POSSESSIVE INDIVIDUALISM AND THE DOMESTIC LIBERAL ROOTS OF INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL THEORY

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Abstract

Criticisms of *realism* and *liberalism*, traditionally the two dominant perspectives within international relations (IR) and international political economy (IPE) theory, have been widespread for the past two decades. What unites these critical theorists is their claim that IR/IPE theory is both ahistorical and decontextualised. What is missing from this critical account is a sustained historical examination of liberal ontology at the domestic level and how it relates to current mainstream IR/IPE theory construction. This project provides an overview of the basic assumptions, goals and insights of C.B. Macpherson's *possessive individualist* model and its relevance to the study of international politics. Its main hypothesis is that Macpherson's critique of the *possessive individualist* core of liberalism is equally valid at the international level of analysis because assumptions about the role of the individual, the state, and human nature within IR/IPE theory have been ontologically transferred to the international level in *possessive individualist* terms. The *possessive individualist* ethos is an identity that imbues intersubjective norms and values upon individuals, institutions and states. Through social iteration, states have embodied these liberal norms, values, and identities that entrench competition, hierarchy and inequality. IR/IPE theory, which draws its core assumptions from this liberal discourse, benefits from including Macpherson's insights because insufficient attention has been given to the historical and ideological development of the liberal worldview, its effects on the conceptualisation of international politics, and how this pervasive worldview inhibits potential alternatives. This leads to a discussion of the model's potential applicability in furthering a critical research programme of other areas of liberal capitalist modernity.

Dedication

To my mother who always gave me the confidence to sail beyond the stars of established truth: to my father who has given me a critical eye and a desire to struggle to imagine a better world: to my wife Amy for her patience and support and to my children Kai and Riley—in whom my hope and optimism for the future resides.

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C.B. Macpherson & Possessive Individualism: Applications for the Study of IR and IPE Theory

Introduction

Criticisms of *realism* and *liberalism*, traditionally the two dominant perspectives within international relations (IR) and international political economy (IPE)[1] theory, have been widespread for the past two decades. These criticisms come from several sources including feminists, post-modernists, post-structuralists, Marxists, and critical constructivists. What unites these critical theorists is their claim that IR/IPE theory is both ahistorical and decontextualised. Mainstream IR/IPE theory is depicted as an ongoing self-referential[2] discourse within an existing domestic liberal ontology; however, there seems to be little attention paid to this fact by realists and liberals alike. Models of international politics are fashioned upon *a priori* claims about the essential nature of

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[1]   For the purposes of this project, the abbreviations (IR) and (IPE) will be used throughout for international relations theory and international political economy theory respectively.

[2]   The self-referential nature has been pointed out by several critical scholars including Robert Cox *Production, power, and world order: social forces in the making of history* (1987) *Political economy of a plural world : globalization and civilization* (2002); James Der Derian, *Virtuous war: mapping the military-industrial-media-entertainment network* (2001); Jim George *Discourses of global politics: a critical (re)introduction to international relations* (1994); V. Spike Peterson, Anne Sisson Runyan *Global gender issues* (1992); RBJ Walker *Inside/outside: international relations as political theory* (1993) among others. More importantly, this claim is evident in the works of many prominent realist and liberal scholars.

For realist scholars see John J. Mearsheimer, "The Future of the American Pacifier" in *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 80 No.5 Sept/Oct 2001 pp 46-61; Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: the struggle for power and peace* (1973); Kenneth N. Waltz *Theory of International Politics* (1979), "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 18, Issue 4 (Spring 1988). pp. 615-628,and "Structural Realism after the Cold War" *International Security* Vol. 25 No. 1 (Summer 2000) pp. 5-41.

For liberal scholars see Francis Fukuyama "The End of History?" *The National Interest* 16 (Summer 1989) pp.3-18, "Reflection on the End of History, Five Years Later" *History and Theory* Volume 34 Issue 2 Theme Issue 34: World Historians and Their Critics (May 1995), pp.27-43, "Their Target: The Modern World" Newsweek Vol. 138 Issue 25, 12/17/2001 pg.42-48, "The west has won. Radical Islam can't beat democracy and capitalism. We're still at the end of history" *Guardian* Thursday, Oct. 11, 2001 http://www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story/0,1361,567333,00.html; Robert O. Keohane "International Institutions: Can Interdependence Work?" *Foreign Policy* No. 110 Spring 1998 pp. 82-96, Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye *Power and Interdependence* 3rd Edition. New York: Longman, 2001; Andrew Moravcsik "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics" in *International Organization* 51 4 (Autumn 1997) pp. 513-553; Kenneth A. Oye ed. *Cooperation Under Anarchy* (1986); W.W. Rostow *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (1960).

human beings in regard to drives, needs and goals. In doing so, these claims purport to explain the "observable."[3]

What is missing from this critical account is a sustained historical examination of liberal ontology at the domestic level and how it relates to current mainstream IR/IPE theory construction. Realists and liberals do not merely resist insights from other critical perspectives because of their previous normative commitments (obviously this is the case), but this resistance is primarily due to the ingrained core identity of *possessive individualism* that C.B. Macpherson first identified in his seminal work *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*. This project will provide an overview of the basic assumptions, goals and insights of the *possessive individualist* model and its relevance to the study of international politics. Its main hypothesis is that Macpherson's critique of the *possessive individualist* core of liberalism is equally valid at the international level of analysis because assumptions about the role of the individual, the state, and human nature held domestically have been ontologically transferred to the international level in *possessive individualist* terms within IR/IPE theory. Macpherson argued that liberalism posited the individual as "the proprietor of his own person or capacities, owing nothing to society for them. The individual was seen neither as a moral whole, nor a part of a larger social whole, but an owner of himself."[4] Thus, this ontology inhibited the creation of a coherent theory of social obligation causing society to become a "lot of free equal

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[3] The claim that mainstream IR/IPE scholarship is self-referential is not revolutionary to those with a critical normative stance (e.g. Marxists, feminists, post-modernists etc.) towards capitalist modernity. For a discussion of how realism and liberalism are in the same "tradition" due to their acceptance of capitalist market relations, and of larger "sociology of knowledge" questions see Thomas J. Biersteker. "Evolving Perspectives on International Political Economy: Twentieth-Century Contexts and Discontinuities" in *International Political Science Review* Vol. 14, No. 1, 1993; Robert Cox "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Theory" in *Millennium* 10 2 1981 and Michael Mastanduno, "Economics and Security in Statecraft and Scholarship" in *International Organization* 52 4 Autumn 1988.

[4] C.B. Macpherson. *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1962 p.3

individuals related to each other as proprietors of their own capacities and of what they have acquired by their exercise."[5]

If a *possessive individualist* identity and ethos is evident domestically, this same worldview is what individual leaders, diplomats, and scholars draw from. Looking for "objective" patterns and laws has only obscured the social dimension of existing structures of power and inequality because this basic ontology or worldview is so embedded and thus unproblematic. Through social iteration, states have embodied these liberal norms, values, and identities that entrench competition, hierarchy and inequality. While realists and liberals discuss the problem of anarchy (i.e. the absence of world government/authority) which does present significant barriers for co-ordination and co-operation, the very concept of *anarchy* is problematic because it invokes implicit "state of nature" arguments[6] and reifies the very thing they are observing and investigating.

By adding Macpherson's insights to the existing critical IR/IPE literature, a more nuanced and detailed model emerges. For Macpherson, liberal conceptions of the nation-state help make up a system that "exists to uphold and enforce a certain kind of society, a certain set of relations between individuals, a certain set of rights and claims that people have on each other both directly, and indirectly through their rights to property."[7] This domestic ontology is again the one mainstream IR/IPE theorists draw from both consciously and unconsciously. This worldview forms the core of their study of states, institutions and conflict. Contrary to mainstream scholars, these *possessive*

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[5] Macpherson *Political Theory* p.3

[6] For an excellent historiography of modern Western political theory's ontology of the "state of nature" see Beate Jahn *The Cultural Construction of International Relations: the invention of the state of nature* (2000).

[7] C.B. Macpherson. *The Real World of Democracy* Concord: Anansi, 1992. p. 4.

individualist, market-based relations are neither normal nor permanent. They are the result of mutually constituted material and social forces developed historically.

Therefore, in terms of international politics, anarchy is indeed "what states make of it"[8] because ultimately people and states are not locked into permanent structures of thought, behaviour and identity. If an intersubjective culture is a key component in both domestic and international life, then only by inverting the ontology of human nature, from a given to one that is socially constructed, can a truer, "thicker" model of international politics emerge; thus, the discipline(s) of IR/IPE (and domestic political theory) would do well "to get rid of the concept of the state of nature and the theories based upon it."[9] Instead of looking for immutable patterns or structures in international relations over time, a better approach would be to examine the cultural context that drives these theories in the first place, providing a better empirical model from which to work.

General Approach

Macpherson's life project was to expose liberal theory's link to capitalist market relations and by this recognition, begin the journey to transcend capitalism. These market relations continue to make up the ontological core of international politics and thus by discussing this core in Macphersonian terms, the analytical force of critical IR/IPE approaches can be strengthened and enhanced.

Macpherson's implicit cultural argument about the co-constitution of the ideological elements of liberalism and nascent capitalism can be linked with the

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[8]   A central theme of Alexander Wendt's work in IR constructivism is that anarchy is inter-subjectively shared by states as to its rules, norms or lack of them. He, unfortunately, does not go deeply enough and implicitly accepts the dominant liberal ontology although he investigates and theorises about it differently. This project seeks to go beyond a new description of liberal political theory and begin a discussion of how deeply embedded liberal social practices are and what they mean for people and humanity as a whole.

     See Alexander Wendt. "Anarchy is what states make of it: the social construction of power politics" *International Organization* 46, 2 Spring 1992 pp. 391-425.

[9] Jahn. Introduction xvi

emerging constructivist stream within IR/IPE. The *possessive individualist* ethos is an identity that imbues intersubjective norms and values upon individuals, institutions and states. Using constructivist insights about the interplay between agents and the *possessive individualist* structures they interact within provides a fuller and more powerful explanatory model. In turn, this helps synthesise and strengthen critical perspectives. In doing so, this project attempts to link Macpherson's domestic model of the liberal tradition to the study of international politics and to the construction of IR/IPE theory in much the same way other critical scholars (e.g. Robert Cox, Stephen Gill et al.)[10] have done with the writings of Antonio Gramsci. After an examination of the merits of an IR/IPE Macphersonian model, there will be a discussion of the model's potential applicability in furthering a sustained critical research programme of other areas of liberal capitalist modernity.

From this overview of Macpherson's ideas and their relationship to Western political ideology, it is evident that there are potential benefits of pursuing an IR/IPE Macphersonian research agenda. In Chapter 2, a discussion of the model's merits begins with an overview of Macpherson's ideas. Some reference is made to the criticisms and resistance to his thesis; this creates a context for extending the *possessive individualist* model to IR/IPE. In essence, most of these criticisms have centred on his supposed misreading of the intentions of major liberal thinkers as well as the extent to which their works were indicative of an emerging market society. The chapter argues that these *micro*-critiques miss the broader goal, and ultimately, the explanatory power of Macpherson's *macro*-project. He was attempting to link liberal theorists together to form a historically based ideological tradition that worked in tandem

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[10]   See *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations* Ed. Stephen Gill. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1993.

with nascent capitalism. Thus, these theorists helped bring a sense of order and justification to this new socio-political order and more importantly, these theorists helped constitute a worldview we now recognize as our own.

In Chapter 3, this worldview is discussed in relation to how it dominates the discipline(s) of IR/IPE. It is demonstrated that the *possessive individualist* market society is the one mainstream theorists live in and draw their assumptions from in their support of capitalist market relations and of positivist, ahistorical models of international politics. The observation of the self-referential nature of mainstream scholarship is not new, and a survey of this critique from the critical IR/IPE literature is discussed and explored. The crux of this debate centres on the inability and/or unwillingness to engage with critical, competing perspectives. These critiques help foster a discursive opening for Macpherson and the *possessive individualist* model.

In Chapter 4, Macpherson's ideas are applied in terms of interpreting mainstream scholarship and thus adding to the critical survey begun in Chapter 3. This chapter also argues that Macpherson is relevant to IR/IPE theory. Using a domestic theorist in this fashion is not new (e.g. the use of Gramsci's writings by IR/IPE scholars). More importantly, Macpherson's model has potentially much to contribute because of its scope and breadth. His model exposes the underpinnings of modernity's worldview and shows that IR/IPE cannot be considered separately from domestic ideational life because it is a part of broader domestic ideological traditions—both liberal and non-liberal.

In so doing, this chapter shows why mainstream scholarship has been, and continues to be, so resistant to examine its assumptions and to change. In applying the *possessive individualist* model to IR/IPE theory, this resistance is placed or contextualised within a broader ideological landscape. One of the model's key insights is that the basic *possessive individualist* ontology has been replicated on an individual,

societal, and international level through social iteration for the past three centuries. Thus, *possessive individualism* is a part of the fabric of almost all social relations creating norms, rules, and practices that make liberal capitalist democracy normal, natural and so resilient. The failure to recognize the interplay between its ideational component and the structures it creates, leads to an underestimation of its power and appeal as well as inhibiting the formation of practical alternatives.

It would be, however, simplistic to state that there has been no dialectical change in liberal thought given the rise of socialism and communism as potent political forces. Liberal interventionism is both an ideational and material response to the conditions of modern capitalism[11]. That being said, in this project the focus is on the historical development of the liberal worldview of which reform liberals are a part. Moreover, the rise of *neo-liberalism,* and its eclipse of reform liberal principles, is a better area of study and better illustrates the possessive individualist worldview of Hobbes and Locke.

The concluding chapter reiterates that Macpherson's attempt to produce a theory that provides the ontological and ideological foundations of liberal capitalist democracy remains a potent theoretical model for understanding the historical development of modernity. IR/IPE theory, which draws its core assumptions from this liberal discourse, benefits from including Macphersonian insights because insufficient attention has been paid to the historical and ideological development of the liberal worldview and its effects upon the conceptualisation of international politics. From this perspective, there is a natural segue into a discussion of possible implications for future research. The

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[11]   See Hayward Alker and Thomas Biersteker. "The Dialectics of World Order: Notes for a Future Archeologist of International *Savoir Faire"* in *International Theory: Critical Investigations* New York: New York Press, 1995 pp.242-276. Alker and Biersteker observe how sociology of knowledge questions are relevant in theory construction and are indicative of the need to understand theory in its historical time and place. Thus, reform liberals responded to attacks from outside the tradition by ceding the need for social, political, economic and institutional accommodations in order to ameliorate inequality. The goal of this project is to argue that liberalism's core ontology has not changed and so transformation is required and not merely reform. It requires a new worldview that sees liberal principles divorced from capitalism.

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possessive individualist model can be considered a *macro*-theory; however, this "bird's eye view" also allows for *micro*-investigations of socio-political practices, institutions and attitudes. At issue is the sheer pervasiveness of *possessive individualism* within modernity and how it has seeped into almost every aspect of life.[12] Many pressing issues such as global poverty, inequality, overconsumption, and environmental degradation are problems of social obligation and stem from the contradictory ontologies within liberalism; thus, what results are "collective action" dilemmas that cannot be easily solved due to our entrenched *possessive individualist* identity. By recognising this fact, it allows for more detailed schema in which to study real effects of this core identity and the roles and behaviours it perpetuates.

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[12]   cf. Jurgen Habermas' idea of the colonization of the lifeworld in *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1984).

Chapter 2
Macpherson as Marxist Gatecrasher of Liberal Theory

'Just as our opinion of an individual is not based upon what he thinks of himself, so can we not judge of such a period of transformation by its own consciousness' -Karl Marx

Throughout his career, Macpherson argued that liberalism was a double system of power: one political and the other economic. Therefore, a central problem of liberal theory was its focus on negative liberty (i.e. freedom *from*) at the expense of material equality. The inability to recognise the historical development of capitalist social relations created, in his mind, an internal contradiction that had yet to be reconciled by liberals. Thus, liberalism would continue to be self-contradictory until it recognised its *possessive individualist* core. Otherwise, liberalism merely legitimated an ongoing inequality that prevented individuals from meeting their full potential. The *possessive individualist* ethos is an entrenched and integral part of Western culture (and modernity). It permeates many, if not most, aspects of social, cultural and political life due to an ongoing process of liberal ideational socialization for the past three to four hundred years. For Macpherson, this process began with the rise of the liberal state, which developed as follows:

> Its essence was the system of alternate or multiple parties whereby governments could be held responsible to different sections of the class or classes that had a political voice. There was nothing necessarily democratic about the responsible party system. In the country of its origin, England, it was well established, and working well, half a century before the franchise became at all democratic. This is not surprising, for the job of the liberal state was to maintain and promote the liberal society, which was not essentially a democratic or an equal society. The job of the competitive party system was to uphold the competitive market society, by keeping the government responsive to the shifting majority interests of those running the market society.[13]

It is this sheer scope or scale of Macpherson's vision, which explains why he remains critical to liberal theory and, by extension, to IR/IPE theory. His concern for individuals to have the requisite tools and resources available to develop themselves

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[13] Macpherson *Real World of Democracy* p.9

was for him, essential in achieving substantive and meaningful equality. He took his scholarship to be necessarily socially *active;* that is, to promote the realisation of a better, more just society. In this sense, it evokes Marx's claim that "philosophers hitherto have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it".[14] At issue was the very nature of who we are as individuals and as a society. Thus, Macpherson's goal was to include the social dimension of life within liberal theoretical discourse and helps explain why his *possessive individualist* model became a centrepiece for most of his writings throughout his career. However, there are numerous examples of "ethical thinkers" applying their ideas and work for social ends. What makes Macpherson unique? First, rather than writing off liberal theory as merely bourgeois ideology, he attempted the very difficult task of using liberal theory against itself to show how it failed to live up to its own values and principles. Thus, his "concept of possessive individualism was Marxist inspired...as was his ethical humanism, which was only superficially Millian."[15] Second, the attempted synthesis of liberalism and socialism, or the "retrieval" of liberalism, was to provide a basis for severing the liberal tradition from its capitalist envelope.[16] Only by understanding why liberal capitalist democracy was so resilient could it eventually be replaced with a socio-political system that valued human creativity and development for *all* citizens.

