, views of the world that one brings with oneself to experiences one goes through during an inquest come together to give profound significance to the understanding one gains at the conclusions of an inquest. Indeed, understanding attained at conclusions of *that* inquest will be specific to *that* particular prober, hence, the essentiality of the uniqueness of the prober. Understanding is personal. Thus, for instance, the manner in which this study is understood will invariably differ from reader to reader. This is only proper because the present inquest is not trying to establish an apodictic foundation of human rationality.

And because understanding is attained only at conclusions of an inquest, one must thereby also bring one’s examinations to an end. Inquests end with understanding. In other words, any genuine social or scientific examination concludes when the examiner has *understood* the examined phenomenon. This is because understanding is the *raison d’être* of any (social or scientific) inquiry. Thus, one *will not go beyond the understanding* of a phenomenon. If one understands the examined phenomenon, then one will appreciate the examined phenomenon for what it is, i.e. *as it is*, with all its faults, limits, absurdities, strengths. And one can accept things *as they are* only when one has understood what one has set out to understand. Because in accepting *as they are*, one is

⁶ Majid Rahnema, “Towards Post-Development: Searching for Signposts, a New Language and New Paradigm”, in *The Post-Development Reader*, eds. Majid Rahnema and Victoria Bawtree (New York, NY: Zed Books, 1997), 392.

appreciative of diversity constituting the understood phenomenon. When, for instance, physicists discover new sub-atomic particles or astrophysicists discover new distant neutron stars, they *accept* and *appreciate* their discoveries because they *understand* that such diversity at the sub-atomic level and in the universe is what gives meaning to them (particles or stars). They also recognize the fact that their discoveries were only made possible by their *understanding* of the examined phenomenon (and not by predictions or empirical measurements because these are predicated on *understanding*). Furthermore, just because physicists or astrophysicists have discovered and understood particular phenomenon (sub-atomic particle and neutron star), they do not try to *change* the way sub-atomic particles behave, or change the way distant neutron stars appear, or change composition of their electromagnetic lights being emitted. They know that such acts are not only fatuous, but they go against the very meaning of scientific inquest and understanding.⁷

Regardless, there is a proclivity in social-scientific inquiries to go beyond understanding and, sadly, in most cases even before one has reached the level of genuine understanding. Here they try to predict and measure even before the social phenomenon is properly understood; they instantaneously equate predictions and measurements with *understanding*. It is rather farcical to watch social sciences go beyond phenomena (even before understanding) because such kinds of naive errors are mostly absent in natural

⁷ So, why should technicians (and social scientists) after having studied and (hopefully) genuinely understood societies want to transform examined societies in the name of progress? Indeed, eliminations of diversity, invariably accompanying development and progress, threaten not only civilizations but scientific thoughts as well, for it is diversity that gives rise to civilizations. It is the contribution of diverse knowledge obtained from diverse rationalities from equally diverse civilizations and societies that makes it possible for posteriors to make unprecedented advancements in human knowledge. But unfortunately, this very much goes amiss in social sciences.

sciences (of course, natural sciences are not completely immune from such pathologies either). Natural sciences do not go beyond *understanding* of phenomena; they *appreciate* and *accept* phenomena *as they are*, because they discern understanding to be the ultimate purpose of scientific inquiries, and, more importantly, they conclude their examinations after they have gained a proper understanding of the examined phenomena. Of course, social sciences (development being one) tend to go beyond phenomena precisely due to their preoccupation to become *exact science*, which they, erroneously, assume is wholly empirical and math driven. Natural scientists do acknowledge the role of empirical mathematical measurements in their disciplines; however, they also recognize measurements *only* as tools used to *describe* phenomena, not *understanding*. It must be duly noted that predictions and mathematical truths in hard sciences, which natural scientists themselves acknowledge, only *designates* or *describes* the laws and workings of the universe; they neither, by themselves, *create* the laws or the universe. Indeed, Newton was quite explicit about the fact that his laws were not the causes of the universe or its workings, rather his laws *merely described* natural phenomena *as they were* in nature.⁸

Very much the opposite is the case in social sciences. Here, instead of limiting oneself to understanding, one erroneously, through perversions of scientific reasoning, goes on to equate measurements and predictions, which are in reality only *tools* in scientific inquiry, as the sole essence of scientific understanding. Newton after *discovering* (it is important to keep in mind Newton did not *create*, he only *discovered*)

⁸ Vide, Isaac Newton, *The Principia*, trans. Andrew Motte (Amherst, NY: Prometheus Books, 1995); I. Bernard Cohen, *The Newtonian Revolution* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

the laws of nature did not say, ‘I have, by discovering the laws of nature, created the universe,’ nor ‘The laws of nature, which I discovered, created the universe’; unfortunately, this is what social scientists assume and try to do. This can be seen in the manner in which social scientists from the outset, without understanding, try to create theories and then fit diverse social phenomena into those theories, as they “strive to shape a people and landscape *that will fit their techniques of observation.*”⁹

