

# Editorial

It is fitting that this 100th edition of *Theoria* addresses many of the major themes that have come, over the years, to define the journal as an editorial project. The articles that follow revisit issues of economic organization and development, and the cultural and political factors that animate them; reflect anew on the nature of justice and the implications thereof for the transformation of everyday life; and consider once more the contribution of thought itself – produced and sustained by intellectual, institutional and educational activities – in interpreting change, and changing our interpretations.

Economic development and its relationship to social and political processes is one of the key themes that *Theoria* has embraced. Johannes Fedderke, in a masterful, synoptic overview of recent developments in economic growth theory, alerts readers to some of the daunting policy challenges that confront developing economies as they engage with the task of “catching up” with the more advanced economies. In particular, through an admirably accessible account of the large and technically often forbidding literature on economic growth, he shows how crucial are institutional factors – social and political – to the successful pursuit of growth. He also makes clear how crucial is the role played by technology and the investment in appropriate forms of human capital formation. To this end he emphasizes the importance of exploring the sources of technological change and innovation. This is especially crucial to those concerned to articulate plausible growth policies in that it is not always the case that in developing economies investment in physical capital, rather than technology, is the “key to long run economic development”. Thus, in the context of a developing economy such as South Africa’s, “the contribution of technological change to growth is non-negligible and growing over time”. The power of endogenous growth theory, Fedderke argues, is exemplified in the manner in which it has led to “a more varied and deeper depiction of the processes that issue in technological progress”. And the need to gain a subtle understanding of the sources of innovation is underscored by the fact that they carry distinct policy implications. In particular, we need to be aware of the danger of low level equilibrium traps that might impair developmental prospects through an inappropriate allocation of human capital

both intra- and internationally. Those concerned to advance the interests of the world's poorer countries ignore new growth theory at their – and the poorer countries' – peril.

In his superb contribution, Peter Burke offers an assessment of the work of Michel de Certeau from an angle which has been relatively neglected: that of the relationship between Certeau's writings and the ecclesiastical context out of which they emerged, and especially his writings on theology, mysticism and the Church. Certeau's generation includes many better known French theorists, from Foucault and Bourdieu to Lévi-Strauss and Lacan, and his work both reflects and is critical of their influence and that of numerous Anglo-American and Continental theorists. Burke's wide-ranging survey touches upon Certeau's early work (mostly published in Catholic journals, up to and including his comments on the events of May 1968), and the similarities between Certeau's and Ivan Illich's intellectual trajectories (both being priests who were conscientized in Latin America and who came to write sociology), but focuses primarily on what Burke calls Certeau's practice of re-employment, the way in which he used concepts drawn from theology to explicate everyday secular life. Amongst these are the metaphors of excommunication and schism, the voluntarist practising of belief and the writing and reading of history. The concept of re-employment itself is associated with both Jesuit and early Christian thought and, Burke concludes, expresses not only the creativity inherent in all forms of thought but also the originality of Certeau himself.

Contemporary debates around justice have constituted a key organizing theme for *Theoria*. Levinas's concept of justice, synchronous with his reformulation of humanism, is based on responsibility and openness to the other. It is equivalent neither to natural law, nor to legislative calculation, but is marked by our pre-intentional relationship to the other (being-for-the-other). In her essay "Remarks on Emmanuel Levinas's Contribution to Classical and 'Situated' Justice", Bettina Bergo explicates and evaluates Levinas's contributions concerning justice and judging. Bergo compares Levinas's ideas on justice with the classical formulations of Aristotle and Maimonides, as well as with recent accounts of "situated justice" advanced by Michael Walzer and others, navigating in the process a path between the poles of universality and particularity, immanence and transcendence. The essay explores the ways in which Levinas's understanding of justice – concerned with both the supererogatory and with equity and proportion – supplements other formulations. Bergo shows Levinas's justice

to be critical and situated in its particularity, yet demanding of an ethical responsibility that extends beyond the immediate vicinity to all others. It is utopian, yet this utopianism is constrained by the structure of testimony. Where the Aristotelian judge is disinterested, standing outside the conflict, Levinas's judge is both inside and outside, split within herself by the conflict. Bergo demonstrates persuasively that Levinas's "transcendentally situated" justice provides the possibility – though not the necessity – of a transformation of quotidian practices of everyday life.

Ashraf Jamal analyzes the state of cultural studies in South Africa, arguing that none of the existing interpretive traditions succeed in accounting for the complexity of lived experience and cultural production. For Jamal, cultural life in South Africa remains trapped in an a priori psychic disfigurement defined by the history of empire and racial strife. In grappling with this, scholars of culture tend to fall into one of three approaches: (1) fatalism: which acknowledges the disfigurement of the past and acquiesces to entrapment therein, (2) positivism: which holds that this disfigurement is innately curable, and (3) relativism: which plays fast and loose with this disfigurement, choosing ultimately to forget or ignore it. Jamal argues for a position that incorporates all three approaches by mediating them through an interstitial approach which forges a more intensively reflective, contingent and enabling reading of contemporary South African culture.

A concern with the vexed and changing circumstances of universities in the contemporary world – and not least in South Africa – has been a recurrent theme in *Theoria* over the past decade. Anthony Holiday presents a timely contribution to the current debates about Africa's identity, development and inclusion in the world community, sparked most recently by the South African president Thabo Mbeki's calls for an African Renaissance. Specifically, Holiday approaches the debate by examining what is at stake in conceptualizing an African university. Holiday rejects the current tendency to ascribe the name "university" to all and any institutions of higher learning, and argues that history and tradition places real constraints on what may be allowed to count as a university. Furthermore, it is not the subject matter taught or researched at a university that determines its identity, but rather it is the less tangible *spirit* and *character* that is central to its definition. By tracing the development of western universities from the Academy through the monasteries and priories of medieval Europe, he argues that the development (and definition) of a uniquely African university is best served by avoiding ideological

Africanist and nationalist approaches, and turning instead to Africa's rich spiritual roots. What is needed is the counterpart to the monastic tradition. While the path towards a university that does not merely seem African, but is African, is fraught with dangers posed by both Africanist ideologues and Eurocentric skeptics, we would support Holiday's sentiment that the collective project is both essential and urgent for the future of this continent.

THE EDITORS