Macpherson's immanent critique of liberalism was formed within the social and political upheaval of the world economic collapse and the rise of extremism. Macpherson's academic life[17] began at the University of Toronto followed with a

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[14] Karl Marx. Theses on Feuerbach XI (www.marxists.org) Viewed Sept 12 2003.

[15] Jules Townshend. "C.B. Macpherson: Capitalism, Human Nature and Contemporary Democratic Theory" in *Marxism's Ethical Thinkers* Ed. Lawrence Wilde New York: Palgrave, 2001 pp. 144-168 p. 144-45.

[16] C.B. Macpherson *The Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* London: Oxford UP, 1977. p.2

[17] Further full length treatments of Macpherson's life and work can be found in William Leiss (1988), Peter Lindsay (1996), and Jules Townshend (2000) respectively.

"Masters at the London School of Economics under Harold Laski (1932-35), and returned to Canada to become a lecturer, mainly in the history of ideas, at the University of Toronto."[18] Upon his return to Canada and the University of Toronto, he began to put into practice the ideas and purpose of scholarship that germinated during his time at LSE. This coterie of scholars at LSE "devoted much of their time to impressing their ideas on the middle-class elite—their students...[because] in the field of the human sciences scholars had a choice whether consciously or unconsciously to support existing power relationships."[19] Thus, the role of intellectuals and their *ideas* are an integral part of society and what they study. Objectivity is neither possible nor desirable from this point of view. In fact, this view would become central to his interpretation and criticism of liberalism as often "solid political theorists in the liberal tradition have been compelled to deceive themselves."[20]

Hobbes, Locke and Possessive Individualism: The Intersubjective Worldview of Modernity

One quickly realizes that Macpherson saw his academic position as creating the ideas necessary to effect social change. This is evidenced in the period leading up to the publication of *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* that was, in the words of Townshend, a "period of gestation" as he began to develop his own vocabulary in "an attempt to get his ideas taken seriously by a liberal audience in the Cold War period."[21] As he did, he began to work out his "own perspective on the property/democracy

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[18]   Jules Townshend. *C.B. Macpherson and the Problem of Liberal Democracy* Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000. p.3

[19] Townshend. *Problem of Liberal Democracy* p. 10-11.

[20]   C.B. Macpherson. "The Deceptive Task of Political Theory" in *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval* Oxford: Oxford UP, 1973. p. 203

relation, a vision destined to become a permanent feature of his thought."[22] When Macpherson's seminal work was published in 1962, it was both the culmination of his emerging scholarship about the liberal tradition as well as the future guiding force for all his subsequent work. The central issue for Macpherson was the two basic conflicting ontologies within liberalism. On the one hand, liberalism was concerned with the procedural aspects of democracy such as voting and participation in the public sphere as well as freedom *from* the extractive power of the state by guaranteeing individuals rights such as freedom of religion, association, speech etc. Macpherson referred to this conception as *protective democracy* and was well "suited to a market society".[23] On the other hand, liberalism was also concerned with the maximisation of individual development or *developmental democracy.* The contradiction lies in liberal theory's division of the political and the economic spheres of life that these rights were situated within. By accepting economic inequality as a function of human nature and of basic social organization, it made the full exercise of individual rights and self-development impossible.

Macpherson, in his work *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism*, examined much of the Anglo-American liberal tradition that extended from Hobbes to the Levellers, to Harrington and finally, to Locke. For the purposes of our discussion, the survey of his pivotal or seminal work will be restricted to Hobbes and Locke because the argument will be made that Hobbes and Locke embody the core premises of *realism* and *liberalism* respectively. Macpherson attempted to root out the implicit social understandings liberal theorists had about their society from their ontological positions

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[21]   Townshend. *Problem of Liberal Democracy* p.12 At issue was Macpherson's attempt to point out the contradictions between liberal positive liberty and its simultaneous acceptance of capitalism—even by reformist liberals.

[22] Townshend. *Problem of Liberal Democracy* p.13

[23] Townshend. *Problem of Liberal Democracy* p.21

about human nature. He argued when "a writer can take it for granted that his readers will share some of his assumptions, he will see no need to point these out... A second reason for a theorist's failure to state an assumption is that he may not be clearly aware of it."[24] Both are germane because often liberal assumptions are taken as given or are so embedded that the full implications of the *possessive individualist* worldview are absent from view.

In the case of Hobbes, Macpherson takes a straightforward and clear interpretive approach. He views Hobbes' theory of human nature as "reflection of his insight into the behaviour of men in a *specific kind of society*"[25] and that he starts by "assuming that Hobbes was trying to do what he said he was doing, i.e. deducing political obligation from the supposed or observed facts of man's nature."[26] In doing so, he was attempting to see the world Hobbes lived in. Hobbes lived through the *Thirty Years War* as well as the *English Civil War*. Both events indicated to Hobbes that the natural "state of nature" was war and violence, which occurred when "men [sic] live without a common Power to keep them all in awe, they are in that condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as is of every man against every man."[27] As such, the life of people, according to Hobbes, became miserable and chaotic. There were no limits to people's behaviour and no one to enforce them. This condition produced fear and "danger of violent death; and the life of man [sic], solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short."[28]

By accepting Hobbes' account of his project at face value, Macpherson was able to analyse Hobbes' assumptions—both stated and unstated—within a broader social context. What is intriguing about Macpherson's approach is his implicit social

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[24] Macpherson *Political Theory* p. 5-6

[25] Macpherson *Political Theory* p.13 (emphasis mine)

[26] Macpherson *Political Theory* p. 15

[27] Thomas Hobbes. *Leviathan*. Ed. C.B Macpherson. London: Penguin, 1985. p. 185

constructivist argument. Hobbes did not base his conclusions on eternal laws but rather, his state of nature is a "statement of the behaviour to which men as they are now, men who live in civilized societies."[29] Hobbes' philosophy is revealed in how he "imported assumptions derived from contemporary society, and in the way Hobbes folded social postulates into his justification of the state."[30] Thus, the *state of nature* argument was but one part of a larger project to convince the *Leviathan's* readers of the need for the Sovereign. Hobbes needed people to realise what kind of society they lived in and who they were as citizens. In arguing that the 'natural' behaviour of men was being led by their passions, it explained "the behaviour of civilized men who, having lived under civil government, find themselves in civil war."[31] In essence, the state of nature served as the logical extension along a continuum of behaviour of which they were all too well aware. Gone were references to the "divine right of kings" and instead, there was an empirical, rational basis for societal organisation. There was no preordained societal structure as Hobbes dispensed with the Aristotelian notion of inherently different classes of people and stated "nature has made men so equal, in the faculties of body, and mind."[32] This fundamental equality dovetails with the emergence of capitalism in that the "*value*, or WORTH of a man, is as of all other things, his price; that is to say, so much as would be given for the use of their power: and therefore is not absolute; but a thing dependant upon the need and judgment of another."[33] Thus, each person has value according to his/her labour, money, or social position. Hobbes believed this rational secularisation of political theory was needed to provide more stable and permanent solutions to the social

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[28] Hobbes. *Leviathan* p. 186

[29] Macpherson *Political Theory* p.22

[30] Jules Townshend. "Hobbes as Possessive Individualist: interrogating the C.B. Macpherson thesis" *Hobbes Studies* XII 1999. pp 52-71. p. 54.

[31] Macpherson *Political Theory* p. 23.

[32] Hobbes in Morgan p. 620

[33] Hobbes in Morgan p.605

and political turmoil caused by the 17th century's religious wars. This is the social and cultural milieu that surrounds Hobbes and his understandings of society and of human nature.

John Locke: Liberal Hero and Guide

Liberals have viewed Thomas Hobbes as a political foil due to his brutal negative assessment of human nature coupled with his prescription for an absolutist Sovereign. Liberals have attempted to overcome his penetrating account of human nature—its egoism, its potentially violent nature and its rationality, by focusing on humanity's capacity for rationality and potential for co-operation. John Locke, in sharp contrast to Hobbes, has served as an important model both in inspiration and guidance. Despite this open affection, few liberals have taken the time to seriously examine the social implications of his ideas and their connection to nascent capitalism; rather, they focus on his model of limited constitutional government, which has become the hallmark of Anglo-American democratic political thought and institutions. This is perhaps not surprising given the fact that his writings "seem to have everything that could be desired by the modern liberal democrat. Government by consent, majority rule, minority rights, moral supremacy of the individual, sanctity of individual property—all are there, and all are fetched from a first principle of individual rights and rationality."[34] Because Locke's ideas have become so revered within liberal thought, using Macpherson's nodal concept of *possessive individualism* is necessary to expose the embedded values that imbue the cultural, political and ideological foundations of modernity, and by extension, the ontology of international political theory.

A key Macphersonian insight is that the focus on the limits of the state upon the individual obscures the role of the *market* in society and *its* effects upon the individual.

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[34] Macpherson. *Political Theory* p. 194.

What is left out in most liberal accounts is the fact that "the liberal-democratic state, like any other, is a system of power… It, like any other state, exists to maintain a set of relations between individuals and groups within the society which are power relations."[35] Locke's ideas helped to create an entrenched set of behaviours and relationships that, through social iteration, created a market society with eventual democratic trappings. While not as austere as Hobbes or as pessimistic in his outlook, Locke relied upon the concept of individual equality as the centrepiece of his theory. For instance, he stated that all are "born to all the same advantages of nature, and the use of the same faculties, should be equal one amongst another without subordination or subjection."[36] For him, this equality produced a state of freedom or "liberty" that was as "natural" as the state of nature was for Hobbes. An important difference lay in his claim that people are *equal and independent*, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty, or possessions."[37] For Locke, people's essential nature was generally peaceful which is an important contrast to Hobbes' assumptions. This contrast may be due to Hobbes living during the *Thirty Years War* while Locke lived in the generation that saw the restoration of the monarchy and the creation of constitutionalised limits on its authority.

Locke, like Hobbes, created a hypothetical environment of pre-civilised life without ever setting out how to actually prove his hypothesis. What we are left with is the transition between this *perfect* state and the type of society Locke wants to create. Locke, like many other Europeans thinkers, grappled with the discovery of the New World and the cognitive dissonance it created. Finding intact societies outside of any possible knowledge of Christianity "led to a radical redefinition of the nature, history and destiny of humankind. In other words, it triggered a radical change in European

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[35] Macpherson *The Real World of* Democracy p. 38

[36] John Locke. "Two Treatises of Civil Government" in *Classics of Moral and Political Theory* Ed. Michael L. Morgan. Indianapolis: Hackett, 1992. p.739.

culture."[38] Perhaps Locke had the pre-modern native society in mind when he proposed his prehistoric "society" that saw a man's "labour fix a property in: whatever is beyond this, is more than his share, and belongs to others."[39] Land was initially used primarily for subsistence and therefore of little commercial value. One could only use or consume a finite amount of resources within the "commons" and therefore the distribution of wealth was relatively even. It is a key foundational element of his overall model because of the transition from this ahistorical state of nature to a society his readers would recognise.

Thus, on the one hand, all individuals had the *natural right* of equality but on the other, these rights changed when people entered *civil society*. In Locke's chapter on property in *The Second Treatise*, he attempts to "transform the natural right of every individual to such property as he needed for subsistence...into a natural right of *individual* appropriation, by which the more industrious could rightfully acquire all the land, leaving others with no way to live except by selling the disposal of their labour."[40] This transition was accomplished through the introduction of currency. Money changed the entire social equation for Locke because with its advent, it became "some lasting thing that men might keep without spoiling, and that by mutual consent men would take in exchange for the truly useful, but perishable supports of life."[41] The growth in population made land more scarce and by people contracting themselves into a society they have "given up their pretences to their natural common right."[42] This produces inequality since each person will labour in such a manner as to benefit themselves the most, but the ways in which this is accomplished will be different, therefore producing

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[37] Locke in Morgan p. 739

[38] Jahn *The Cultural Construction of International Relations* p. 115

[39] Locke. in Morgan p. 747.

[40] Macpherson. *Political Theory* p. 231.

[41] Locke in Morgan p.752

[42] Locke in Morgan p.752

different outcomes. Thus, the "core of Locke's individualism is that every man is naturally the sole proprietor of his own person and capacities—the absolute proprietor in the sense that he owes nothing to society for them—and especially the absolute proprietor of his capacity to labour."[43]

As Locke brings the ahistorical *state of nature* of his model more and more into focus, his prescriptions and observations about his own society become clear. Locke's model is at once both simple and nuanced. Locke believed that a society is just if the "men have so *consented to make one community or government*, they are hereby incorporated, and make one body politic, wherein the *majority* have a right to act and conclude the rest."[44] What constitutes the *majority*, however, is central to Locke's worldview, or ontology of a liberal society because once men have contracted themselves out of the *state of nature*, they have put "on the bonds of civil society... and no man can be exempted from the laws of it."[45] Macpherson argues that putting on these "bonds" has a specific ideological function. Locke assumed that the "propertyless were a majority in England at the time he wrote...[thus], Locke was assuming that only those with property were full members of society and so of the majority."[46] The concept of consent also is linked with Locke's conception of rationality. Those with property were more "rational" than those without and since Locke assumes the propertied class' consent gives legitimacy to governmental authority, majority rule is accepted and affirmed. Although this propertied "majority" may have internal differences in terms of government policy (e.g. level of taxation etc.), each member must "consent to whatever

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[43] Macpherson *Political Theory* p. 231.
[44] Locke in Morgan p.779
[45] Locke in Morgan p.768
[46] Macpherson. *Political Theory* p. 252.

is acceptable to the majority, for without this there can be no government revenue, hence no adequate protection of the institution of property."[47]

Locke's model of society is, therefore, premised on differential *rationality* that ontologically privileges property and those possessing it. Consent, legitimacy, sovereignty, and the rule of law all stem from it. Just as Hobbes posited assumptions about society and human nature that reveal popular social attitudes and understandings of the day, so too does Locke. By examining Locke's arguments, Macpherson teases out unstated assumptions to bring a fuller picture of Locke's social worldview as well as its implications. For example, in neglecting the fact that subsistence wages for the working class was "in effect an alienation of life and liberty"[48], Macpherson claimed Locke took it for granted "that labour was naturally a commodity and that the wage relationship gives [a person] the right to appropriate the produce of another's labour was a part of the natural order."[49] By doing this, Macpherson was taking the interpretation of Locke back "to the meaning it must have had for Locke and his contemporaries."[50]

Reaction to Macpherson's Thesis

Macpherson's claims were bound to cause a stir if not a controversy in how the liberal tradition was discussed and written about. First, he claimed the liberal worldview or ontology of the West was built upon *possessive individualist* assumptions that are

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[47] Macpherson *Political Theory* p. 254.

[48] Macpherson *Political Theory* p. 220.

[49] Macpherson *Political Theory* p.220.

[50] Macpherson *Political Theory* p.220. This is one very evident passage, within Macpherson's seminal text, that evokes a "proto-constructivist" feel or impression. By taking liberal thinkers' (of which Locke is pre-eminent) ideas to their logical conclusion as well as inferring social, cultural, and ideological attitudes and beliefs of the time period, Macpherson is attempting the difficult task of simultaneously providing immanent critique as well as retrieving the best aspects of liberal thought. The sheer complexity of the task is no doubt partially to blame for the resistance to Macpherson's ideas as well as the misunderstandings arose from critics from all over the political spectrum.

inherent within and inexorably linked to capitalism. While not revolutionary at first glance, Macpherson attempted to force liberalism to come to terms with its own internal contradictions and in so doing, created a series of *anomalies,* which defied easy refutation and solutions. Second, he achieved this crack or fissure in the liberal paradigm by linking liberalism to the emerging market society in the 17th Century that had been largely *obscured* with the rise of liberal democracy vis-à-vis the state (i.e. universal suffrage, and later with the Keynesian welfare state). This development, in turn, blunted the effects of *laissez*-faire liberalism[51]. Third, despite these changes and adaptations that occurred under *reform liberalism*, liberalism, as an overall tradition and worldview, remained internally contradictory because it attempted to reconcile individual freedoms with the *possessive individualist* ethos. This ethos has permeated Western political, social and cultural thought and has produced a truncated and impoverished role for political obligation. Taken together, Macpherson was attempting to combine his normative socialist prescriptions and *a priori* assumptions about human nature and society with a discursive immanent critique. This daunting, monumental task necessitated a response. Liberals harshly rejected his thesis by claiming his uncovering of "anomalies" was nothing more than a misinterpretation and misreading of the liberal canon by an outside quasi-Marxist. The reasons for this liberal resistance lie in Macpherson's fundamental purpose: to juxtapose a *possessive individualist* ethos or identity, inherent within the works of liberal thinkers, with liberalism's stated goals of individual freedom and equality. By linking them together, Macpherson was attempting to use liberalism against itself in order to break and ultimately transcend its link with capitalist market relations. This resistance, however, was again also due to

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[51]   See Karl Polanyi *The Great Transformation: The Political and Economic Origins of Our Time* Boston: Beacon, 1957 and John G. Ruggie, "International Regime, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order." *International Organisation* 36(2) 1982 pp.379-415.

Macpherson's credentials. He was a socialist and for many, it was therefore a question of whether he was qualified to condemn a philosophical tradition that brought about universal suffrage, human rights and an end to slavery.