In other words, social sciences, being epigones of science equipped with its narrowest version, pervert not only science, but social inquiries as well. They, thereby, *create* and *fabricate* social phenomena by positing them upon examined societies as something *actual* and *natural*. Furthermore, the penchant of social sciences to mimic physics makes them disregard the fact that society cannot be measured. Of course, this does not mean social sciences refrain from measuring societies. Certainly, they think societies can be measured, hence the current popularity of survey and opinion polls.¹⁰ Indeed, increased popularity of inquiries based on inane survey and opinion polls only show how far social sciences have gone off track; and how little they know and understand. Social sciences insist they are not only measuring what can be measured utilizing scientific methodologies, but they are also affording measurements on those aspects of human societies that cannot be measured. This way, they maintain, social inquests become more scientific and, of course, anything science is good or preferable. Yet, Konrad Lorenz contests against such claims: “Well-known sayings, such as that all research is science insofar as it involves mathematics, or that science consists in

⁹ James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), 82.

¹⁰ Prime examples of such are the World Values Survey (WVS) and European Values Survey (EVS).

“measuring what is measurable, and making measurable what is not measurable,” are epistemologically the greatest nonsense that ever came from the lips of those who should know better.”¹¹ Certainly, what Lorenz is in fact evincing is the essentiality of understanding. For without understanding, what use are the mathematical tools and measurements. Epistemologically, mathematical or empirical measurements are dependent on understanding of phenomena, after all, mathematical numbers, equations, symbols, even measurements, gain their significance as scientific tools only in relation to and contingent on the prober’s understandings of the phenomenon. Without understanding the phenomenon, mathematical tools, no matter how sophisticated, accurate, or practical, will be as useful as the rarest and finest string quartet instruments in the hands of persons who have no acquaintance with any musical instruments whatsoever and asking them to perform one of Beethoven’s String Quartets.

Without understanding, measuring means very little. One can carry as many empirical measurements as one wishes, but these will only lead to the collection of numerous measurements with no meaning, just as one can go on measuring birds in one’s garden every day or collect computable data on how many blue cars one sees on the street or empirically observe how many pieces of hair one sheds from one’s head. All these are meaningless without understanding: what makes birds attracted to one’s garden—is it the trees or fruits on the trees or is it something else—or what makes hair shed from one’s head—is it because of blood pressure, other health ailments, or is it because one has long hair and is time to get a haircut—or what make blue cars pass through one’s neighborhood—is it because there are people in the neighborhood who own blue cars, or

¹¹ Konrad Lorenz, *Civilized Man’s Eight Deadly Sins* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1974), 94.

is it because the street is one way, or is it because the street is named *blue street*, or is it because owners of blue cars happen to like this street, or is it something else. Hence, without understanding, empirical measurements have no meaning.

Indeed, Mark Twain tells us that when he was appointed as a correspondent for a newspaper, the editor advised him not to cover nor write about events that cannot be *empirically verified*. So, following the instructions given to him by the editor, Twain describes an event thusly: “A woman *given the name of Mrs. James Jones, who is reported to be one of the society leaders of the city, is said to have given what purported to be a party yesterday to a number of alleged ladies. The hostess claims to be the wife of a reputed attorney (italics added).*”¹² Mark Twain certainly saw the silliness and absurdity of instructions given to him by the editor, who was very keen on empirical facts and observations. And this is exactly what Mark Twain did by showing the silliness of empiricism in his descriptions of the social event following the instruction of an editor, who considered empirical observations to be the only source of truth. Truly, this anecdote of Mark Twain offers valuable lessons on human experiences to the social sciences.

Understanding does not mean measurements, nor do measurements mean understanding. Social inquest means understanding; it does not mean measurements or empirical observations. Certainly, Newton did not discover gravity by measuring without first understanding why objects always fell to the ground. He certainly did not resort to mathematical equations or measurements to discover gravity; rather he first had to *understand* why objects fell to the ground. And on understanding, he represented his understanding by *describing* it in an equation, not vice-versa.

¹² Mark Twain quoted in Karl Popper, *Conjectures and Refutations* (New York, NY: Routledge Classics, 2006), 557.

At this point one may argue what is the point of understanding when science can and will in the future solve all the problems. Yet, it is essential to remember human problems are not meant to be solved, rather they are to be understood. In understanding, a problem solves itself. It must also be remembered, science only *describes* phenomena; its problem solving aspects reside in its understanding of phenomena it is describing. Science does not offer solutions without first understanding the nature of phenomena. To be more precise, by understanding phenomena, problems begin to solve themselves. This is how science solves problems. In fact, this aspect of science is notoriously ignored by many of its epigones, for they assume, science upon encountering problems immediately offers solutions through measurements and experiments.

Moreover, what mostly goes amiss in development studies and social sciences, in general, is their assumption of how science can solve all problems of society. Nevertheless, as Claude Lévi-Strauss verily reminds us: “Science will never give us all the answers.”¹³ Science is ultimately a human product based on cultural experiences; and like any human product, it is bound to be fallible and restrictive (in its applicability). Indeed, most supporters of science have erroneously come to the conclusion by insisting empirical measurements and mathematical tools to be of necessity in social sciences. They argue social sciences must become like natural sciences—mathematically rigorous, application of scientific methodologies, etc. Yet, it is essential to recognize that just because certain methodical tools favorably serve the needs of a specific discipline, this, however, does not necessarily mean the same tools will be beneficial in other disciplines. Aldous Huxley maintained, one cannot simply extend the same methodologies of natural

¹³ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myths and Meanings* (New York: Schocken Books, 1979), 14.

sciences into social sciences because the two disciplines are not the same, nor are their objects of study, for one studies external natural material outside of man, while the other studies man himself. He notes:

“But the methodology of social science is *inevitably different* from that of natural science. It is *different and must be different* from [*sic*] one basic reason—the *investigator is inside instead of outside* his material. *Man can not investigate man by the same methods by which he investigates external nature.* He can use the methods of natural science to investigate *certain aspects of man*—the *structure and working of his body*, for instance, or the mode of his *heredity*; but that is because these are shared with other organisms and because they are partial aspects which can be readily externalized. *But when he starts investigating human motive, his own motives are involved; when he studies human society, he is himself part of a social structure* (italics added).”¹⁴

What Huxley means is, society is not an atom nor a quant, it does not reflect from a shiny surface nor does it tell where it is but not how fast it is going, it is not an abstract number waiting for someone to run statistical regressions, it is not a square root nor a *phi*, it is not an equation, it is not a variable, it does not exist in the realm of ideas. As such, to assume *tools* used in *describing* the natural world will be beneficial to social sciences is an absurdity, for it implicitly shoulders the idea that by *somehow* utilizing those tools, they will *somehow* solve the profoundest of societal maladies. Even Franz Boas, who was trained in physics before turning to social sciences, saw very early in his career that methods from natural sciences could not be applied to social sciences. He realized social sciences had to formulate their own approaches independent of the hard sciences. Even though he couldn't apply scientific methodologies in his new field, he nevertheless brought with him the very best of science: the *spirit* of science. Boas saw the importance of critical skepticism towards any kind of generalization, he was unwilling—just as any

¹⁴ Aldous Huxley quoted in George A. Lundberg, “The Future of the Social Sciences,” *The Scientific Monthly* 53 (October 1941): 347.

astute physicist would—to accept any kind of generalized explanations. For this he was considered an eccentric by most of his colleagues mainly because they were more inclined toward facile generalized understanding.¹⁵

Indeed, understanding is not an easy task for it mocks at the face of lazy *generalities* of scientific rationality. Understanding requires one to examine not only oneself but also requires one to be open to new views. It requires one to appreciate diversity of views that is diametrically opposite to one's own, after all understanding is critical towards one's sense of what is good, moral, rational; it is indignant to one's prior beliefs; it mocks at terms such as *universal, uniform, standard, method*. Only when one accepts things *as they are* in their varieties, will one become wise, not only as an inquirer of society, but also as a human being. However, for scientific epigones, such arduous task to understand can be easily by-passed by employing empirical measurements that promise *instantaneous* answers to solve the profoundest problems of the human world, so why bother with understanding. They may even argue, measurements point us to the causal variables, and that *cause* and *effect* are essential to science. Nevertheless, it must be duly noted that, as Heisenberg maintains, modern physics have abandoned the concept of causality, i.e. *cause-effect*, as a useful tool for interpreting physical experiences.¹⁶ They are abandoned because the law of causality is too restrictive and, hence, does not hold in quantum theory, as Heisenberg further argues, it is possible that the “space-time processes may run in reverse to the causal sequence.”¹⁷

¹⁵ Franz Boas, *Anthropology and Modern Life* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, Inc., 1986).

¹⁶ Werner Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy* (New York, NY: Harper Torchbooks, 1958).

¹⁷ Heisenberg, *Physics and Philosophy*, 88.

Thus, it is rather imprudent to hold on to or utilize redundant concepts that no longer hold and that have been rejected by natural sciences, and apply them to explaining human society, which is as complex, if not more complex than the quantum world. As such, one must accept human reality for what it is. No amount of scientificity can make societies, cultures, and peoples predictable or measurable as is usually assumed by simulacra of science. At least, great minds from every century seem to hold this view, so why can't the modern society.