For many liberals, it was clear that Macpherson was an enemy from outside the tradition. His attempt to link John Locke—again the *patron saint* of the liberal tradition—with a philosophical defence of structural, social inequality was both misleading and unfair. They charged that Macpherson's depiction of the market was far too negative and his lack of detailed alternatives made his project purely abstract, and ultimately of limited application. Two common threads that seem to knit much of this liberal critique together are his assertions about human nature and what he believed constituted a fully developed life. Essential to their critique was the rejection of the Macphersonian notion of capitalism's inherently exploitative nature as there was no "necessary correlation between material provision and spiritual happiness"[52], no way to measure fulfilment in the first place[53], and that capitalism was, in essence, the straw man for Macpherson's need to derive "all politics from a single principle".[54] Another problem was how to promote or raise the consciousness of those who could benefit from the move to socialism because many prefer the "benefit of consumption, even at the expense of self-development."[55] The basis for Macpherson's critique was his conception of human nature, and the needs and wants that came with its definition which Macpherson acknowledged was "both an ontological and a historical problem."[56] His privileging,

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[52] Townshend *Problem of Liberal Democracy* p. 102

[53] John Dunn. "Democracy Unretrieved, or the Political Theory of Professor Macpherson" *British Journal of Political Science* Vol. 4 No. 4 (Oct. 1974) pp.489-499 p. 495.

[54] K.R. Minogue "Humanist Democracy: The Political Thought of C.B. Macpherson" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* Vol. 9 No. 3. p. 376.

[55] Townshend *Problem of Liberal Democracy* p. 106-107.

[56] C.B. Macpherson "Needs and Wants: An Ontological or Historical Problem?" in Ross Fitzgerald, ed. *Human Needs and Politics* Rushcutters Bay: Pergamon, 1977 p. 27.

however, of some aspects of human characteristics was an "intellectual muddle"[57] and implicitly totalitarian.[58] This is an interesting charge given how liberals often implicitly take their own ontology as given and treat it as a universal expression of humanity. For example, liberals hold the view that rather than producing artificial wants and needs, capitalism was in fact, "a response to the core characteristics of the people who live under it."[59] Macpherson defended his definition of human nature by claiming that providing a non-problematic model was extremely difficult and that he was in "good company with all the ethical theorists in the Western tradition."[60]

Marxist critics were also critical of Macpherson's attempt to reconcile liberalism's internal contradiction through a synthesis of liberalism's ideals with a Marxist critique of the state and capitalist social relations. Thus, many of these theorists believed that their model *alone* was sufficient to replace liberal capitalism and thus, his *possessive individualist* model sought to supplant their *paradigm* as well. Many deemed Macpherson to be on a fool's errand, and conceded far too much to liberal notions of individualism. Furthermore, many argued that he had no adequate view of transition and implicitly advocated a vanguardist, elite-driven model of social and political change. For example, Wood questions his commitment to the Marxist tradition in asking whether Macpherson's "abandonment of class struggle and the revolutionary agency of the proletariat really constitute a radical break in his thought, or is it implicit in the very foundations?"[61] She continues her probing of Macpherson's Marxist commitment by

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[57]   B. Wand "C.B. Macpherson's Conceptual Apparatus" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* Vol. 4 No. 4 1971 p. 526

[58]   Townshend *Problem of Liberal Democracy* p. 101. This comment is not uncommon from liberals and indicates that they miss the point of Macpherson's critique.

[59] Minogue p. 387

[60]   C.B. Macpherson "The Criticism of Concepts and the Concept of Criticism" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* Vol. 5 No. 1 1972 p.143

[61]   Ellen Meikins Wood "Liberal Democracy and Capitalist Hegemony: A Reply to Leo Panitch on the Task of Socialist Political Theory" in *Socialist Register* London: Merlin, 1981 pp 169-189. p 172.

claiming that his "project implies a particular audience and assigns to that audience a predominant role in the transformation of society... [and] implies that socialism—if it comes at all—will be a gift from a segment of the 'educated' ruling class."[62] Wood's charge that Macpherson has, at best, a watered-down commitment to Marxism is echoed in Svacek's critique—albeit in a more sympathetic light. He agrees with Wood that in trying to rescue the best aspects of liberalism by separating it from capitalist relations, he "employs the weapon of his own justificatory ethic...[and] we must describe him a five-sixths of a Marxist."[63] Thus, Svacek argues that Macpherson can "be seen to be *in* the Marxist tradition but not *of* it."[64] Panitch reinforces this characterisation and extends it by placing Macpherson's work in a broader Marxist discussion about the need for a *revolutionary* transition. He notes that Marx himself believed in the "possibility of a peaceful transition in Holland, England and the United States"[65] which seems to indicate that Marx was open to the possibility of more than one road to socialism.

Problems With Macpherson's Possessive Individualist Model

When the liberal and Marxist critiques/attacks of Macpherson are taken together, they reveal significant but not fatal flaws in his model. In terms of strengths, his model provides a penetrating account of the liberal tradition through the technique of immanent critique. The dual ontology of the individual as infinite consumer coupled with the individual as developer of his/her own capacities indicates that liberal thought is internally contradictory. Moreover, his idea of individuals being endowed with a wide array of natural abilities and attributes promotes an inspiring view of individuals and

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[62] Wood p. 172-173.

[63] Victor Svacek "The Elusive Marxism of C.B. Macpherson" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* Vol. 9 No.3 1976. pp.395-422. p. 419

[64] Svacek p.419 emphasis in original

human beings. The resistance to his model is partially ideological but is more often due to a misreading of his overall purpose. Macpherson notes with gratification that Svacek believed that "I have sometimes contributed a valuable increment to Marx's analysis, as in his view that my net transfer of powers is more precise and more discriminating than Marx's concept of surplus value."[66] This comment was due to Macpherson's belief that it is a "test of my critics' understanding of my analysis whether or not they understand the concept of the net transfer of powers. Few do; Svacek does."[67] Despite Macpherson's provocative thesis and his uplifting view of humanity, his model is not without weaknesses. For one, he lacks a detailed model of transition from the existing capitalist order to a socialist one. Others include problems over the authoritative allocation of work and compensation between people and between professions. These, in turn, raise issues about whether hard work, initiative, and individual drive would cease to exist in Macpherson's idyllic society. What he does propose is a "pyramidal councils system, with direct democracy in the lowest level of the neighbourhood and workplace, and thereafter election of delegates by one level to the next, higher one."[68]

At the centre of these theoretical problems is the concept of *human nature.* The reason that liberals focus on reward, initiative etc. in individualist terms is because of possessive individualism—the centrepiece of Macpherson's model. Possessive individualism provides a truncated view of humanity and of human nature. Macpherson argues that if "you start from the assumption that there is a permanent unchanging nature of man [sic], then you are forced to subsume all changes, such as increase in

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[65]   Leo Panitch "Liberal Democracy and Socialist Democracy: The Antinomies of C.B. Macpherson" *Socialist Register* London: Merlin, 1981 pp 144-168. p 153.

[66]   C.B. Macpherson "Humanist Democracy and Elusive Marxism: A Reply to Minogue and Svacek" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* Vol. 9 No. 3 1976. pp. 423-430 p. 424

[67] Macpherson "Humanist Democracy" p. 424

[68]   David Morrice "C.B. Macpherson's Critique of Liberal Democracy and Capitalism" *Political Studies* XLII 1994 pp.646-661 p. 659

desires to, under his innate nature."[69] This argument, however, can be applied equally to Macpherson's conception of human nature since he argues, "political theory hinges on its penetration of its analysis of human nature."[70] Thus, while his definition of human nature is much broader in scope, it still assumes that human beings desire and have the capacity for "judgement and action, for aesthetic creation and contemplation, for the emotional activities of friendship and love, and sometimes for religious experience."[71] This description has an *a priori* justification and implicit definition of an ideal society, which flows from this understanding—just as much as the liberal theorist. Therefore, Morrice makes an excellent point by stating that Macpherson "placed himself in a paradox of relativism: his conception may be historically different from others, but may in time come to be criticized as irrelevant and inadequate."[72]

This potentially quite damaging charge against Macpherson can be blunted, if not muted by linking it to a broader discussion of human nature within the field of linguistics. Is human nature fixed or the product of historically contingent social and political forces? This paradox can be partially resolved by using the ideas of Noam Chomsky, the noted American linguist, social critic and activist. While no serious exploration of Chomsky's work will be attempted here, what will be examined are his notions about human nature and cognition as well as his political views, which implicitly spring from his scholarly work. For instance, Chomsky "regards creativity, imagination, and invention as key factors that render the human species unique... Ordinary creativity is evidenced in the everyday linguistic practices of people who are able to produce original statements and to translate those of others...Rather human nature provides us with a generative

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[69] Macpherson *Democratic Theory* p. 34

[70] Macpherson *Democratic Theory* p. 51.

[71] Morrice p. 656

[72] Morrice p. 656-657.

framework that enables us to make sense of and order our experiences."[73] Therefore, creativity is "free action within the framework of a system of rules."[74] This conceptualisation of human nature avoids the "either/or" dichotomy through the introduction of *abduction,* which can be defined as "a process in which the mind forms hypotheses according to some rules and selects among them with reference to evidence, and presumably other factors."[75] This means human knowledge is based upon an active mind participating in the outside environment due to biological capacity, and our subsequent interpretation of the said environment. Thus, there is an empirically verifiable world "out there" that can be understood.

This has important implications for Macpherson's model. Macpherson is arguing that liberal notions of the individual and society are throwbacks to earlier conceptions and justifications of a particular type of society that are no longer valid. The claim that Macpherson's own model could become outdated is weakened significantly when Macpherson's normative claims are combined with his immanent critique of liberalism's ontological contradictions *and* Chomsky's ontological and epistemological foundations. For example, Macpherson makes a good case for the creative capacity of human beings and the liberal inadequacy of providing an appropriate environment for them to flourish. A particularly strong argument is Macpherson's claim that when "democracy is seen as a kind of society, not merely a mechanism of choosing and authorising governments"[76], the empowerment of human beings will have begun. This definition of society has strong

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[73]   Peter Wilkin. "Chomsky and Foucault on Human Nature and Politics: An Essential Difference?" *Social Theory and Practice* Vol. 25, No. 2 (Summer 1999) pp. 177- 210 p. 186-87.

[74]   Noam Chomsky "Interview With Noam Chomsky: Linguistics and Politics" *New Left Review* No. 57 (1969) 21-34, p. 31.

[75]   Noam Chomsky *Rules and Representations* Oxford: Blackwell, 1981. p. 36. Thus, Chomsky argues that while we acquire personality, knowledge and understanding from the world around us, this process is not passive. Rather it is an *active* one involving cognitive systems that are, at their core, biological and hence "hard-wired".

[76] Macpherson *Democratic Theory* p. 51

linkages to Chomsky's social and political thought. For Chomsky, the "just society has something to do with what best meets the requirements of human nature and needs"[77], and dovetails with Macpherson's notion of people having the capacity for "judgement and action, for aesthetic creation and contemplation..."[78] noted earlier. The main contribution Chomsky brings to Macpherson's model is grounding its core ontological assumptions in a better empirical framework linked to the natural sciences.

Why the Possessive Individualist Model Still Captures Modernity's Basic Ontology

By examining the liberal and Marxist reaction to Macpherson's thesis, we can identify its contributions to both traditions as well as identify some definite weaknesses in his model. By adding in Chomskyan insights from his work in linguistics, the case for using Macpherson's ideas at the international level of analysis is strengthened. First, Macpherson's immanent critique of liberalism makes his model well suited to critique the ideological traditions that international political theorists implicitly draw from. Second, having integrated Chomskyan insights into the model, it allows human nature and society to be co-constituted—that is to say, human creativity, behaviour, and ideas are bound up in the societies in which people find themselves. Thus, differences in societies over time and between societies are a function of humanity's diversity, and societies that do not recognise and affirm this diversity can be empirically deemed inferior. Third, this ability to evaluate a given society allows for a detailed examination of IR/IPE theory since it has European cultural assumptions from which it derives *universal* principles. Fourth, his model connects well with the constructivist turn in IR/IPE, which emphasises the inseparable nature of agents and structures and therefore provides a link to an

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[77] Wilkin p. 203
[78] Morrice p. 656

already established set of models and vocabulary. The last point is salient in using Macpherson's model internationally. Making the link between the debates surrounding Macpherson and *possessive individualism* and the debates within IR/IPE may not seem obvious; however, connecting his model to an existing vocabulary makes acceptance more likely.

Capitalist expansion and market ideology—both of which are an integral part of liberalism, helped fuel the eventual global dominance of European civilization. When Macpherson is connected to the origins of this dominance, his work provides a model to understand the cultural ideology that provided the impetus behind European hegemony and also the worldview that justified and legitimated European expansion and control. The legitimation function provided by mainstream IR/IPE scholarship is at the heart of critical scholarship and Macpherson's domestic model fits within this critical current of thought because it shares with critical IR/IPE scholarship an attack on the ontology of modernity itself. It will become clear that Macpherson provides a crucial domestic—international disciplinary bridge through the discussion and review of critical accounts of international politics in Chapter 3. In Chapter 4, Macpherson's insights will be inserted into this critical stream and it will be argued that doing so adds a more nuanced, historically based foundation from which to critique mainstream theory's connection to the liberal worldview, and enables critical perspectives to better propose alternative theoretical models of states, international governance, and development.

Chapter 3
International Political Theory's Dialogue of the Deaf:
Mainstream Theory Meets its Critics

The problematic nature of the liberal worldview outlined in Chapter 2 is also evident when international political theory is analysed. A key insight was how temporally and ideologically bounded the liberal discursive worldview is. This chapter seeks to provide a thematic overview of some key IR/IPE critical scholarship in order to demonstrate that this body of literature is concerned about mainstream political theory's assumptions, role, and function in much the same way Macpherson demonstrated in his critique of the liberal worldview. In order to demonstrate this common affinity, and to "fit" Macpherson into this stream of critical scholarship, core "issues" or debates over basic concepts, assumptions, and definitions in mainstream IR/IPE will be explored. Two important approaches within critical scholarship that relate to Macpherson's ideas are *neo-Gramscian transnational historical materialism* and *postmodernism*.

Both are chosen because, in the case of the former, it is a clear example of the merits and viability of porting a domestic theorist to an international level of analysis that derives its analysis from the Marxist tradition. In the case of postmodernism, it focuses on the use of language, socio-political practices, and social identity. All three are addressed in Macpherson's *possessive individualist* model. Focusing on these two schools of thought will reveal the potential strength of an international neo-Macphersonian model because *possessive individualism* focuses on the ideational foundations of the liberal worldview internationally and can accommodate, synthesise, and integrate postmodernist insights on a real-world empirical setting without descending into epistemological relativism. Given the complexity and sheer breadth of the critical literature, this review will be necessarily limited and selective. It will remain

thematic through the discussion of key conceptual elements of international political theory: anarchy, state self-interest and sovereignty. It will become quite clear that these elements, when discussed through a critical prism via selected writers, reveal the ontological roots of liberalism about society, human nature and property.

When discussing a body of literature labelled *critical,* it is important to note that critical scholars do not merely criticise traditional mainstream scholars but rather, seek to undermine prevailing assumptions, to reveal contradictions, and to provide alternative viewpoints. Essentially, mainstream problem-solving theory "takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organised, as the given framework for action"[79] while critical theory "stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how that order came about."[80] By the end, it will be clear that Macpherson's life's work easily fits within the spirit and goals of critical IR/IPE scholarship and makes an important contribution by making the domestic-international link explicit.

Gramsci and the Redefinition of Hegemony in IR/IPE

Robert Cox's notion of theory having both an implicit and explicit function is a good segue into the discussion of *transnational historical materialism.* Cox argues, in this seminal 1981 article, that theories are "always for someone and for some purpose. All theories have a perspective. Perspectives derive from a position in time and space, specifically social and political time and space."[81] For him, mainstream theory's strengths lie in the ability to state clear, parsimonious claims and terms of reference. This, however, is also a major weakness in that problem-solving theory rests on a false

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[79]   Robert W. Cox "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory" *Millennium* 10 No.2 1981 p.128.

[80] Cox "Social Forces" p.129.

premise and is "not merely a convenience of method but also an ideological bias."[82] His article then traces how this bias is reflected in observations, predictions and, in fact, the entire conceptualisation of international relations. He notes that history becomes a "quarry providing materials with which to illustrate variations on always recurring themes."[83] Taken together, Cox attempts to unite a meta-theoretical discussion of theory itself with a self-consciously normative commitment along Gramscian lines.

Cox continued to pioneer and refine Gramsci's ideas for international politics. In a follow up article to his "Social Forces" article, Cox laid out some basic guiding assumptions of a Gramscian-inspired research programme. At the heart of such a programme is the concept of *hegemony*. For Gramsci, power within Western societies was not achieved through mere force or coercion alone but rather, through subtler, and perhaps even more effective ways. He differentiated between societies where the "bourgeoisie had attained a hegemonic position of leadership over other classes from those which it had not."[84] This is crucial in understanding that power and control go beyond the state itself in advanced capitalist societies. Not recognising this reality makes prospects for transformation much more unlikely. For example, two related terms, *war of movement* and *war of position,* denote the relative strength of civil society. In the case of the former, when civil society is not cohesive or well developed, a vanguard elite might succeed in overthrowing the government (e.g. the Russian Revolution). If conditions in a country with a more developed civil society were dire, revolution could occur but "because of the resiliency of civil society such an exploit would in the long run be

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[81] Cox "Social Forces" p. 128

[82] Cox "Social Forces" p. 129

[83] Cox "Social Forces" p. 131

[84] Robert W. Cox. "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: A Study in Method" in *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations* Ed. Stephen Gill New York: Cambridge UP, 1993 p. 51.

doomed to failure."[85] This leads to the latter concept, the *war of position,* where "the struggle had to be won in civil society before an assault on the state could achieve success. Premature attack... would only reveal the weakness of the opposition and lead to a reimposition of bourgeois dominance as the institutions of civil society reasserted control."[86]

This key insight not only explained why the "revolution" did not occur in advanced capitalist states, it also provided a plan of action albeit fraught with uncertainty. For one, the war of position required a long-term approach to social change and social justice. It also revealed just how difficult this change was to achieve. Gramsci argued that the hegemonic class achieved its status in the strategy of *trasformismo* through the development of a *historic bloc*—the creation of a common culture that made the goals of the dominant, hegemonic class synonymous with society as a whole. The ideological feat is achieved by the active participation of intellectuals who create the ideas that sustain the culture. The embedded ideological nature of capitalist relations was not merely economic and material—it was ideational as well. Thus, the goal of the working class intellectuals—the *organic intellectual*—was to provide a counter-hegemonic discourse and a programme of solidarity to challenge the hegemonic class.

Jim George notes that since the publication of these articles, Cox's writings continue to explore and adapt Gramsci's ideas internationally. Hence, neither the "structure of interstate interaction nor the question of hegemony is necessarily understood in power politics terms."[87] For Cox, international politics is a dialectic involving both ideas and material interests emerging from the process of production.[88]

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[85] Cox "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations" p. 53.

[86] Cox "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations" p. 53

[87] Jim George *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re)introduction to International Relations* Boulder: Rienner, 1994 p. 178.

[88] See Robert W. Cox *Production, Power, and World Order* New York: Columbia UP, 1987.

That being said, Cox does not reduce everything to economic forces or change. His use of Gramsci denotes a more nuanced and multifaceted approach. Expanding the definition of *hegemony* beyond the state allows for a fuller integration of economic elements into international political theory and allows for a fuller appreciation of the ideational aspects of international politics. His earlier clear disavowal of circumscribed, positivist methodology is also clearly evident. Moreover, by linking Gramsci's domestic writings to developments in international politics, Cox also helped further the cause of an historical examination of international politics rather than relying upon ahistorical models to explain, predict, and implicitly prescribe actions of state and non-state actors. Notions of anarchy, self-interest, power, defined in axiomatic, ahistorical and abstract terms, are rejected as *problem-solving* theory that functions to legitimate the existing set of social, political, and economic relations between people and between states.

Essentially, Cox has applied Gramscian notions about the social, intersubjective nature of political and economic power and discourse, and has attempted to place events within an international version of the model. For instance, Cox argues that international organizations function as "the process through which the institutions and its ideology are developed... Elite talent from peripheral countries is co-opted into international institutions in the manner of *trasfomismo*... [and] absorbs potentially counter-hegemonic ideas and makes these ideas consistent with hegemonic doctrine."[89] He argues that a transnational financial "fraction" within the post-war *historic bloc* has emerged as a new dominant "hegemonic" capitalist elite with its origins in the late 1960s and 1970's through real-world economic changes, and the dissemination of the ideas necessary to support, explain and legitimate this change and their authority. Before this time,

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[89] Cox "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations" p. 62, 63.

the substantial congruence of ideas, institutions, and policies among the leading capitalist nations, in a system of "embedded liberalism". This involved the emergence and consolidation of the ideology of the "mixed economy", which along with the rise of the Cold War, was important in the reconstruction (or creation) of the liberal-democratic form of rule in the West and Japan.[90]

The effect of this cannot be overstated. This *international historic bloc* sought to "internationalise New Deal principles and associated forms of capital-intensive, mass-consumption accumulation, and to extend opportunities for exports and foreign direct investment."[91] However, changes in communication and technology contributed to the "rise of structurally powerful, internationally mobile capital".[92] This led to the need to provide an appropriate "business climate" due to the belief that there is a "market for capital, enterprise, and inventiveness, and the supply of these will be reduced by higher taxation...It can be thus argued that a Gramscian form of hegemony was being reconstructed."[93]

The Emergence of Neo-Liberalism and the Transnational Historic Bloc 1980-2003

It is from this vantage point in time and place that Gramscian scholars draw their inspiration, guidance and focus. Despite this common "cause" or outlook, this school is not monolithic with writers exploring different aspects of hegemony from the effects of institutions on domestic and international state behaviour, to trade agreements, to the effects of neo-liberalism on various segments of society. Thus, it is obvious that the neo-Gramscian programme has expanded greatly since Robert Cox wrote his two seminal articles. For example, Stephen Gill, a colleague and fellow neo-Gramscian of Robert Cox at York University, reinforces the idea that the ideology of international capital has

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[90]   Stephen R.Gill and David Law, "Global Hegemony and the Structural Power of Capital" *International Studies Quarterly* 33, 1989. p. 478

[91] Gill and Law "Global Hegemony and the Structural Power of Capital" p. 478.

[92] Gill and Law "Global Hegemony and the Structural Power of Capital" p. 480.

become hegemonic. His focus is on international institutions, their values, and how they affect the beliefs and subsequent action of both state and non-state actors. The result is the construction of a possible Transnational Capital Historic Bloc. He notes that this growing strength and influence is due to the neo-liberal ideas themselves as well as "their application in the practices and organizational forms of key social institutions, and the reconfiguration of material power relations and a redistribution of wealth."[94] Hence, this reinforces Cox's argument that the OECD, in recommending monetarism, "endorsed a dominant consensus of policy thinking in the core countries and strengthened those who were determined to combat inflation this way against others who were more concerned about unemployment."[95] Gill furthers this line of argument in his study of the *Trilateral Commission* where he notes that the "basic role of the Commission has been in internationalizing the outlook of its members. In this process, apart from underlying material forces, intellectuals played a leading role."[96]

Gill essentially argues that economic liberalization would not have occurred without the ideational part provided by those leading intellectuals (i.e. scholars, bureaucrats, media) that served the transnational capital fraction's goals and outlook. Moreover, the ascendance of this fraction's hegemony since the 1990's has produced a 'disciplinary neo-liberalism' which is "institutionalised at the macro-level of power in the quasi-legal restructuring of state and international political forms: the 'new

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[93]   Gill and Law "Global Hegemony and the Structural Power of Capital" p. 480, 481-482. It should be noted that in footnote 5 of their article, Gill and Law note that Thatcherite policy was heavily influenced by neo-classical, monetarist economics spearheaded by Friedrich Hayek and Milton Friedman. This is an excellent example of Gramsci's concept of organic intellectual.

[94]   Stephen Gill. "Theorizing the Interregnum: the Double Movement and Global Politics in the 1990's" Ed. Bjorn Hettne in *International Political Economy—Understanding Global Disorder* Halifax: Fernwood, 1995, p. 69.

[95] Cox "Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations" p. 63.

[96] Stephen Gill *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission* New York: Cambridge UP, 1990. p. 210.

constitutionalism."[97] In short, it is a project of "attempting to make transnational liberalism, and if possible liberal democratic capitalism, the sole model for future development."[98] This new model would protect capital from the authority of other bases of power through policies that "emphasise market efficiency, discipline and confidence; economic policy credibility and consistency; and limitation on democratic decision-making processes."[99] In fact, a key characteristic of global politics in the last decades of the twentieth century is the

> redefinition of the role and purpose of government in the emerging world order. This has been a transnational process, involving both key elements in the state structures of the most powerful members of the G7, and drawn from private banks, corporations, think tanks, universities, and conservative and liberal political policies as well as influential private international-relations councils such as the Trilateral Commission and the World Economic Forum. [100]

From a Canadian perspective, one can see quasi-constitutionalisation through international trade and economic agreements. For instance, NAFTA requires that "publicly provided services be consistent with the commercially oriented rules in the private sector."[101] This process is evident in the norms setting OECD as well as the WTO.[102] The hegemony of this Historic Bloc shifted the "sectoral shift away from traditional manufacturing towards services...[and] would appear to set back the prospects for international trade unionism based upon traditional workers' organizations."[103] This lack of a counterhegemonic alternative helps to normalize neo-

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[97] Stephen Gill. "Globalization, Market Civilization and Disciplinary Neo-Liberalism" in *Power and Resistance in the New World Order* New York: Palgrave, 2003 p. 131.

[98] Gill. "Globalization, Market Civilization and Disciplinary Neo-Liberalism" p. 132.

[99] Gill. "Globalization, Market Civilization and Disciplinary Neo-Liberalism" p. 132.

[100] Gill. "Theorizing the Interregnum," p. 86.

[101] Stephen McBride "Quiet Constitutionalism in Canada: The International Political Economy of Domestic Institutional Change" *Canadian Journal of Political Science* 36:2 June 2003 pp. 251-273 p. 263.

[102] The recent agreement at the WTO regarding agriculture has important implications for Canadian publicly/state—owned enterprises that attempt to mediate market forces such as the Canadian Wheat Board. Please see Campbell Clark "WTO accord imperils Wheat Board" *Globe and Mail* Aug 2 2004 page B1 and Sandra Cordon "Wheat board head sees WTO threat" *Globe and Mail* Aug 3 2004 page B5

[103] Gill and Law "Global Hegemony and the Structural Power of Capital," p. 488.

liberal relationships between states and within states both materially and ideationally. Moreover, the lack of organized resistance amongst the developing world (partly due to these neo-liberal developments) make such a counterhegemonic challenge that more difficult.

Gramsci and Macpherson: Recognising the Importance of Ideas and Worldviews

This brief and cursory exploration of Gramscian IR/IPE illustrates that it is both self-consciously normative and rejects positivist, ahistorical approaches to the study of politics. Mainstream concepts and definitions are narrowly defined and do not exist to challenge existing institutions of power or to seriously question their ethical bases. The Gramscian approach to politics insists upon having an "ethical dimension to analysis, so that the questions of justice, legitimacy and moral credibility are integrated sociologically into the whole and into many of its key concepts."[104] This broad, ethical dimension of scholarly "activism" is rooted in the recognition that capitalist production is not just physical goods but also the "production and reproduction of knowledge and the social relations, morals, and institutions that are prerequisites for the production of physical goods."[105] It is not merely one class or elite subjugating others: the whole point of hegemony argues otherwise. Rather, hegemony "filters through structures of society, economy, culture, gender, ethnicity, class and ideology.[106] Thus, scholars, academics and intellectuals in general, through their work, all serve to provide a social reality that people know, understand and accept as normal and natural—even if they dislike it. The

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[104]   Stephen Gill. "Epistemology, Ontology and the 'Italian School'" in *Gramsci, Historical Materialism and International Relations* pp.21-48 p.24.

[105]   Robert W. Cox. "Production, the State and Change in World Order" in eds. Ernst-Otto Czempiel and James N. Rosenau *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges: Approaches to World Politics for the 1990's* Toronto: Lexington, 1989. p. 39.

[106]   Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton. "A critical theory route to hegemony, world order and historical change: neo-Gramscian perspectives in International Relations" *Capital & Class* 82 Spring 2004 pp. 85-113 p. 87.

critical mass of scholars who promulgate the legitimacy of such a social order is what keeps it intact. Again, an explicit part of the Gramscian approach is the question of justice and equality, and who benefits from the existing order.

Macpherson also recognised that liberal society was a historically market-based society predicated upon inequality. In fact, one could argue that Macpherson, using a different vocabulary, was explaining hegemony on a much larger time frame. For him, liberal democracy was designed to maintain property relations between people, which were also power relations. By defining individualism in *possessive individualist* terms, liberalism has created identities, which in turn, are acted upon in social, political, and economic relationships and within societal institutions. Taken together, Macpherson's work has shown that an historical intersubjective worldview of *possessive individualism* went hand in hand with nascent capitalism. Thus, rules, norms, and practices are imbued with the *possessive individualist* ethos that is historical in origin. This is evident in his concern for how political scientists cast politicians and parties "in the role of entrepreneurs in a profit-seeking economy (and voters in the role of consumers)... [and] in which all social relations between individuals are transformed into market relations."[107] He argues that this analogy is so easily devised due to the "premises of liberal democratic thought at its origin in the seventeenth century".[108] Therefore, there appears to be much common ground between the Neo-Gramscian perspective and Macpherson since neo-Gramscians seek to "focus on intersubjectivities that constitute the historical structures of the social material world."[109]

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[107]   C.B. Macpherson "Market Concepts in Political Theory" in *Democratic Theory: Essays in Retrieval* p. 188,192.

[108] Macpherson "Market Concepts in Political Theory" p. 192.

[109]   Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton "The Gordian Knot of Agency—Structure in International Relations: A Neo-Gramscian Perspective" *European Journal of International Relations* Vol. 7 (1) 2001 pp. 5-35 p. 17.

Ideas, Power and Discourse: Postmodernism and its Implications

The focus on language and interpretation is at the heart of the postmodernist challenge. There is, therefore, a self-conscious attempt to expose, undermine, and subvert modernist notions of identity, truth, facts, and ultimately, reality itself. And mainstream scholarship has much to be criticised from this perspective. Concepts such as anarchy, power, state sovereignty, balance of power, self-interest etc. are all accepted as unproblematic. To be sure, there are differences amongst mainstream scholars as to the precise definition or how they are operationalised in practice; however, to postmodernists, these concepts become reified and close off alternatives worldviews. This concern is related to the function of ideas and those who created them. Like the neo-Gramscians, postmodernists recognise that intellectuals play an enormous role in creating dominant modes of thinking, speaking and behaving. They aid the dominant classes through authenticating and buttressing "their authority so that their hegemony can run smoothly without the constant recourse to force."[110] Postmodernism takes this idea even further whereby the discursive depiction of reality (i.e. hegemony in Gramscian terms) is "an integral part of the relations of power that are present in all human societies."[111] Moreover, postmodernists seek to explain "how power is constituted and how its premises and givens are replicated at all levels of society."[112] That being said, postmodernism goes one step beyond discursive analysis: it seeks to challenge the entire Enlightenment notion that "there is an ultimate *foundation* for our knowledge, beyond the social construction of that knowledge."[113]

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[110]   Frederick H. Gareau "A Gramscian analysis of social science disciplines" *International Social Science Journal* Vol. 45 Issue 2, May 1993 p.301-310, p, 306.

[111] George *Discourses of Global Politics* p. 30.

[112] George *Discourses of Global Politics* p. 30.

[113] George *Discourses of Global Politics* p. 31.

Postmodernism and International Politics: The Reification of Anarchy and Conflict

With that *raison d'être* as a backdrop, postmodernist IR/IPE scholars challenge most mainstream concepts such as anarchy, state sovereignty and self-interest. If there is no firm footing on which these categories and concepts are situated, questions about how, when, and why they exist becomes extremely relevant. Only when one rejects the assumption that an objective world can be understood on a purely empirical, logical basis, will a new "thinking space" emerge. For George, the "Enlightenment dream is over, [and] that peoples everywhere are becoming increasingly awakened to the dangers of the Enlightenment narrative of reason, knowledge, progress, and freedom."[114] The same socio-cultural tradition that produced the dynamism of Western science, technology, and the ideals of freedom, equality and democracy cannot be separated from the social forces that produced the nuclear age and the Holocaust.

In terms of international politics and of international relations theory, postmodernist writers have much to say. International politics is a complex subject that involves, states, international institutions, non-state actors such as multinational corporations and non-governmental organisations, and economics never mind the domestic politics within states themselves. Thus, a degree of parsimony is needed to cope with such an intricate and interconnected web of variables. This, however, is where traditional, modernist theory goes astray. Creating a parsimonious model is only a limited approximation of what it purports to explain. Most scholars understand this and yet these models end up attempting to explain and make sense of far more than they should or be capable of. These reified models are indicative of embedded cultural and ideological discourses of power, domination and control that exist within domestic society, and are then ontologically transferred internationally.

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[114] George *Discourses of Global Politics* p. 140.

For instance, the concept of international anarchy is accepted due to the obvious lack of world governmental institutions and the inability of global norms to be enforced. Another obvious fact is that international conflict is frequent—often in violent fashion. Richard Ashley argues that realism's penchant for assuming conflict is indicative of a

> structuralism that treats the given order as the natural order, limits rather than expands political discourse, negates or trivializes the significance of time and place, subordinates all practice to an interest in control, bows to an ideal of a social power beyond responsibility, and thereby deprives political interaction of those positive capacities which make social learning and creative change possible. What emerges is an ideology that anticipates, legitimises, and orients a totalitarian project of global proportions: the rationalization of global politics.[115]

Realism's apparent objectivity is rooted in a positivist conception of reality whereby knowledge can be expanded through reason and observation. Theories can be constructed, evaluated, and tested based upon this knowledge. Ashley argues that when applied to the social science enterprise, this conception becomes quite problematic. Scientific rationality inhabits "the domain of the 'is' rather than the domain of the 'ought', and hence its truth requires no normative defence."[116] In social science, using a Weberian framework, "meaning enters society primarily through the autonomously generated ends of individual acting agents: meaningful action is merely *motivated* action... All explanations of social action must ultimately come to rest with the interpretation of some frozen set of actors, their values and ends."[117] Realism embodies many of these implicit assumptions and norms as states are *assumed* to be in an anarchic system with interests based on the system they find themselves in.

An interesting illustration of this mindset is found in Kenneth Waltz's response to his critics (Ashley's piece being one of them) in *Neorealism and its Critics*. Waltz notes

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[115]   Richard K. Ashley. "The Poverty of Neorealism" *International Organization* 38, 2 Spring 1984 pp. 25-286 p. 228.

[116] Ashley "Poverty of Neorealism" p. 250.

[117] Ashley "Poverty of Neorealism" p. 252. (emphasis in original)

that the "state in fact is not a unitary and purposive actor. I assumed it to be such only for the purpose of constructing a theory... Yet if one is to develop a problem-solving theory about anything, assumptions of this sort have to be made."[118] Waltz's admission is more self-conscious than Ashley's characterisation of realists. Waltz's analysis remains, however, quite reified and ahistorical. Waltz regards as unproblematic the notion that "problem-solving theory seeks to understand and explain"[119] the world in which the scholars find themselves, and who are not in the business of interpreting "the world historically and philosophically"[120] as critical theory suggests. Explaining and interpreting are, however, quite similar in the sense that which data we decide to process, how data are processed is subject to both an implicit and explicit set of ontological, epistemological, and ideological assumptions that guide and shape understanding, focus and direction.