Theory-less

From what has been hitherto reasoned, in this study, may give the impression that there is no redeeming quality in development studies, however, this is not the case. There is, indeed, a redeeming quality to this discipline: it has numerous theories borrowed from other disciplines of social sciences or, more precisely, it has no theory of its own.¹⁸ Indeed, what are called *theories of development* or *development theories* are nothing but utilization of political, economic, and socio-cultural theories for the purpose of development. These theories together make up *theories of development*, for there are no theories that *exclusively* deal with issues of development. There is nothing wrong with theories being brought together to understand development, this is not the problem for it is always prudent to understand any social issue by examining it from multiple perspectives and, of course, development cannot be understood in piecemeal manners because development can only be made sense through amalgamation of social, cultural, political, and economic aspects: in a holistic manner. So, what then is the problem? The

¹⁸ Of course, *polyphonic rationality* proposed in this study *is not* an attempt to proffer a new theory in development. In fact, as clearly mentioned in the previous chapter, to put polyphonic rationality into a theory is to truncate and construe its significance and meanings.

problem lies in the theories themselves. The political, socio-cultural, and economic theories brought into development studies are themselves highly devoid of worldly realities—thereby leading one to erroneously assume the larger human reality to be composed of one set of rationalities. It is, therefore, important to recognize that theories which are brought into development studies are themselves highly oblivious to their own prodigious limits. These theories,¹⁹ ironically, are simply incapable in carrying out a single uninterrupted train of thought (or argument) without succumbing to logical and rational fallacies of their own making—which is rather risible considering the fact that the whole foundation of their theory rests on the infallibility of scientific rationality and logic.

Nevertheless, absence of theories dealing exclusively with issues of development is not unwise because it provides the best possible milieu to make clear the true purpose of development: understanding. Absences of *pure* theories of development provide a fecund environment from where to begin *de novo* the purpose of development, meaningful understanding (of course, in the best of worlds, development studies and social sciences, in general, will *eternally* remain *theory-less*). One must also realize just because there is no pure theory (or theories) of development, one should not, thus, conclude a pure theory of development is, therefore, needed. Such conclusions would be

¹⁹ These theories are not difficult to find, if one were to vide about what has been hitherto reasoned in this study. In perusal of any theory—such as: (neo) classical theory, the new growth theory, the new economic geography, post-modernism, the new trade theory, dependency theory, Marxism, critical theory, institutionalism, post-colonialism, (neo) liberalism, rational choice theory, post-developmentalism, constructivism, and cultural deprivation theory, feminism, eco-feminism, etc.—one will find all these theories (and many others) run into logical and rational *ad absurdum*. In other words, these theories in trying to avoid any logical fallacies and irrationalities, the very foundation of their theories are overlooked, ironically, leading to logical and rational *ad absurdum*.

a grave *misunderstanding* of what has been hitherto discussed. Rather, one of the principal aims of this study is to maintain this *theory-less* in development studies, viz. no theories, no methods, examine societies *as they are*. Here, the words *as they are* point to the *heuristic* nature as the best possible way to fully realize the aim of social inquests: understanding societies. One cannot take for granted how important it is to maintain theory-less examination of societies. Development studies already lacking a pure theory must be made to remain theory-less, but this should not lead one to erroneously conclude it is perfectly wise to bring in numerous political, economic, and socio-cultural theories from without. Rather, development must be examined without scientific theories, methods, and criteria. If one were to insist it is unthinkable to carry out development without any theory or method, one is forgetting human, and as such societies, are *sui generis*, they cannot be made to conform to what is unnatural and artificial—which scientific theories and methods are. It is out of the soil soaked in fervent adherence to narrow scientific catechisms that one finds this fecund ground from where to better carry out social inquests. If this opportunity is lost then, indeed, development will continue to be an abortive *cul-de-sac* process.

Traditional societies do not hold the same worldviews; rather societies think differently (thoroughly discussed in the previous chapter). Hence, theories constructed in one society, under different societal realities, will hardly be of any relevance to societies who do not hold the same worldviews. As Hirschman verily reminds us, “theories which, because of their high level of abstraction, look perfectly ‘neutral’ as between one kind of economic system and another, often are primarily relevant to the conditions under which they were conceived... Therefore, the more useful they are in one setting, the less they

are likely to be so in a completely different one.”²⁰ What is more, because theories are *not reality* but are only *abstractions of reality*, they are far removed not only from the contexts of their own aborning societies, but are even further removed from the context of societies where they are to be implemented.