This chapter's self-styled "dialogue of the deaf" title is clearly supported by the above exchange. At issue is the appropriateness of employing a natural science model in a social science context. Observing and theorising about a colony of ants is not the same as observing and theorising about human society and the complexity of human interactions at an individual, group or state level of analysis. The social production and reproduction of knowledge—in this case a theory of international politics—affects what is observed. Scholars, diplomats, and politicians create policies that produce an intersubjective environment that scholars then relate to in subsequent interactions and iterations. This perpetual feedback loop thus affects both the observer and the observed. If such a feedback loop exists, postmodernists (and others with a critical eye) ask what is the genealogy or tradition this type of theorising comes from. Rob Walker argues that it

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[118]   Kenneth N. Waltz. "Reflections on Theory of International Politics: A Response to My Critics" in *Neorealism and its critics* ed. Robert O. Keohane New York: Columbia UP, 1986. pp. 322-345 p. 339.

[119] Waltz. "Reflections on Theory of International Politics" p. 341

is from our European conceptions of politics and society itself. He notes that Thomas Hobbes evokes the "imagery of both the 'state of nature' and the security dilemma'[121]. He derived his model (in works such as *Leviathan*) from the time and place—as observed by Macpherson in the discussion of Hobbes in Chapter 2. He also notes that this is relevant to the entire discipline as mainstream debates "tend to freeze or reify complex philosophical questions into a permanent problem: either into an eternal debate between realists or idealists or a progressive struggle to establish a properly empirical science."[122]

The State, Sovereignty and Identity: The Ahistorical Moment

This depiction of the discipline as locked in with fixed constants that define the "reality" of international politics is evident when discussing the concepts of the *state* and of *sovereignty*. The biggest difference between domestic and international politics is again the lack of an international state. Because of this, the amorphous state is reified and given attributes that are implicitly related to domestic understanding of human behaviour and rationality. Walker notes that the theories of "international relations are more interesting as aspects of contemporary world politics that need to be explained than as *explanations* of contemporary world politics."[123] Postmodernists often examine this idea of *theory as practice* by looking at areas of theory construction not usually the purview of traditional scholarship. For instance, the whole question of the supposed hostile, competitive anarchical environment is reinforced in security strategy. Rather than place an event, crisis, or conflict in a historical framework (i.e. examining the complexity of politics, economics and culture), policy analysts often rely on simulations to formulate

[120] Waltz. "Reflections on Theory of International Politics" p. 341

[121]   R.B. J. Walker. "History and Structure in the Theory of International Relations" in *International Theory: Critical Investigations* New York: New York Press, 1995 pp. 308-339. p. 323.

[122] R.B. J. Walker. "History and Structure in the Theory of International Relations" p. 317.

[123]   R.B.J. Walker *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* New York: Cambridge UP, 1993 p. 6. (emphasis added)

policy. Game theory is one such way this occurred. Rather than see an issue in terms of a complex historical relationship, potential cooperation is neither a "planned strategy nor a response to a collective norm, but as an evolutionary successful behavioural routine."[124] By removing rationality from a specific historical, social and cultural perspective, this reveals an implicit individualistic methodology akin to microeconomics. In fact, "cross—cultural experiments with prisoner's dilemma—type games show that children in traditional villages (and socialist *kibbutzim*) are more likely than children in capitalist cities to seek collectively rewarding, cooperative outcomes."[125]

If social norms mediate how "games" or social interactions are understood, interpreted and subsequently acted upon, then the social fabric that creates existing interpretations of conflict, fear, and (in)security is a subject worthy of study. A central tenet of postmodernism is that this understanding is mediated by language and not recognising this is the core of the problem. For instance, the events of "September 11th" or "9/11" left American analysts with an interpretive vacuum. A generic date and pair of numbers have been given a cultural symbolic potency that is likely to be permanently ingrained in Western historiography and the popular imagination for some time to come. Using these two phrases instantly evokes images of the planes crashing into the World Trade Centre towers. Despite how potent the images may be, how this event has been interpreted is subject to many factors. The hijackers' mission ensured death and to most Western observers, this was the penultimate example of irrationality. This observation, however, is not as simple or straightforward as the "act of the pilots may nonetheless be considered rational within a structure of meaning by which one's self-sacrifice

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[124] Roger Hurwitz "Strategic and Social Fictions in the Prisoner's Dilemma" in *International/Intertextual relations: postmodern politics* eds. James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro Lexington: Lexington Books, 1989. pp. 113-134 p. 114.

[125] Hurwitz p. 125.

contributes to the good of God or Allah."[126] On a practical level, they believed that, in striking a blow to the American infidel, it would help end the U.S. "occupation" of Saudi Arabia, its corrupting influence on Muslim society, and demonstrate the strength and power of Islam. If one sincerely adhered to that worldview, so-called data, facts and the truth of a social and political reality become subject to interpretation.

If understanding is mediated through an intersubjective social reality, then the identities that shape this understanding become quite important. In the case of 9/11, there emerged ready-made dichotomies, which allowed for easy adoption. Fundamentalist Islam became the source of evil and the enemy of the United States. This black/white, hero/villain, good/evil bifurcation has created foreign policy that may appear to be a new American unilateralism; however, behind the rhetoric is a way of analysing and interpreting that has its roots in ahistorical positivism alluded to earlier. Debates about the "national interest" or one nation's place in the world are indicative of "self-understandings of the nation's identity and purpose."[127] Campbell, in another work, argues that this state identity emerged with the *Peace of Westphalia* in 1648. He notes that this historical narrative links the genesis of the state with the terms of "'independence, 'sovereignty', 'nonintervention', and 'international law'."[128] When combined with positivist social science, mainstream IR embeds identity within a discourse of anarchy and entrenches fear, insecurity and mistrust.

James Der Derian connects the emergence of the state and the discourse of anarchy within international politics to the historical development of diplomacy. He

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[126]   K.M. Fierke "Links Across the Abyss: Language and Logic in International Relations" *International Studies Quarterly* 46 2002 pp 331-354 p. 342.

[127]   David Campbell "Violent Performances: Identity, Sovereignty, Responsibility" in *The Return of Culture and Identity in IR Theory* eds. Yosef Lapid and Friedrich Kratochwil Boulder: Rienner, 1996. pp. 163-180 p. 164.

[128]   David Campbell. *Writing Security: United States foreign policy and the politics of identity* Minneapolis: Minnesota UP, 1998 p. 41.

argues that the modern diplomacy (and the implicit self-understanding that goes along with it) is related to:

> first, the common estrangement of states from the suzerain state system; second, their mutual estrangement from states of being, namely the polar extremes of hegemony or anarchy, which accompanied the collapse of the suzerain state system; and third, the mutual estrangement between (or among) states in which the interests of each state are pitted against those of all others.[129]

This is a particularly relevant and interesting area of research because it reveals how individual decision makers (agents) act on the ideas of the social reality they are encountered with, which in turn, create structures of meaning that produce a larger historical intersubjective reality which becomes normal and natural. It is also particularly noteworthy in that modern diplomacy emerged from an earlier historical era where the international landscape (if we can say that) looked fundamentally different because of an intersubjectively held worldview and identity different from our own. Hence, any claim that anarchy is a perpetual condition of the human condition, human nature, or society is to reify modern conceptions of these categories and then read them back into the historical record. If anything is to be gleaned from this postmodernist survey, it is that this reification abounds in mainstream theory and social science in general. Postmodernists emphasise the need to reject the goal and claim of a universal truth as the attempt is both unattainable and undesirable.

Macpherson & Postmodernism: Synergy of Thought and Purpose—To A Point

The admittedly brief introduction and overview to postmodernist IR/IPE theory reveals a degree of synergy between it and Macpherson both in terms of purpose and ethos. However, that being said, there are important differences and distinctions. First, as noted in Chapter 2, Macpherson was attempting to trace the discursive narrative of

liberalism through a close examination of key texts within the liberal canon. The difference between his textual analysis and that of postmodernist approaches is the degree to which the latter links the analysis to broader concerns about modernity itself. Macpherson's concerns are somewhat different. His seminal theory of *possessive individualism* attempted to provide a unity that had been obscured by liberalism's simultaneous and contradictory juxtaposition of freedom and equality with an economic and political system that produces the opposite. His insights were also informed by his affinity for the Marxist notion of alienation within capitalist societies and how it might be overcome. Second, at the heart of his work is an implicit working model of human nature that posits human beings as being naturally creative and imaginative. Possessive individualism, according to Macpherson, inhibits or disables this natural ability for the vast majority of the population. It invariably leads to a net transfer of one's powers to others since one is a proprietor of one's capacities, and that such powers are alienable. Such an occurrence is justified within a market society because any such transfer is a voluntary market transaction.

Arguing about the essential qualities of human nature, in order to justify his theoretical model, is the point of divergence for postmodernists and Macpherson. For postmodernists, Macpherson is still operating within and arguing from a modernist perspective. To claim that there exists an essential human nature is to fall into the trap of a central dominant discourse of modernity—the belief in an objective knowledge and reality apart from the social reality one is situated within. Macpherson was well aware of how scholars could deceive themselves by accepting, producing and reproducing the liberal worldview. While he can be criticised for being sanguine about prospects for democracy in the former Soviet bloc and in many developing countries, his optimism

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[129]   James Der Derian *On Diplomacy: A Genealogy of Western Estrangement* New York: Blackwell, 1987.

was again rooted in a conception of human beings as potentially cooperative and non-competitive if liberated from the shackles of a possessive individualist market society. His strength lies in analysing the internal contradiction within liberalism, his synthesis of the liberal canon, and his innovative and creative use of the Marxian concept of *surplus value* to include the transfer of political power from the working class to the business class. His concern and belief in the need for transformation has an emancipatory ethos similar to both the neo-Gramscians and postmodernists in terms of revealing the production and reproduction of power, hierarchy and inequality within society and within mainstream theory itself. As will be shown in Chapter 4, applying Macpherson's *possessive individualist* model will link mainstream theory's central discourse, and the scholarship which supports it, to the historical development of capitalism. By doing so, it will create potential openings for transcending the reified notions of perpetual anarchical conflict, insecurity and competition.

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p.111.

Chapter 4
Reification, Intersubjectivity and Possessive Individualism: Macpherson's Contribution to the Ontology of International Political Theory

The natural state of man is society- J.G. Herder

The problematic nature of mainstream IR/IPE theory in terms of subject and method, as outlined in Chapter 3, provides an opening for applying Macpherson's domestic model to international politics. At issue, is the totalising, self-referential nature of the discipline. The ongoing "dialogue of the deaf", alluded to earlier, illustrates the divide not only normatively but also ontologically. Meaningful dialogue seems so problematic because the starting points are so different. As noted in Chapter 2, the embedded nature of *possessive individualism* is so entrenched and such an integral part of society that it is largely invisible. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Neo-Gramscians have attacked the self-referential nature of mainstream IR/IPE scholarship using insights from the domestically oriented writings of Antonio Gramsci. Thus, using a domestic theorist at an international level of analysis is not unusual or unheard of. Neo-Gramscians have a materialist theoretical core but extend Marxist analyses through Gramsci's study of the ideational basis of capitalist society. In contrast, the *possessive individualist* IR/IPE model proposed here, has an *ideational* core with less of a materialist base. This may appear to be an odd reading of Macpherson at first glance. However, in using key Marxist assumptions about capital, the state, and surplus value, Macpherson was attempting to reveal and explain the ideology that underpinned the capitalist worldview and made sense of it. This is further revealed by connecting Macpherson's nodal concept of *possessive individualism* to the constructivist turn in IR/IPE. This model contributes to a critical theory of international politics through a close examination of the *ideational* structure of modernity and the intersubjective effects of *possessive*

individualism on how international politics is theorised and understood by scholars, political leaders and the public alike.

Why Does Macpherson Make a Difference in Studying International Politics?

We can link Macpherson to the critical IR/IPE literature because it shares a similar notion about the purpose of theory. It bears repeating Cox's claim that problem-solving theory "takes the world as it finds it, with the prevailing social and power relationships and the institutions into which they are organised"[130] while critical theory "stands apart from the prevailing order of the world and asks how that order came about."[131] Clearly, Macpherson's study of the liberal tradition identifies him as a harsh critic of liberalism and capitalism. However, he also is challenging liberalism to live up to its own precepts in order to provide a vision of non-coercive participatory democracy. Like the Neo-Gramscians, what perhaps separates Macpherson's model from some post-modern approaches is that it does not get caught up in notions of discourse and metaphysics so much as to obscure potentials for alternatives. Post-modern concerns, while important, often do not further actual change and can actually inhibit dialogue with those the criticism is presumably trying to reach. Rather than attempting to deal with the philosophical issues related to anti-foundational epistemology, using Macpherson's *possessive individualist* model at an international level of analysis avoids this philosophical quagmire by linking the basic tenets of the model to a broad historical, ideological canvas, and demonstrating that *possessive individualism* is what mainstream scholarship implicitly draws from.

His model also avoids the charge of relativity through immanent critique and through his conception of human nature. The latter is not without its problems as was

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[130] Cox "Social Forces" p.128.

evident in the discussion in Chapter 2 about Macpherson's domestic model. Clearly, his immanent critique of liberal theory has analytical and explanatory power; however, his conception of human nature is undertheorised and not immune to the same kind of argument he is making against liberal theory. That is why his ideas need a constructivist ontology added to them. In doing so, human nature and society become co-constituted—that is to say—they are both ontologically privileged. In some sense, Macpherson seems to have implied this co-constitution in his work but never developed this reasoning further. What he did do, however, was to bracket the liberal tradition's own valuing of developing one's human powers with liberalism's contradictory acceptance of capitalist inequality. Macpherson's definition of human nature can be further improved by employing Chomsky's notion of a core human nature of which society, ideas, behaviour, and genetics are constituent parts.

This chapter argues that when Macpherson's model is applied internationally, his overall argument remains valid. His immanent critique of liberalism reveals that mainstream IR/IPE theory posits states in the same manner as domestic liberalism posits individuals. States become autonomous individuals who have ownership, control and sovereignty over their territory (e.g. their property), and thus have unfettered and unlimited access and use of resources. When examined from a constructivist approach, this liberal culture is seen as natural and normal because the international system constitutes "actors with certain identities and interests, and material capabilities with certain meanings"[132] Because these interests and identities of states are *possessive individualist,* the effect is a reified international social structure that reinforces a culture of anarchy and entrenches mistrust, insecurity, global inequality and hierarchy. Much of

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[131] Cox "Social Forces" p.129.

[132]   Alexander Wendt. "Constructing International Politics" in *International Security* Vol. 20, No.1 (Summer 1995), pp. 71-81 p. 76.

mainstream IPE and IR theory is thus predicated upon the idea that the international politics is a self-help, anarchical system. There are different interpretations of what anarchy is but the image of competitiveness is always near the surface. He noted that the "seventeenth-century view of individuals as the essential proprietors of their own personal capacities emphasizes the limited social responsibility of individuals to society."[133] Taken together, an international version of Macpherson's model grounds a critical analysis on a temporal, real world, empirical footing because it posits that *possessive individualism* can be argued to include almost all social relations. Conceptions of international politics, economics, the environment, and development are all affected by the *possessive individualist* ethos and worldview. Not recognising this mindset or worldview as temporally bounded (i.e. within the past 300-400 years) makes it appear normal, natural and invisible. Hence, any attempts to reform international institutions, policies, and practices (like *reform liberals* attempt to do) will be ultimately prove futile because the *possessive individualist* worldview will not be questioned since its assumptions are drawn from unexamined assumptions from the domestic sphere— where we all actually live.

An Overview of the IR Constructivist Project

In order to demonstrate the necessity of understanding the intersubjective effects of ideas and identity on behaviour and structure alike, an overview of the constructivist approach is necessary. Constructivism is a part of the IR discipline's development over the past two decades. Like most ideas, they are formed and reformed in a historical context. Critical approaches exposed important blindspots that deserved closer attention and scrutiny. Constructivism has been developed to recognise mainstream deficiencies

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[133] Michael Clarke and Rick Tilman. "C.B. Macpherson's Contributions to Democratic Theory" in *Journal of Economic Issues* Vol. XXII No.1 March 1988 pp. 181-296 p 183.

or lacunae and its proponents hold "the view that the building blocks of international reality are ideational as well as material."[134]

Alexander Wendt has been a major contributor to IR constructivism and several of his articles have sparked debate about the role of anarchy in mainstream IR theory. An early piece is "noteworthy... [as] it was IR's first sustained exploration of agency and structure."[135] For example, he states that "social structures include material resources like gold and tanks. In contrast to neorealists' desocialized view of such capabilities, constructivists argue that material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared understandings in which they are embedded. For example, 500 British nuclear weapons are less threatening to the United States than 5 North Korean nuclear weapons."[136] Thus, material capabilities, in and of themselves, do not predispose state behaviour. What matters is the "social structure, which varies across anarchies. An anarchy of friends differs from one of enemies, one of self-help from one of collective security and these are constituted by structures of shared knowledge."[137]

Since the advent of the term *constructivism* in IR/IPE theory, the term has been increasingly associated with those scholars (e.g. Wendt, Adler, Katzenstein et al.) who do accept standard empirical social science practice. The main purpose of this sociological approach is that it brings out "new and meaningful interpretations of

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[134]   John Gerard Ruggie. "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge" *International Organization* 52, 4 Autumn 1998 pp. 885-885 p. 879.

[135]   Harry D. Gould. "What Is at Stake in the Agent-Structure Debate?" *International Relations in a Constructed World* eds. Vendulka Kubálková, Nicholas Onuf and Paul Kowert pp. 79-98 p 84

[136]   Alexander Wendt "Constructing International Politics" in *International Security* Vol. 20, No.1 (Summer 1995), pp. 71-81 p.73

[137] Wendt "Constructing International Politics" p. 78

international politics... [and] has rescued explanation of identity from postmodernism."[138] Hopf argues that all constructivists insist, "all data must be 'contextualised,' that is, they must be related to, and situated within, the social environment in which they were gathered in order to understand their meaning."[139] Constructivists want to "discover identities and their associated reproductive social practices, and then offer an account of how these identities imply certain actions."[140]

Because this new approach has attempted to synthesise critical approaches with the mainstream, it has readily "achieved the status of a third recognized approach with[in] International Relations Theory,"[141] leading many to argue that it merely replicates liberal arguments, conclusions, and predictions about the future of international relations as a result."[142] Wendt seems to fall into this category in his creation of ideal types of anarchy that are either "Hobbesian, Lockean or Kantian"[143] which create and induce a unique set of shared values based upon these "logics" of anarchy. Therefore, despite his groundbreaking, maverick, articles that stirred up IR scholarship circles, Wendt does not advocate a radical break with mainstream scholarship in that he does not question the validity or existing "constructions" of international politics; moreover, his writings do not discuss the question of the economic and political identities of states and their relationship to capitalism. Thus, while their ontological notion that a "social structure" exists between states which in turn creates intersubjective norms, values and practices, is a refreshing change, the way in which this structure is understood and studied has

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[138]   Jeffrey T. Checkel. "The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory" *World Politics* 50:2 1998 pp 324-340.

[139]   Ted Hopf. "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory" *International Security* Vol. 23, No. 1 (Summer 1998) pp. 171-200. p. 182.

[140] Hopf p. 183-4

[141]   Caroline Kennedy-Pipe "International History and International Relations Theory: a dialogue beyond the Cold War" *International Affairs* 76, 4(2000) pp. 741-754. p. 751.

[142]   Jennifer Sterling-Folker. "Competing Paradigms or Birds of a Feather? Constructivism and Neoliberal Institutionalism Compared" *International Studies Quarterly* 44, 2000. pp. 97-119. p. 98.

normative and ideological roots that are strikingly similar to those whom they are attacking. This seems to indicate that constructivists generally accept capitalism, and like realism and liberalism, is a "criticism from within the tradition"[144] because "critical theorists have a different aim… to elaborate on how people come to believe in a single version of a naturalised truth."[145]

The Ethical Dimension of Politics: The Foundation of Macphersonian IR/IPE

In order to illustrate how Macpherson's nodal concept of *possessive individualism* can be combined with the ontology of constructivism to produce a credible, insightful critical approach to IR and IPE, a survey of selected major realist and liberal thinkers' ideas will be interpreted and discussed through a *possessive individualist* lens. This combination will, however, go far beyond much of the current "conventional" constructivist literature as it now stands because while the methodological recognition of the mutual co-construction of agent and structure is fine, leaving it within a solely *problem solving* theoretical paradigm wastes much of its potential contribution. Following Macpherson's lead, the inclusion of ethical notions such as justice and legitimacy in any discussion is vitally necessary to any meaningful analysis or discussion of politics. Moreover, questions of identity, norms, values, and practices cannot be divorced from how they have been *historically* developed. Therefore, theories and approaches need to be seen as "contingent upon, and reflect substantial portions of the context in which they are formulated."[146] Thus, despite Hopf's claim that scholars need not follow critical theorists in self-consciously recognizing "their own participation in the reproduction,

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[143] Wendt *Social Theory of International Politics* p. 247.

[144] Thomas J. Biersteker. "Evolving Perspectives on International Political Economy: Twentieth-Century Contexts and Discontinuities" in *International Political Science Review* Vol. 14, No. 1, 1993. p. 19

[145] Hopf p. 183-4.

[146] Biersteker. p.7

constitution, and fixing of the social entities they observe,"[147] *not* doing so reinforces existing structures and makes the status quo appear normal and natural. It will also become apparent that employing Macpherson's model internationally connects the postmodernist focus on ideas and discourse with the neo-Gramscian focus on the historical development of hegemony without succumbing to the charge of relativism.

Realism and Hobbesian Anarchy: Battle of the Sovereigns

Therefore to begin, Realism is by far the oldest tradition within international relations with its proponents claiming thinkers back to Thucydides. This timeless and static portrayal of human nature as self-interested, aggressive, and in a constant state of insecurity, has obscured modern social relations inherent within liberal capitalism leaving the Hobbesian possessive individualist view of politics as normal and unproblematic. Some key modern realist theorists that embody much of the implicit Hobbesian cultural worldview are Hans Morgenthau, John Mearsheimer and Kenneth Waltz. Each emphasises a different variant of realism but all have possessive individualist assumptions. They were selected due to their stature within the realist tradition and their effect on the discipline itself. Morgenthau helped define the modern realist tradition for over a generation. He was a "refugee from the Nazis, and his European education and experience provided a breadth of outlook and an historical orientation which gave him insights, which came more slowly to more parochial American students."[148] The dystopian Nazi experiment helped condition his views towards society and human nature that parallels how the English Civil War helped to condition Hobbes' worldview. As such, Morgenthau sought to "tame Americans' optimism about human nature, science, and reform... [as] a distressingly large number of scholars equated good intentions with a

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[147] Hopf p.184

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successful foreign policy, assumed that democracy could control, if not extinguish, base human instincts, [and] believed that democracies could avoid wars and that a peaceful world could encourage democracies."[149] Thus, it is not surprising that he would attempt to set out a more "realistic" understanding of international politics.

Morgenthau's description is a fascinating account of how culturally constructed mainstream IR theory has been. For example, he claimed that "politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature...[which] has not changed since the classical philosophies of China, India, and Greece endeavoured to discover these laws."[150] This static view of human nature and society has the effect of reifying interstate relationships by enforcing an inter-subjective view of the world, which holds that conflict is the "result of forces inherent in nature. To improve this world one must work with those forces, not against them... [as] moral principles can never be fully realized."[151] It also directly relates to the Hobbesian assumption that this state of affairs thwarts "every man's [sic] desire for 'commodious living' and for avoidance of violent death, that every reasonable man [sic] should do whatever must be done to guard against this condition."[152] Because of Morgenthau's parsimony as well as his appeal to "common sense", he quickly enabled modern realism to become the "nearest approximation to a reigning paradigm or, at least a dominant orthodoxy in international politics."[153] This dominance, however, is based upon "making facts fit the

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[148]   Robert Jervis "Hans Morgenthau, Realism and the Study of International Politics" *Social Research*, Vol. 61 Issue 4 Winter 1994 pp. 853-76 p. 853.

[149] Jervis p.853-4.

[150]   Hans J. Morgenthau *Politics Among Nations: the struggle for power and peace* 5th Edition New York: Knopf, 1973. p. 3-4.

[151] Morgenthau p.3

[152] Macpherson p.19

[153]   Bahman Fozouni. "Confutation of Political Realism" *International Studies Quarterly* 39 1995 pp. 479-510 p. 479.

theory" in that he felt comfortable claiming that "a perfect balance of power will scarcely be found in reality, it assumes that *reality being deficient in this respect,* must be understood and evaluated as an approximation of to an ideal system of balance of power."[154] In essence, Morgenthau was couching realism's *normative* utility on the back of its "descriptive and explanatory *validity.*"[155]

One of the key challenges to realism was the liberal focus on domestic politics. Morgenthau claimed that we "assume that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power… we listen in on his conversation with other statesmen; we read and anticipate his very thoughts."[156] According to Keohane and Nye, this realist approach "deprecates domestic politics by suggesting that the national interest must be calculated in terms of power, relative to other states, and that if it is not, the result will be catastrophic."[157] For example, Keohane notes "balance of power theories and national security imagery are poorly adapted to analysing problems of economic or ecological interdependence… Applying the wrong image and the wrong rhetoric to problems will lead to erroneous analysis and bad policy."[158] For neo-liberals, the role of institutions helps to alter interests and promote co-operation. This claim allows for the *possibility* of change in sharp contrast to realism. Moreover, they note that state "choices reflect elites' perceptions of interests, which may change in several ways… Practices or interests that are accepted in one period become downgraded or even illegitimate"[159]. While realists

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[154] Morgenthau p.8 emphasis added

[155] Fozouni p 495.

[156] Morgenthau p. 5.

[157]   Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye *Power and Interdependence* 3rd Edition. New York: Longman, 2001 p. 37.

[158] Keohane and Nye p.7.

[159] Keohane and Nye p. 284.

see patterns of balancing and of national interest, they seem uninterested in the content of those interests and why power is used: they seem only interested in power.

The Continuing Relevance and Resilience of Realism

Keohane and Nye's critique of realism is indicative of ongoing liberal attacks on realism; however, despite the challenge to its hegemony, realism remains a dominant force in IR/IPE theory, especially in Anglo-American academic circles. Two prominent scholars who have responded to some of this critique over the past two decades have been John Mearsheimer and Kenneth Waltz. Both are excellent examples of realist thought both in terms of force of argumentation as well as illustrations of basic *possessive individualist* ontology. Mearsheimer's work is often directly opposed to liberal scholarship and current trends such as European integration. His work seems to take on a rearguard attack of opposing approaches. In doing so, he reveals core cultural assumptions about human nature and society. For example, in a recent article, Mearsheimer views the international system, especially in Europe and Asia as particularly unstable. The current stability is "based largely on auspicious distributions of power that make war highly unlikely... The most likely scenario in Europe is an eventual American exit coupled with the emergence of Germany as a hegemonic state."[160] He further argues that if Germany became responsible for its own defence, it would probably acquire its own nuclear arsenal and increase the size of its army."[161] Mearsheimer's description of realist *anarchy* is useful in seeing how differently European states currently "see" their interests rather than the ones he believes they should and/or will follow. In addition, his views are, again, at odds with a lot of liberal scholarship. For example, the image of the United States acting as the "lid covering a simmering cauldron

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[160] John J. Mearsheimer "The Future of the American Pacifier" in *Foreign Affairs* Vol. 80 No.5 Sept/Oct 2001 pp 46-61 p. 47.

of European insecurity" seems to be predicated upon *a priori* assumptions about the balance of power and presents an ontology akin to the Hobbesian "gladiator". The fascinating part of his analysis is the apparent straightforward evaluation of nuclear weapons as merely modern forms of offensive/defensive capabilities. Because he utterly rejects any notion of social understanding that could frame nuclear weapons use differently, he neglects even the ideational "taboos" of using nuclear weapons by even such hawkish American realists as John Foster Dulles, Robert McNamara and Dean Rusk.[162]

Waltz & Structural Neo-realism: The Scientific & Empirical Defence of Hobbesian Anarchy

Relying upon a reified notion of "anarchy" to justify a set of international political understandings and related prescriptions indicates an unwillingness to entertain any notion of a social and political context: power politics simply exists. This timeless, ahistorical nature of international politics is mirrored in many other realist scholarly works—most notably Kenneth Waltz. Waltz's theoretical framework provides for a more nuanced and "scientific" model of international politics. While sympathetic to many of Morgenthau's and Mearsheimer's normative assumptions, Waltz sought to provide a rational, predictable model of behaviour that transcends time and place based upon scientific principles. He achieved this by deducing his theory from a reading of history. He was impressed by "the striking sameness in the quality of international life throughout the millennia."[163] Thus, this view of continuity led him to "generate a parsimonious theory which explicitly sought to omit the influence of the units, and thereby make the purely

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[161] Mearsheimer p. 50

[162]   See Nina Tannenwald. "The Nuclear Taboo: The United States and the Normative Basis of Nuclear Non-Use" *International Organization* 53, 3 Summer 1999 pp. 433-468

[163] Kenneth Waltz *Theory of International Politics* New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979. p. 66.

defined international structure ontologically primitive."[164] In essence, Waltz has attempted to provide a cross-section of international politics throughout time and examine its core features.

Waltz is a key realist scholar to examine because his work is clear and straightforward, which has bolstered the realist school in the face of challengers; however, as ambitious as his attempt is in its scope and scale, it fails to account for cultural understandings of the state and the individual. For instance, he differentiates between domestic and international political structures in that domestic systems are hierarchical while the international system is anarchical. There is nothing revolutionary in this dichotomy, but what is revealing is his characterisation of the international anarchical environment. He argues that in an anarchical environment, "each unit's incentive is to put itself in a position to be able to take care of itself since no one else can be counted on to do so."[165] Moreover, he equates international politics to a competitive market where "international political systems, like economic markets, are individualist in origin, spontaneously generated and unintended."[166] Thus, a weak state must be always "concerned with its *relative* power. The power of others—especially great power—is always a threat."[167] Both descriptions harken back to the earlier Hobbesian description of individuals in the state of nature—the domestic equivalent of international anarchy. It also relates to *possessive individualism* in that "each state is a separate, autonomous, and formally equal political unit."[168] As such, states perform tasks, "most of which are

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[164]   John M. Hobson "What's at stake in 'bringing historical sociology back into international relations'? Transcending 'chronofetishism' and 'tempocentrism' in international relations" in *Historical Sociology of International Relations* Eds. Stephen Hobden and John M. Hobson Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2002. pp. 3-41 p. 39.

[165] Waltz *Theory of International Politics* p. 107.

[166] Waltz *Theory of International Politics* p. 91.

[167]   Jack Donnelly *Realism and International Relations* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. p. 18.

[168] Donnelly p.17.

common to all of them; the ends they aspire to are similar."[169] States are equal "individual" units that have similar interests of security and power. Stronger states dominate weaker states and thus set the "rules of the game". At one level, Waltz's model of international politics is again simple, elegant and straightforward. States act to enhance their power and security: international politics is viewed through this prism and states' actions are interpreted and understood in these terms. At a deeper level, it reveals a model predicated on *presentism*—or the construction of theory based upon the shifting sands of contemporary politics. In some instances his theory's "conceptual neatness of a system defined in terms of a single type of unit may actually reflect the empirical world. But when it does not, the difficulties of diversity need to be faced rather than avoided."[170] It is no wonder that such an approach to "the study of international relations was popular during the Cold War, when structures did seem to be unchanging."[171]

Implications of Realist Thought in the post-Cold War Era

Waltz's claim that international politics is timeless coupled with the geo-political reality of the Cold War also reveals how deeply embedded core cultural assumptions are about how people and states interact. Waltz's theory embeds these notions under the guise of a scientific model. His model is static and does not allow for change. This is particularly evident in Waltz's more recent work after the dissolution of the former Soviet Union. In many ways, his thoughts and perceptions echo and mirror those of Mearsheimer. For example, in his piece "Structural Realism After the Cold War", he asks how the post-Cold War international system has changed "so profoundly that old ways of

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[169] Waltz *Theory of International Politics* p. 96

[170] Barry Buzan and Richard Little. "International systems in world history: remaking the study of international relations" in Hobden and Hobson pp. 200-220 p.213.

thinking would no longer be relevant? Changes *of* the system would do it; changes *in* the system would not".[172] He posits that changes in the "structure of the system are distinct from changes at the unit level"[173], which creates a dichotomy between the domestic and international political spheres. For him, it is the number of great powers that drives state action as several, relatively equal states creates inherent instability within the international system. He further asserts, "To explain war is easier to understand the conditions of peace. If one asks what may cause war, the simple answer is anything."[174] Again, the historical and political context is unimportant, as the *security dilemma* and the *balance of power* remain permanent fixtures of international politics. Thus, the post-Cold War era is not different from previous periods because "even if all states became democratic, the structure of international politics would remain anarchic. The structure of international politics is not transformed by changes within internal states, however widespread the changes may be."[175] Waltz argued at length that neo-realism was a superior, scientific model to replace *classical realism* because "the ultimate concern for states is not for power but security [and for] the purpose of developing a theory, states are cast as unitary actors wanting to at least survive, and are taken to be the system's constituent units."[176] However, in applying such a rigid definition of anarchy, Waltz has *a priori* assumptions, which are embedded in his notion of structure.

This has important implications, both in terms of theory and what questions are asked (or not asked). Particularly troubling is again the sharp contrast between the

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[171] Stephen Hobden. "Historical Sociology: back to the future of international relations?" in Hobden and Hobson pp. 42-59 p. 55.

[172] Kenneth N. Waltz. "Structural Realism after the Cold War" *International Security* Vol. 25 No. 1 (Summer 2000) pp. 5-41 p. 5.

[173] Waltz. "Structural Realism p.5

[174] Waltz. "Structural Realism p.8

[175] Waltz "Structural Realism" p.10

[176] Kenneth N. Waltz " The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory" *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* Vol. 18, Issue 4 (Spring 1988). pp. 615-628 p. 617-18.

domestic and international domains. For example, in his 1988 piece, Waltz notes that how "secure a country is depends on how it compares to others in the quantity and quality of its weaponry, the suitability of its strategy, the resilience of its society and economy, and the skill of its leaders."[177] The language and description indicates constant competition, aggression and fear of the "other"—definite characteristics of a Hobbesian ontology. In addition, given the fact that Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* came out with the onset of the Reagan inspired arms race, it seems ironic that the Soviets, under Gorbachev did precisely the opposite of what Waltz's theory would have predicted. As such neo-realism "took it for granted that the Soviet Union and the United States would remain in a bipolar world by virtue of their capabilities, regardless of any changes in domestic politics."[178] As Gorbachev allowed Eastern European states to determine, one by one, their own political fates, this transformed the relationship between the United States and the Soviet Union. Nothing had changed from within the "structure" of the international system: nuclear weapons arsenals, armies, tanks, nuclear subs etc. all remained a part of each other's "capabilities". What did change was the inter-subjective relationship between the two superpowers. Domestic economic problems also encouraged Gorbachev to pursue a different foreign policy that relied on a "substantially changed image of the adversary, a considerably narrower conception of the national interest, and a reconceptualization of security itself."[179] Clearly, the neo-realist description of anarchy did not hold because Gorbachev and the Soviet Union did not understand it that way, and because of that fact, the system changed. Waltz, of course, would again not characterise the events of 1989-1991 as a change *of* the system but *in*

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[177] Waltz "The Origins of War in Neorealist Theory" p. 627

[178] Rey Koslowski and Friedrich V. Kratochwil. "Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire's Demise and the International System" *International Organisation* Vol. 48 Issue 2 (Spring, 1994) pp. 215-247 p. 217.

[179] Koslowskil and Kratochwil. p.233

the system because international anarchy and the security dilemma still exist—only the units have been altered.