That is to say, theories build on one social setting and transplanting them into an alien culture is no different from how, “events that surround a forest ranger differ from the events that surround a city dweller lost in a wood. They are different events, not just different appearances of the same event.”²¹ There is a world of difference between knowledge of woods (or forests) in which the ranger is accustomed to and the city-dweller’s understandings of the forest. The forest ranger knows the landscapes, what to do in an event he goes astray from the path, and so forth. While, on the other hand, the city dweller lost in woods is in a totally alien world, with little or no knowledge of the environment he finds himself in (other than what he might have otherwise read in books or magazines). No doubt, the lost city-dweller might have read books on survival and what measures to take when one goes astray in forests, but there is a world of difference when it comes to actual applicability of what the city dweller might have read in survival guides and reality of his circumstances. It may so happen, the city dweller might have read survival guides and *how to* books, but the applicability of putting it into practice depends on one’s understanding of the environment in which one is in. For it would be rather unwise for one to use the African savanna survival guides, which one has read in books, and use those practices when one finds oneself in the tundra regions of North

²⁰ Albert O. Hirschman, *The Strategy of Economic Development* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1958), 29.

²¹ Paul Feyerabend, *Farewell to Reason* (New York, NY: Verso, 1987), 104.

America. What is more, just because one has read survival guides and *how to* books, it does not mean one is *instantaneously* well-equipped and apt for survival. This is because survival requires constant interactions with and understanding of the environment. The forest ranger in this case by virtue of his constant interactions with and understanding of the landscape enables him to be apt to various unforeseen circumstances; indeed, the forest ranger would find the survival guides and *how to* books to be a horrible means to get oneself out of difficult situations, for he knows there is a vast difference between what is said in the (survival) books and the actual experiences. Likewise, there is a vast difference between numerous social sciences theories and their applicability to traditional societies.

Moreover, traditional societies do not care about numerous political, socio-cultural, economic theories popular among technicians; still, this point always seems to go amiss. Differently put, traditional societies do not hurdle around in groups and contemplate which theories they should choose. Nor do they think, “We are acting according to ‘*R*’ or ‘*K*’ theory of economics”; nor do they say, “because the demand of ‘*O*’ is *X* and the supply is *Y*, hence I am going to sell ‘*O*’ at price *Z*.” These kinds of scenario never take place, yet technicians tend to assume such scenarios do take place within traditional societies. The traditional world functions at a very different level; its realities are vastly different from realities of technicians, who live in their own societies with their own societal realities. And whether one likes it or not, each social reality affects the manner in which each society views its world.

No doubt, there are problems in traditional societies, yet these problems are specific to each society and must therefore be addressed by each according to its

existential realities. Friedrich von Hayek maintained, because of societies' long process of adjustments to their own milieu, they are better equipped to deal, on their own, with their own specific problems. This is because each society has, at its disposal, means that relate to the realities of its circumstances. Thus, local societies are better equipped to address their own problems, rather than any intellectuals or experts would, using advanced theories and equipment at their disposal to do the same. He further warned that "rational interventions" with advanced scientific theories and equipment only leave societies in worse conditions than they were prior to such interventions.²² Indeed, problems of development, underdevelopment, etc. are the logical consequences of development. Traditional societies are in the state they are not because they do not want to develop, but rather they want to develop, modernize, become wealthy, and join the wealthy society club. The urban slums, poverty, illnesses, rancid living conditions, overpopulation, dense overcrowding of living spaces, unemployment, fragile health, air and water pollutions, destruction of environment, desertification of rural lives, poor sanitation, lack of clean water, and so on are not the result of societies' effort to shy away from development, rather they are the consequence of societies' effort to develop, progress, modernize, etc. What, for instance, makes people flock to urban areas? It is the quest for development that people flock, by the millions, into urban areas. People, erroneously, hope better life awaits them, and that their first step towards the "ladder of development" is to move away from existing slow rural lives. And, no doubt, their illusive dreams are scattered the very moment they decide to leave their homes. They

²² Friedrich von Hayek, *Studies on the Abuse and Decline of Reason: The Collected Works of F. A. Hayek*, vol. 13, ed. Bruce Caldwell (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2010).

believe in the illusive allurement of modern development promising much “existential security” through economic progress. If development never took place, then there wouldn’t be the destructive *underdevelopment* in traditional societies. In absence of development, each society would make for itself the path in which it wants to remain or maintain. In other words, each society will become what it was meant to be (whatever it may be), at least, for Aristotle (as well as for the Greeks), this is what it meant by life, society, and progress.

Philosopher’s Stone and the Perennial Manifestations of the Faustian Geist

In this enquiry, we have seen how scientific rationality colors development studies. Certainly, technicians of development²³ proselytize not only the hopes that (if only scientific rationalities are embraced by traditional societies) development—through rationalized societal institutions, governments, economic systems, values, beliefs—would be a smooth process, but also that social-scientific inquiries will help solve much of societal ailments. It is as if technicians take scientific rationality to be the *philosopher’s stone*, an elixir capable not only of answering societal malaises, but also capable of describing, explaining, interpreting, representing societies themselves. On one level, it is unfair to equate alchemists with technicians because alchemists were not only knowledgeable of their limitations, but they were also some of the greatest minds, with *broad* understanding of the human and natural world, from every corner of the world, from China, India, Arabia, Mediterranean/Levant, Greece, Rome, to Europe, who advanced human knowledge. Newton was an ardent alchemist, so also was the

²³ By technicians, one has in mind here: academics—sociologists, political scientists, economists, anthropologists, psychologists—public intellectuals, policy makers, journalists, Aid agencies, NGOs, Humanitarian agencies, among many others.

renaissance thinker Paracelsus. Even Robert Boyle, one of the pioneers in chemistry, was an alchemist. While today's technicians, unfortunately with their narrow parochial understanding, are simulacra of the great minds of the past. Alchemists did not impose their views on others, nor did they demand every society to adhere to their modes of thought, certainly they also never did find their philosopher's stone.

In complete contrast, technicians of development have found their own version of the *philosopher's stone*, scientific rationality. They, thereby, demand every society to adhere or conform to their modes of thought. After all, this is their elixir that will resolve, decipher, answer numerous afflictions of society. For technicians, it is their principal purpose to turn traditional societies into developed societies; this is their equivalent of alchemists' aim to turn base metals into gold. Alchemists failed in their effort because metals, be they noble or base, are not human products, rather they are products of nature. Likewise, technicians fail to learn from the errors of alchemists because societies are not the product of a few groups of individuals planning what human society ought to be, rather societies are products of nature where each society acclimatized, in its best possible ways, to its given milieu. No amount of scientific engineering can bring to fore what technicians aim to achieve. Technicians have, no doubt, come to accept the necessity of only one mode of thought, scientific rationality, while relegating others as irrational superstitions. They genuinely believe in scientific rationality's benign gifts conferred onto man; they believe these gifts to be nothing but benefits for societies. Yet, Blaise Pascal saw such views to be erroneous. For Pascal, the greatest errors of scientific rationality are not only its failures to recognize any other forms of knowledge, but also its

failures to recognize the fallibility of the doctrine of the certainty and sovereignty of its techniques.²⁴

The failure to recognize other modes of thought, which Pascal points to, limits technicians understanding of human societies. In order to understand any issue, be it social or natural phenomenon, what is essential is the freedom of thought, to think independently. It requires freedom of *mind* to think without any constrain—rigid rules, methods, standards, theories, rationalities, logic, etc. As Allan Bloom verily notes:

Freedom of the mind requires not only, or not even especially, the absence of legal constraints *but the presence of alternative thoughts*. The *most successful tyranny* is not the one that uses force to assure uniformity but the one that *removes the awareness of other possibilities*, that makes it *seem inconceivable that other ways are viable*, that removes the sense that there is an outside. It is not... commitments that will render a man free, but thoughts, reasoned thoughts... *Real differences come from difference in thought and fundamental principle* (italics added).²⁵

Indeed, the intense zeal with which scientific rationality (and with it the inevitability of modern progress) is advocated only substantiates the verity of Bloom's statement. The developed world as well as technicians' insistence on only one mode of thought deemed beneficial for the entire human society, by condemning other modes of thought and ways of life, is no different from the most successful tyrant who not only, to borrow Bloom's words, "removes the awareness of other possibilities," but also gives the illusion "that makes it seem inconceivable that other ways are viable."²⁶ This way the difference in thoughts and ways of life is negated.

²⁴ Blaise Pascal quoted in Michael Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays* (New York, NY: Methuen & Co. Ltd, 1962), 25.

²⁵ Allan Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 249.

²⁶ Bloom, *The Closing of the American Mind*, 249.

Without free and difference in thoughts, any social or natural inquest will remain purposeless without any real meaning. It is only through unconstrained thoughts unhindered by doctrinal dogmas that inquests can be beneficial not only to societies, but also to humanity itself. At the very least, it requires societies to be viewed through a *humanistic* lens—where societies are accepted *as they are* with all their complexity. In the end it is important to have the tenacity to accept the world for what it is. This means accepting, as Tertullian puts it, “*Credo quia Absurdum*” (I believe because it is absurd);²⁷ after all, this, in few words, is the *humanness* of our world.

Truly, it is the absurdities of the world technicians cannot accept. In fact, it is this absurdity Goethe’s *Faust* was also unwilling to accept. What technicians are trying to achieve is no different from what Goethe’s *Faust* planned on achieving: to rid the world of needs, wants, cares, and guilt.²⁸ Faust is a German fable in which the protagonist, Faust, makes a pact with the devil, Mephistopheles, for which he receives infinite knowledge and other worldly pleasures in exchange for his soul. This fable has been told many times prior to Goethe’s *Faust*: Johann Spiess and Christopher Marlowe before, and Mikhail Bulgakov and Thomas Mann after Goethe. Indeed, Faust has even been put to music by Hector Berlioz, one of the most original composers of the nineteenth century, and Franz Liszt, one of the great pianists and composers. Anyone familiar with Faust will know why it is that this fable is often retold. As human beings, we are all terribly interested in knowledge that can be utilized to do something *good* for humanity. This is

²⁷ Pierre Bühler, “Tertullian: The Teacher of the *credo quia absurdum*,” in John Bartley Stewart, eds. *Kierkegaard and the Patristic and Medieval Traditions* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2008), 131.