Realist Anarchy as Hobbesian Possessive Individualist Culture

Realist ontology, when seen through a constructivist lens, bears out Macpherson's argument domestically. The commodious, self-interested individual lives in a world that is solitary, nasty, brutish and short. Hobbes used his "state of nature" argument to justify the imposition of an absolute sovereign that all citizens would rationally agree amongst themselves to follow. Again, given the pivotal moments in Hobbes' life, it is not all that surprising that he saw the world this way. Many others also intersubjectively shared his worldview. Hence, in an international environment with no world or global Sovereign but only state gladiators, realists accept this view of anarchy and thus, according to this worldview, prescribe a response to this hostile environment.

Macpherson's model illustrates that this environment, like its domestic counterpart, is historically contingent and neither eternal, natural nor permanent. Unlike its domestic counterpart, realist anarchy looked eternal and immovable due to the lack of international institutions. Now that such institutions exist, the realist argument and ontology is weakened. This is because these institutions have changed the intersubjectively shared norms and values of states and between states. This is analogous to the changes in England from the time of Hobbes (i.e. the English Civil War) to the time of Locke (i.e. the Glorious Revolution). In the case of the latter, a limited constitutional monarchy combined with a protection of property and enhanced powers of Parliament, created a shift in intersubjectively held norms, values and beliefs about the role of the government and the need for the steady, iron fist of an absolute Sovereign. This optimism has carried the liberal tradition far both domestically and internationally

and yet its Lockean *possessive individualist* core remains intact. This optimism obscures the dual ontology of liberalism and thus liberalism's *possessive individualist* core.

Given the prominence of realism in the study of international politics, its assumptions and ontology need to studied and critiqued. Needless to say, within mainstream scholarship, liberals of various persuasions have attacked realism but leave out the cultural and historical context of which it is a part. Given the embedded nature of market relations inherent within domestic political theory, this is not altogether surprising. To understand international politics and how we conceptualise it, we must recognise this connection to domestic theory. Beginning with Hobbes, anarchy became reified (albeit with some justification given Hobbes' experiences), which helped create an inter-subjective identity for the "self" and the "other". In turn, this reification has been reinforced repeatedly over time making it appear both normal and natural.

Possessive Individualism and Lockean Anarchy: The Culture of International Rivalry

As noted in Chapter 2, the discussion about John Locke focused on his attacks on Hobbes' conception of human nature and the *state of nature.* By providing a more positive view of human nature, Locke was able to justify the set of social relations that came with constitutional monarchy. People's essential nature were posited generally good, cooperative and yet still competitive. From this basic premise, the brutal, but perhaps more honest, account of market society put forth by Hobbes was hidden by the rational, peaceful conception of human nature. Survival was replaced by rivalry and peaceful, non-lethal competition. This worldview has helped propel liberalism as a dominant global ideology. The earlier overview of Locke's model and its underlying assumptions is also crucial in understanding the ontology of international liberal theory. If there is to be one thing gleaned from that discussion, it is the fact that Locke was almost

entirely concerned with limiting the state and did not problematise the market or its effects on society. Given that there is no international "state" to contend with, and that market relations are largely unproblematic for liberals, this core *a priori* worldview posits markets as beneficial and positive. This is particularly relevant when examining how liberals theorise so-called international co-operation and how developing nations fit into its overall framework. Liberalism seems to depict developing nations as being either at an earlier stage of development than developed nations[180] who should logically adapt in order to compete, or they are largely peripheral to its theoretical concerns—much like the poor and propertyless in Locke's model.

Locke provides a vision of society that believed in the powers of reason and the possibility of peaceful co-existence with one's neighbours. This is derived from his theory of property relations and his belief it could be replicated. In essence, "Locke's political theory provides a justification for the global expansion of the civil society system, developed first in Europe (particularly Britain) resting on a money economy with the free circulation of commodities."[181] His theory "provides a justification for the prevalent form of western economic and political organization."[182] Thus, "property relations and representative government lie at the heart of international relations not least because representative governments are a dominating force in contemporary international politics and because in general they favour certain types of property relations."[183] This echoes and reinforces Macpherson's claim that "the liberal-democratic state, like any other, is a

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[180]   See W. W. Rostow *The stages of economic growth: a non-communist manifesto* 2nd Ed. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1971. While Rostow is quite orthodox in his typology, his basic assumptions remain at the core of the liberal tradition. *Reform liberals* do indeed argue for special allowances for developing nations. Models of development are still predicated upon competition and the primacy of market relations as the dominant form of social organisation. Thus, the acceptance of capitalism ensures inequality and hierarchy despite the attempts at reform.

[181] Howard Williams *International Relations and the Limits of Political Theory* London: MacMillan, 1996 p 91

[182] Williams p. 92

[183] Williams p. 92.

system of power... It, like any other state, exists to maintain a set of relations between individuals and groups within the society which are power relations."[184]

Locke's ideas about property relations and the need for representative government to protect it remain at the heart of international political theory. This is due to Locke's belief in the right of property as a basic human right through one's labour and effort. Just as "water running in the fountain be everyone's, yet who can doubt but that in the pitcher is his only who drew it out?"[185], Locke employs this idea to the colonization of the New World—North America in particular. For instance, this helped "limit claims to ownership by the native nomadic population and, on the other hand, provides a useful basis to the claims of the colonizers to the land they have cultivated."[186] This combined with the earlier discussion of money in justifying inequality within a civil society indicates that his social conception of property provided a justification for capitalist social relations, which Macpherson, in turn, has identified as *possessive individualist.*

Thus, if Locke's theory has provided an historical, intersubjective, cultural understanding domestically, which justified the export of this cultural vision of humanity through colonization and imperialism, then it is also logical and appropriate to contend that liberals will implicitly use this understanding in discussing and theorising international political matters such as security, trade, inequality, poverty, the environment etc. Three key liberal theorists that embody principles of this implicit cultural worldview are Francis Fukuyama, Robert Keohane, and Andrew Moravcsik. Each emphasises a different aspect or variant of liberalism; however, despite the differences in approach and subject matter, all three share basic *possessive individualist* assumptions. To begin, Francis Fukuyama can be perhaps best described as a key

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[184] Macpherson *The Real World of Democracy* p. 38

[185] John Locke *Two Treatises of Government* London: Dent, 1977 p. 118

[186] Williams p. 101.

promoter of liberal values and norms and an apologist for its benefits to individuals and societies. He argues that "the combination of liberal democracy and capitalism has proved superior to any alternative political/economic system, and the reason lies in its ability to satisfy the basic drives in human nature."[187] This basic premise, developed further in his controversial book *The End of History and the Last Man,* posits that the fall of communism has shown that liberal capitalism is the most ideal, modern and advanced model for civilization developed thus far. As such, the pockets of resistance to its inevitable march are on the wrong side of history.

While much has made of his "end of history" sound bite—some of it over played by his critics, what is clear is his unabashed belief in Lockean liberalism's inherent superiority. For example, in the wake of the World Trade Centre attacks, many have questioned the validity of his "end of history" thesis. In an article written shortly after the attacks, Fukuyama noted:

> If we looked beyond liberal democracy and markets, there was nothing else towards which we could expect to evolve; hence the end of history. While there were retrograde areas that resisted that process, it was hard to find a viable alternative civilisation that people actually wanted to live in after the discrediting of socialism, monarchy, fascism and other types of authoritarianism... believe that in the end I remain right: modernity is a very powerful freight train that will not be derailed by recent events, however painful. Democracy and free markets will continue to expand as the dominant organising principles for much of the world.[188]

What is fascinating about his position is how culturally specific his worldview appears to be. He explicitly links capitalist free markets to democratic governance and thus obscures Macpherson's insight that liberal democracy is a "system of power,"[189] which entrenches inequality. Advocates of globalisation are often quick "to identify democracy

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[187] Martin Griffiths. *Fifty Key Thinkers in International Relations* London: Routledge, 1999 p.69

[188]   Francis. Fukuyama "The west has won. Radical Islam can't beat democracy and capitalism. We're still at the end of history" *Guardian* http://www.guardian.co.uk/waronterror/story/0,1361,567333,00.html Thursday, Oct. 11, 2001.

[189] Macpherson *Real World of Democracy* p.38

with free markets. There is, of course, very little historical justification for this identification. It derives almost exclusively from the coincidence of liberal parliamentary constitutionalism in Britain with the industrial revolution and the growth of a market economy."[190] Thus, perhaps obscuring is not even the right term as he freely acknowledges that equality does not refer to one of "economic station: Lockean principles of property have been widely accepted, and therefore Americans have accepted a fair degree of economic inequality throughout their history. The 'passion' for equality refers, above all, to a passion for equal recognition, that is, an equality of respect and dignity."[191] Given the fact that for two-thirds of its history, most Americans were disenfranchised (i.e. slavery, property, race, gender), it is highly disingenuous to assert that they have accepted their oppression so "passionately". Furthermore, the idea of "recognition", which is a key component of his overall model, neglects the fact that fundamental equality, respect and dignity cannot occur without a society attempting to ameliorate material inequality amongst its citizens.

Fukuyama succeeds in bifurcating the political and the economic systems of power within liberalism and yet links them as part of an ultimate well-functioning model of society; however, he is not original in doing so. His approach has clear connections to Locke's conceptions of history and society: both are ahistorical and serve the interests of the ruling class. For example, Fukuyama's omission of the fundamental lack of consent (and thus legitimacy) mirrors Locke's model in *Two Treatises*. Locke too missed the crucial importance of true consent within his system of government in that "lawful government is fixed on all men whether or not they have property in terms of estate, and

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[190]   Robert W. Cox "Global Perestroika" in *The Theoretical Evolution of International Political Economy: A Reader* 2nd Edition Eds. George T. Crane and Abla Amawi New York: Oxford Up, 1997. pp. 158-172. p. 163.

[191]   Francis Fukuyama. "Reflection on the End of History, Five Years Later" *History and Theory* Volume 34 Issue 2 Theme Issue 34: World Historians and Their Critics (May 1995, pp.27-43. p. 40.

indeed whether or not they have made an express compact... and it appears that the result of Locke's work was to provide a moral basis for a class state from postulates of equal individual natural rights."[192] Locke thus recognised that there are inherent differences in people, and that by accident of birth or by gifts of nature, there would be differences in the levels of material and social benefits amongst individuals. And to Locke, these differences often were due less to luck than to the character of individuals. For instance, he "advocated the harsh treatment of able-bodied unemployed in workhouses, because their unemployment was due to their moral depravity"[193] and so he did not view them as "full members of the body politic and had no claim to be so" and did not live a "fully rational life."[194]

The idea of rationality in relation to a proper functioning society and in the character of individual states themselves is mirrored in Fukuyama's claim about the inherent superior nature of liberalism. For example, he argues:

> Western institutions are like the scientific method, which, though discovered in the West, has universal applicability. There is an underlying historical mechanism that encourages a long-term convergence across cultural boundaries, first and most powerfully in economics, then in the realm of politics and finally (and most distantly) in culture. What drives this process forward in the first instance is modern science and technology, whose ability to create material wealth and weapons of war is so great that virtually all societies must come to terms with it. The technology of semiconductors or biomedicine is not different for Muslims or Chinese than it is for Westerners, and the need to master it necessitates the adoption of certain economic institutions, like free markets and the role of law, that promote growth. Modern technology-driven market economies thrive on individual freedom-that is, a system where individuals rather than governments or priests make decisions on prices or rates of interest.[195]

Thus, Western culture is an integral part of modernity, is rooted within science and the pursuit of knowledge itself. States must adapt to Western technology, and must

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[192] Macpherson *Possessive Theory* p. 249-50

[193] Townshend, *Problem of Liberal Democracy* p. 64.

[194] Macpherson *Political Theory* p. 221.

[195] Francis Fukuyama "Their Target: The Modern World" *Newsweek* Vol. 138 Issue 25, 12/17/2001 pg.42-48.

reproduce its social and political structures in order to compete. Those who do not or cannot compete (e.g. native societies in the New World, the modern Third World, the former Soviet Bloc) are relegated to the dustbin of history. Particularly revealing is how Fukuyama attempts to analyse the cultural variables within Islam, which would explain or account for its resistance to liberal modernity. He rejects looking at the economic or political context of Islamic fundamentalism and instead, describes it as an irrational, pathological response to the myriad of benefits available under liberalism. This illustrates that Fukuyama's outlook is largely ahistorical, and is culturally bound because he neglects so much relevant historical data by portraying economic inequality as natural, normal and unproblematic. Moreover, despite his liberal values of political equality, respect, and belonging, his worldview entrenches hierarchy and competition in much the same way realists do. The main difference is how this competitive culture is underneath the polite, liberal veneer of freedom and equality.

Keohane and the Cultural Worldview of Complex Interdependence

This veneer is one of the major sources of criticism levelled at liberals from both realists and Marxists because it demonstrates a lack of focus on power—either by states or other non-state actors. It is not that liberals do not recognise power or non-state actors as important. In fact, they have stressed the importance of such actors. What liberals seem to have is an optimistic view of how these actors use power because they have an *a priori* belief in positive-sum outcomes in the marketplace. For example, in terms of North-South relations, liberals "simply assume that open economic policies will improve LDC opportunities, without considering the political and power relationships between North and South...[but] critics argue, North-South relationships are highly

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asymmetrical, with LDC's far more dependent."[196] Within this debate, Robert Keohane

has tirelessly promoted, throughout his writings in IPE, the need to study the effects of

international regimes, their potential positive-sum benefits, and the rise of "complex

interdependence." His research agenda gained wider acceptance due to the decline of

relative American economic power, which occurred in part because its allies in Europe

and Japan caught up from their war devastated lows. Nonetheless, the debate over a

changing political landscape helped to "motivate research programs in hegemonic

stability theory, regime theory and the role of institutions, and the link between domestic

politics and foreign economic policies."[197]

Regimes can be defined as "sets of implicit or explicit principles, norms, rules,

and decision-making procedures around which actors' expectations converge in a given

area of international relations."[198] A crucial element in this definition is who sets what

these rules, norms and values are. For Keohane, although there are "asymmetries in

dependence that are most likely to provide sources of influence for actors in their

dealings with one another,"[199] he and partner Joseph Nye have a rather "benign view of

the effects of asymmetrical interdependence on smaller states. Indeed, they argue that

interdependent relationships increase the opportunities for bargaining and permit smaller

states to achieve their objectives."[200] This is evident in Keohane's defence of how

multilateral institutions function within the international system. For example, he notes,

"great powers such as the United States exercise enormous influence within

international institutions. But the policies that emerge from these institutions are different

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[196] Theodore H. Cohn *Global political economy: theory and practice* New York: Longman, 2000 p. 100.

[197]   Michael Mastanduno "Economics and Security in Statecraft and Scholarship" *International Organisation* 52, 4 Autumn 1998, pp. 825-854 p. 838.

[198]   Stephen Krasner. "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables" in *International Regimes* Ed. Stephen Krasner Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1983 p.2

[199] Keohane and Nye *Power and Interdependence* p. 9.

[200] Cohn p.89

from those that the United States would have adopted unilaterally."[201] By creating these institutions, their very structure begin to create "social" relationships between states that can slowly transform their interests and interactions; however, the values that go into these institutions, and their overall mandate in the first place, will shape and structure subsequent interaction. If the argument is that we are better off with a multilateral approach to international decision-making and problem solving rather than simple unilateralism, it is obvious that regimes have value; the argument, however, is not that simple or straightforward.

To this end, Keohane and Nye completed detailed case studies of Canada-U.S. relations, Australia-U.S. relations as well as the regimes relating to oceans and monetary governance in order to test and illustrate their theoretical model. They qualified the nature of the respective case studies in that they were not be construed as "a definitive treatment of the effects of complex interdependence on bilateral relations."[202] Their first edition of *Power and Interdependence* debuted in 1977, the second in 1989, and the latest in 2001. What is striking about their research programme is their confidence in it, and how little they believe it needs to change in light of developments over the past twenty-five years. They claim, "anonymous referees polled by our publisher have told us that out basic argument remains relevant... [and] our analytical framework is, we believe, enhanced by the continuing significance of the two main sets of forces that we tried to understand in 1977: rapid technological change and the continuing importance of state interests in shaping the global political economy."[203] Given the OPEC crisis, the New Economic Order (NIEO) and its collapse, the 1980's Debt Crisis, structural adjustment programmes by the IMF and the World Bank, and the

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[201]   Robert O. Keohane "International Institutions: Can Interdependence Work?" *Foreign Policy* No. 110 Spring 1998 pp. 82-96. p.88.

[202] Keohane and Nye p. 189.

collapse of the Soviet Union, it seems incredible to claim that their text needs few revisions or updates. Even more remarkable is their admission, in the first edition, that their case studies were preliminary and not representative. How strange that Canada-U.S. relations have not been studied further given the fundamental shift in the two nations' relationship due to the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA. Furthermore, there is little mention of the widening gulf between the developed and developing world as well as between citizens other than to say its "causation is difficult to pinpoint since several changes have been occurring at the same time. Part of the cause is Schumpeter's 'creative destruction' as technology has been substituted for labour as part of the information revolution."[204]

Complex Interdependence and Liberal Exclusionism: The Third World as Afterthought

Their description of "causation" is an illustration of liberalism's ability to obscure and blot out its own internal contradictions. By not re-examining their case studies in light of twenty-five years of historical developments or their model's applicability to states more dependent and less culturally similar, Keohane and Nye do a disservice to scholarship and to the pursuit of knowledge. Given Keohane's penchant for a positivist social science, through the replication of data and falsification, it seems hypocritical to claim that their model continues to be valid and have explanatory value. From a different vantage point, however, their model functions to maintain the "limits of the possible" and the "prevailing socio-economic system and set of power relations."[205] That they exclude the study of the Third World—which contains over two-thirds of the world's population—indicates that what we study is always situated within a social, political and economic

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[203] Keohane and Nye xvi

[204] Keohane and Nye p.255

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context. Thus, there is no "objective study", and the separation of the scholar and object is a convenient fiction as "theory is always for someone and for some purpose."[206]

In terms of the liberal tradition, Keohane's oversight is consistent with Locke's exclusion of those who were extraneous to his argument. In this case, the exclusion is due to a lack of understanding of the developing nations' role in the international system and the deeply embedded cultural assumptions based upon the "prototypical European or North American state... and the tradition of taking states and their underlying communities for granted."[207] In essence, developing nations are unproblematic because they are viewed with cultural blinders. Thus, Keohane, like Kenneth Waltz, sees states as similar units although he recognizes their complexity and permeability. In doing so, he reinforces the cultural logic of anarchy when in fact, "'hierarchy is a concept that better describes the structure of the interstate system than 'anarchy.'"[208] The most intriguing part of this observation is the fact that Keohane does not recognise this hierarchy but rather, sees legally equal states that have varying degrees of success both politically and economically. This again mirrors the contradiction in Locke's assumption of fundamental equality on the one hand, and the belief that "some—the men of property— were more rational than others—the men without property. The propertyless were less rational because of their economic position resulting from the free alienation of their labour."[209] Moreover, due to their lack of rationality, it required the "discipline of supernatural sanctions as well as legal ones,"[210] and Locke's contradictory notions were

[205] Stephen Gill. "Epistemology, ontology and the 'Italian School'" in Ed. Stephen Gill p. 24.