²⁸ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Anchor Books, 1990).

indeed the case in Faust. However, what sets Goethe's *Faust* apart from other incarnations is that in Goethe's *Faust*, his desires are not so much with the infinite knowledge and worldly pleasures in of themselves, but rather, as Marshall Berman astutely notes, he is, here, infatuated with the notion of self-development as a means to transform the entire external world.²⁹ With Mephistopheles by his side, Faust goes on to transform and develop the landscapes, towns, villages, societies, forests, seas. He harnesses the power of nature by subduing and controlling it. There are immense human costs, but Faust consciously ignores the evil acts being done (which Mephistopheles obliges) in order to realize his goals for physical, social, cultural transformations not only of himself, but also of the entire world. Faust's project to transform "earth and sea" is done in order to do *good* (*good* defined by Faust) for human society; after all, he has received infinite knowledge from his pact with Mephistopheles; hence, what point is there to waste such knowledge.³⁰

He created new living space in the barren wastelands: built harbors and canals for ships to carry goods, men, and for commerce; they also attract new migrants into the developing lands thereby creating settlements, towns, cities, and thriving commerce.³¹ All these he attains. Yet, at what human costs (after all, human, cultural, societal lives became obsolete). These human costs are overlooked because Faust always maintained the possibility to create a new human society, a world devoid of wants, cares, guilt, and

²⁹ Marshall Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1988).

³⁰ Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Faust: Part Two*, trans. David Luke (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³¹ von Goethe, *Faust: Part Two*.

desires with clean hands.³² No doubt, he has created new and vibrant social systems with cosmopolitan commerce, high productivity, free economic and individual activities, long-distance trade, but these were, nevertheless, driven by the need for standardized modern systems that, in their wake, erased the old traditions without a trace.³³ Goethe in his *Faust* most astutely forewarns us of the inherent destructive features of progress upon man and nature. As Berman notes, “Ironically, once this developer [Faust] has destroyed the premodern world, he has destroyed his whole reason for being in the world... [thus] show[ing] us how the *category of obsolete persons, so central to modernity, swallows up the man who gave it life and power* (italics added).”³⁴

An astute reader will find parallels between Faust’s development works and what technicians of development, today, aim to achieve. The Faustian Geist is a recurring theme throughout human history: more often than not it involves making a deal, with devil or, what is termed as, *necessary evil*, for human good. Truly, every human malaise is the product of projects aimed at bettering human conditions, just as Faust’s contract with Mephistopheles. After all, he, more so than any of his preceding incarnation, was infatuated with bettering the human world by taming the “earth and sea.” Every kind of human suffering arises in an effort to do something deemed beneficial for human societies, they do not arise from wanting to make peoples or societies suffer.³⁵ Today, technicians of development, no doubt, see their role as the facilitators to better human conditions; however, the results of their effort will be the same as have been for much of

³² Berman, *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air*.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁵ For instance, look at the destruction of societies in the Middle-East and in Africa in an effort to institute the professed ‘universal human good’: democracy, freedom, market-system, etc.

human history: more human suffering, destruction of societies, cultures, values, beliefs, and expendability of human lives. Perhaps, we as human beings are a threat to ourselves, for we hardly seem to confer any principal importance to anything or anyone other than to our own selves.

We, as human beings, for most part of the known human history have been in quest to create a better human world, but the magnitude and zeal with which today's developmental progress is carried out (and believed in) are unprecedented. If one looks into human histories, one will find no equivalent, in terms of magnitude, to contemporary societal changes. Indeed, science and technology have much to do with it: with instantaneous access to media, internet, information, transportation, and so forth. Here, one could, no doubt, argue man have throughout history shown the tenacity not only to learn, but also to adjust and thrive under new environmental, social, cultural conditions. Yet, like everything else in the world, we are bound to *exhaust* our adaptability, for there is only so much, or a limit, to how species can adjust.³⁶ This is why since the earliest of human civilizations, the importance of *golden mean* has been expressed, always: from Ancient China (Confucius) to Greece (Aristotle). Human societies have, indeed, adapted

³⁶ Through-out human history there is the recurring theme of *exhaustion*. 'Exhaustion' in which societies are not only unable to rectify existing problems, but are also unable to solve new problems arising from changing societal—cultural, social, political, economic—circumstances. Vide, Oswald Spengler, *The Decline of the West: Forms and Actuality*, vol. 1 (New York, NY: Alfred. A. Knopf, 1980a), and *The Decline of the West: Perspectives of World History*, vol. 2 (New York, NY: Alfred. A. Knopf, 1980b); Arnold Toynbee, *A Study of History*, Abridgment of Vol. 1-6 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1987a), and *A Study of History*, Abridgment of Vol. 7-10 (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1987b); Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, trans. Franz Rosenthal (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Nature and Destiny of Man: Human Nature*, vol. 1 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996a), and *The Nature and Destiny of Man: Human Destiny*, vol. 2 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996b); Will Durant, and Ariel Durant, *The Lessons of History* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 2010).

themselves to many changing circumstances, but it is also unavoidable to exhaust their adjustment ability, after all, there is limit to everything.

Furthermore, ruinations of traditional societies and cultures will no doubt continue; it will continue not out of malaise intent, but out of innocent, yet misplaced concern for bettering human societies. Sadly, the Faustian Geist is far too pervasive for any society to refuse its offers: infinite knowledge, money, power. What is more, the lure of modernity, development, progress is immense; societies can hardly ever resist such a lure of material wealth, big houses, vehicles, entertainments, leisure, medical enhancements of any aspect of human body, material comforts, and so on. This is further aided by high paced media, information, transportations, and interconnectivity. The attraction of modernity is far too intense in its scope and presences for any traditional society to contain itself. In this day and age isolation becomes impossible, when everyday new isolated societies are being discovered, if not academically examined. Hence, invariably traditional societies very soon set themselves on their quest to attain the same things they see or hear though mass media or other information outlets. And who wouldn't want to amass personal wealth that gives more freedom to do what one wants. In the face of such a reality, traditional values of conviviality, nobler forms of poverty, cooperation, sharing, etc. become too absurd for any descent *modern man*.³⁷ Indeed, the

³⁷ In other words, there, ultimately, exists the indissoluble conflict between individual self-interests and collective interests. And without restrains (i.e. in absence of societal restrains) individual self-interests invariably always wins. Vide, Sigmund Freud, *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. James Strachey (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989a), and *Civilization and Its Discontents*, trans. James Strachey (New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989b); Niebuhr's, *Human Nature*; and *Human Destiny*. Hence, with respect to traditional societies, when traditional restrains are rendered superfluous and dispensable, all existing values emphasizing collective good that hitherto ensured societies' survival are discarded by invoking new values and

more peoples or societies become materially better off, the more they tend to regard with contempt not only other societies and human beings, but also sneer at the whole of organic environment on which life depends; they begin to take many essential things for granted. Yet, this is perhaps only understandable, after all, we as human beings are weak in temperament, especially towards materiality, hence we have institutionalized states, places of knowledge, religions and other abstract entities, somethings which we can set up or put in pedestal, bow down before and offer to them our sacrifices.

Development will go on regardless of human, social, and cultural costs. For the Faustian Geist is always ready to give assurance about the *future* benefits that await us for the price we pay today to attain our ideal human society. Given a chance most people would want to change the world, yet because we are fallible, even our most munificent and selfless generous intensions will only kindle more sorrow. One can only commiserate the humanity at large, for we are indeed pitiable.

No doubt, just as Faust benefited from his contract with Mephistopheles with knowledge and power, likewise, modern societies have benefited by embracing scientific rationality: material wealth and riches, modern technological advancements, ease of life and travel, intense and high paced connectivity, and so forth. Yet, such an embrace is indissolubly accompanied by *consequences* not so beneficial for societies, just as Faust soon discovered about his development projects. Consequences depriving societies of their essences, of their humanness through economic valuation and mechanization of society and human lives, intense impersonal and superficial human relations, neurotic

individual self-interests that invariably accompany modern developmental progress. Differently put, new values, beliefs, etc. provide an avenue for traditional societies to justify their break from their existing beliefs.

emphasis on technical efficiencies, uniform organization of human societies, intense alienation and meaninglessness in peoples' lives, and numerous other societal pathologies. In other words, inherent in scientific rationality is its internal logic that leads to it becoming *universal* with generalized uniform laws that, in turn, *make* human societies and, in fact, the human world, conform to these laws. And this inherent logic, if you will, to it becoming universal is its impulse to *domination*. It *dominates* by eviscerating other modes of thought, i.e. diversity, and then blankets the whole of human world with its rationality that in turn adheres to its universal laws. Thus, the logical product of scientific rationality is uniformity, uniformity among societies, cultures, rationalities, knowledges, beliefs, etc. Given such a nature of scientific rationality, it is, therefore, only prudent to have polyphonic forms of thought, based on societies' diverse realities affording diverse lenses, from which to view and understand this complex, indeterminable human world.

What is proposed in this inquest, polyphonic rationality, is not a means to solve problems of development or to better human conditions. It is only an *awareness* to show the humanness of diverse societies and what they have to contribute within the larger realm of human understanding. Understanding is perhaps the only way to delay the inevitable fallacies of our own making that endanger the very place on which all life is contingent.

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