[206] Cox "Social Forces" p. 128

[207] K.J. Holsti "International Relations Theory and Domestic War in the Third World: The Limits of Relevance" in *International Relations and the Third World* ed. Stephanie Newman New York: St. Martin's, 1998 pp. 103-132. p. 109

[208] Carlos. Escudé "An Introduction to Peripheral Realism and Its Implications for the Interstate System: Argentina and the Condor II Missile Project" in Newman pp. 55-75 p. 65.

[209] Townshend *Problem of Liberal Democracy* p. 65.

[210] Townshend *Problem of Liberal Democracy* p.65.

due to "an emerging bourgeois society which demanded formal equality but required substantive inequality of rights."[211] This contradiction is noted in states' formal international legal equality and yet exposing poor states, through structural adjustment, to "global economic competition, aiming to make them efficient capitalist economies"[212] that seldom is successful and only furthers poverty and inequality.

The problem with Keohane's basic *ontology* of international politics is his affinity with realism itself. Keohane's model shares important *a priori* methodological assumptions with realism. He argues that realism is a "necessary component in a coherent analysis of world politics because its focus on power, interests, and rationality, is crucial to any understanding of the subject."[213] The main objection or criticism may be summarised by describing realism as "particularly weak in accounting for change, especially where the sources of change lie in the world political economy or domestic structures of states."[214] Keohane still congratulates Waltz for providing an elegant, parsimonious model that can conform to standard social science practice of providing various testable hypotheses. This empirical characterization of realism does not address deeply held culturally based assumptions about the role of individuals, society and the economy. For example, he states that "power becomes like money in economics: 'in many respects, power and influence play the same role in international politics as money does in a market economy'."[215] By comparing power to money, it evokes the implicit power relations between those who have money and those who do not. This image is evoked because Keohane is accessing an ideological position he both implicitly and

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[211] Macpherson *Political Theory* p.247.

[212]   Oswaldo de Rivero *The Myth of Development: Non-Viable Economies of the 21st Century* Halifax: Fernwood, 2001 p. 90.

[213]   Robert O. Keohane "Theory of World Politics: Structural Realism and Beyond" in *Neorealism and its Critics* ed. John Gerard Ruggie New York: Columbia UP, 1986. pp. 158-203 p. 159.

[214] Keohane "Theory of World Politics: p. 159

explicitly accepts. Macpherson had argued that describing society in these terms allows money to define interests in terms of who can best afford to pay for them. Thus, those states with more fungible power will determine the beliefs, values and subsequent actions that scholars objectively study through their parsimonious, empirical models. International anarchy is understood in terms of insecurity, rivalry and competition because the basic ontology of domestic society and individuals has not been questioned or examined. Until it is, any notion of international co-operation will continue to be defined by the most powerful states with the most wealth and resources rather than using that power and those resources to help those disadvantaged states.

Moravcsik and the Goal of a Purely Empirical Liberal Empirical Model

Implicit within the liberal worldview of Fukuyama and Keohane is the inherent benefit of liberal institutions, norms and values. Andrew Moravcsik, the third liberal theorist under discussion, does not reject this basic premise but attempts to divorce *any* normative aspects in devising a liberal theory of international politics. In a key article *Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics,* he contends that liberal insights such as "state society relations—the relationship of states to the domestic and transnational social context in which they are embedded—have a fundamental impact on state behaviour in world politics."[216] At issue is his belief that liberal theory is a strong and appropriate alternative to realism and institutionalism. In essence, Moravcsik contends that Keohane and other neoliberals have given far too much away to the supposed strengths of realism. Its lack of paradigmatic status has "permitted its critics to

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[215] Keohane "Theory of World Politics: p. 167 and quoting Arnold Wolfers *Discord and Collaboration: Essays on International Politics* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 1962 p. 105.

[216] Andrew Moravcsik "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics" *International Organization* 51, 4 Autumn 1997, pp. 513-553 p. 513.

caricature liberal theory as a normative, even utopian ideology."[217] He thus seeks to "move beyond this unsatisfactory position by proposing a set of core assumptions on a general restatement of positive IR theory can be grounded."[218]

Moravcsik then proposes three core assumptions of Liberal IR theory—the primacy of state actors, states represent domestic interests, and the configuration of interdependent state preferences determines state behaviour.[219] Taken together, these assumptions "imply that states do not automatically maximize fixed, homogeneous conceptions of security, sovereignty, or wealth per se, as realists and institutionalists tend to assume."[220] He seems to suggest that domestic politics plays a larger role than other IR approaches suggest. International behaviour is affected and mediated by domestic concerns. His third assumption of policy interdependence comes into play and is defined as the "set of cost and benefits created for foreign societies when dominant social groups in a society seek to realize *their* preferences."[221] This, in turn, affects what states do as they seek to fulfil goals of their domestic constituency and is set against the wishes of other states' domestic constituencies. Compromise is essential and the degree of compromise for a specific issue is dependent upon the relative size of the countries involved, the issue itself, and the domestic factors within those states.

This interstate, or as Moravcsik says *transnational,* relationship is a two-level analytical approach that does not neatly separate domestic and international politics. Thus, the "expected behaviour of any single state—the strategies it selects and the systematic constraints to which it adjusts—reflect not simply its own preferences, but the

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[217] Moravcsik "Taking Preferences Seriously" p. 514
[218] Moravcsik "Taking Preferences Seriously" p. 515.
[219] Moravcsik "Taking Preferences Seriously" p. 515-520
[220] Moravcsik "Taking Preferences Seriously" p. 519.
[221] Moravcsik "Taking Preferences Seriously" p. 520 emphasis added

configuration of *all* states.[222] By doing so, his model of international politics seems to suggest that international politics, and the conception of anarchy have a much more open-ended structure than realist scholars contend. For instance, realists assume that power is the balance of states' capabilities. Moravcsik argues that external capabilities (i.e. international) can be due to *very* strong examples of domestic preference. He cites the examples "Hitler's remilitarization of the Rhineland, Vietnam, Afghanistan and Chechnya. In each case the relative intensity of state preferences reshaped the outcome to the advantage of the 'weak'."[223]

Moravcsik's Approach: Realist-Liberal Synthesis or Liberal Takeover?

Moravcsik's powerful restatement of Liberal IR theory has not stopped with the above article. He has since taken aim at how many realist scholars are employing mid-range theories that encompass many principal insights from the liberal perspective. He argues that recent realist work has served to "deepen and broaden the proven explanatory power and scope of the liberal, epistemic and institutionalist paradigms."[224] He and co-author Jeffrey Legro propose three core assumptions of realism—rational unitary political units in anarchy; state preferences are fixed and in conflict; primacy of material capabilities[225]—just as Moravcsik did in describing the core assumptions of liberalism. What is interesting about this distillation is their claim that few realists actually follow these basic assumptions, but implicitly use concepts and assumptions from liberal scholarship. Without summarising the entire article, Moravcsik and Legro compare recent realist scholarship to the liberal domestic preferences literature, to epistemic

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[222] Moravcsik "Taking Preferences Seriously" p.523.

[223] Moravcsik "Taking Preferences Seriously" p.524

[224] Jeffrey Legro and Andrew Moravcsik "Is Anybody Still A Realist?" *International Security* Vol. 24, No. 2 (Fall 1999), pp. 5-55 p. 7.

[225] Legro and Moravcsik p.12-16

community literature, or to institutions."[226] At the end of this scholarly tour, the authors emphasize that the works cited provide "innovative and valuable contributions to scholarly understanding of world politics... They belong among the most fruitful advances in recent international relations scholarship."[227] At issue for them is a better empirical IR scholarly enterprise. Moravcsik and Legro are attempting to synthesise both liberal and realist perspectives in order to provide better models, theories and hypotheses upon which to study the complex world of international politics. They contend that the central issue is " the distribution of material resources, the distribution of preferences, the distribution of beliefs, and the distribution of information... [and] correspond to the four major categories of modern rationalist international relations theory, namely realist, liberal, epistemic and institutionalist theories."[228]

This brief survey of Moravcsik's work thus far indicates he clearly wants to delineate an empirical model and theory of international politics that provides parsimonious insights into the actions of states. This is evident in other works such as his critique of constructivist literature pertaining to the European Union where he questions the ultimate value of the constructivists' work in noting they "have contributed far less to our empirical and theoretical understanding of European integration than their meta-theoretical assertions might suggest—certainly far less than existing alternatives."[229] He also has issues with critics of the European Union's so-called democratic deficit. His clashes with realist and constructivist scholars have more to do with social science theorising than the ultimate prescriptions they may put forth. In attempting to acknowledge the realist-liberal synthesis that is taking place, he is also

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[226] Legro and Moravcsik see p. 25-33, 34-39, 41-43 respectively.

[227] Legro and Moravcsik p. 45

[228] Legro and Moravcsik p. 46

[229] Andrew Moravcsik "Is Something Rotten in the State of Denmark: Constructivism and European Integration" *Journal of European Public Policy* 6:4 Special Issue 1999 pp 669-681 p. 670

claiming that what is observable has to be understood and theorised through an empirical model.

Moravcsik's empiricism in the name of objectivity and lack of normative bias has important implications. In another article discussing the democratic deficit in the EU, this approach is evident. He describes critics of the EU as overly critical and idealistic. He observes that the critiques are drawn from comparisons to "ancient, Westminster-style, or frankly utopian form of deliberative democracy. While perhaps useful for philosophical purposes, the use of idealistic standards no modern government can meet obscures... the real-world practices of existing governments."[230] To be fair, he does note how limited the functions of the EU bureaucracy, and EU parliament are in many respects. The *way* he presents his argument is the most revealing. His objections to various critiques are that they are overly normative and neglect the simple fact that the EU specialized in "those functions of modern democratic governance that tend to involve less direct political participation."[231] He seems to define democracy simply as institutional mechanisms that channel various preferences. Given that power still resides largely at the national level, he does not see EU governance as all that problematic. This is illustrated in his account of areas that the EU does wield significant influence—he argues that bureaucratisation is balanced by "direct accountability via the EP [European Parliament] and indirect accountability via elected national officials."[232] This argument is very similar to those who support multilateral institutions. They are legitimate because state representatives and/or appointees have democratic mandates and thus, indirectly at least, have the tacit support of their respective populations. Moravcsik, given his stated goals of providing a meaningful context for domestic politics in international state

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[230] Andrew Moravcsik "In Defence of the 'Democratic Deficit': Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union" *Journal of Common Market Studies* Vol. 40 No. 4 pp. 603-24 p. 605.

[231] Moravcsik "In Defence of the 'Democratic Deficit'" p. 606

behaviour, should be well aware of how often ill informed much of the public is regarding the often esoteric and arcane nature of EU or other multilateral negotiations. This lack of information often gives governments a veritable "blank cheque" to conclude agreements even when this may have little to do with stated objectives at election time.

This attempt at academic objectivity and neutrality is clearly evident in a 2003 IR roundtable sponsored by the *International Studies Association*. Its purpose was to elicit responses to address inter-paradigmatic and inter-epistemic issues and concerns. Out of the many issues and back and forth debate that came with this dialogue, two main issues stand out, which indicate Moravcsik's core academic "value-set" and help shape his academic theorising and illustrate the implications of these values. The first is his definition of social science as a positivist, rational and empirical exercise; the second is that social science seeks to find cause and effect relationships—not to "directly interrogate our deepest moral intuitions and ideals about politics… it does not explore the basic epistemological or metaphysical bases of our apprehension of reality."[233] The first point is fairly straightforward. His piece outlines his empiricist argument, which is quite similar to previous articles discussed earlier. In this case, however, it is in even a more blunt and frank form. He recounts the synthesis that has occurred between liberals and realists by setting out models, assumptions, and theories and then testing them. For him, this is a very uncomplicated process. Basically, one observes the world, makes hypotheses based upon observation, and then tests to see the results. He takes resistance to, or rejection of this process, as accepting theoretical pluralism "for its own sake."[234]

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[232] Moravcsik "In Defence of the 'Democratic Deficit'" p. 611

[233]   Andrew Moravcsik "Theory Synthesis in International Relations: Real Not Metaphysical" *International Studies Review* Vol. 5 March 2003 Forum entitled "Are Dialogue and Synthesis Possible in International Relations" p. 133

[234] Andrew Moravcsik "Theory Synthesis in International Relations" p. 131

This so-called resistance came from just about everyone else participating in the forum. The three most outspoken were Friedrich Kratochwil, Yosef Lapid, and Steve Smith. Kratochwil notes that Moravcsik's position regarding empiricism is "hardly tenable anymore[235] because "we cannot test our ideas against reality as all our questions to nature are already phrased in a theory (or language); we test only theories against other theories."[236] Another point he makes is the scientific enterprise is very complicated because "honesty is required and plays a decisive role when a scientist has to decide to abandon his [sic] tenaciously held beliefs...[237]" Steve Smith echoes these concerns in that dialogue and synthesis "assumes either a common set of methodological and epistemological assumptions or assumptions that are, at the very least, not mutually exclusive."[238] The argument is not whether there are standards but that "the standards for assessing work within any one approach must be the standards of *that* research tradition."[239] Lapid criticizes Moravcsik for failing to make "even a single reference to dialogue... in Moravcsik's wholesale repudiation of metatheory-driven (as opposed to problem-driven and theory-driven) scholarship... [and] his spirited effort to sharply differentiate scientific and non-scientific discourses."[240]

The claim about a value-free, problem solving social science was a huge point of contention. Kratochwil is concerned that Moravcsik's conception of social science could prove "useful for propagating schools and reproducing them... As teachers, it is our duty

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[235]   Friedrich Kratochwil "The Monologue of Science" *International Studies Review* Vol. 5 March 2003 Forum entitled "Are Dialogue and Synthesis Possible in International Relations" p. 124

[236] Kratochwil "The Monologue of Science" p. 124

[237] Kratochwil "The Monologue of Science" p. 125

[238]   Steve Smith "Dialogue and the Reinforcement of Orthodoxy in International Relations" *International Studies Review* Vol. 5 March 2003 Forum entitled "Are Dialogue and Synthesis Possible in International Relations" p. 142.

[239] Smith "Dialogue and the Reinforcement of Orthodoxy" p. 143.

[240]   Josef Lapid "Through Dialogue to Engaged Pluralism" The Unfinished Business of the Third Debate" *International Studies Review* Vol. 5 March 2003 Forum entitled "Are Dialogue and Synthesis Possible in International Relations" p. 130.

to educate students by encouraging self-reliance, stimulating imagination (even if it needs to be disciplined), and instilling in them a critical attitude toward orthodoxies instead of simply training the aspiring young people like Pavlovian dogs to salivate at the master's voice."[241] He does not want orthodox gatekeepers who use his or her "position as an evaluator of departments to prevent unorthodox scholars from being appointed... This type of professionalism has taken its toll on the field.[242] Moravcsik presents an impressive array of scholars to illustrate his contention that U.S. *professional* academia is broadly based. Smith argues that his entire list shares his social science approach. The danger in doing so is that defining work as "relevant for activities of the state... is a powerful disciplining force."[243] This is crucial because objectivity is but a hidden discourse to implicitly serve the existing set of power relations. In other words, for one to accept Moravcsik's challenge one would have to agree, "academic work reports on the world and does not of necessity have to take normative positions about it."[244]

Taken together, his desire to provide more unity and/or synthesis within IR theory—especially between realism and liberalism—evokes at least three previous discussions about the role of theory and the scholar as agent. First, his belief that realism can be subsumed or integrated under a broader Liberal IR theory is contextually related to the last fifteen years of the Cold War era. Mastanduno makes the argument that multipolar world politics "creates incentives for integration—great powers tend to be economic interdependent... [and] that scholarship responds to the particular features of the international environment, and the resulting patterns become institutionalised in academic life."[245] He again recounts various "cycles" of scholarship that oscillate from

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[241] Kratochwil "The Monologue of Science" p. 127.

[242] Kratochwil "The Monologue of Science" p. 127-128

[243] Smith "Dialogue and the Reinforcement of Orthodoxy" p. 142.

[244] Smith "Dialogue and the Reinforcement of Orthodoxy" p. 142.

[245] Mastanduno p. 827, 829.

security studies to economics and back again. Cold War thinking is clearly absent from Moravcsik's writing as he argues that domestic political factors played a key role in the Soviet Union's disintegration and thus the domestic-international nexus needs to be studied much more closely. Second, his desire to synthesize realism and liberalism reinforces Biersteker's contention that both are from the same ideological tradition (i.e. capitalism) and Moravcsik affirms it by seeing much common ground between realism and liberalism. The third, and most important, is Moravcsik's approach and his positivism supports Macpherson's critical approach towards mainstream scholarship. Macpherson was very sceptical of positivism and strongly believed that scholars had an important function in either legitimating or critiquing existing power relationships within society. Moravcsik sees the study of politics as largely unproblematic, apart from methodological obstacles, because he implicitly accepts society as it is—one structured along *possessive individualist* lines.

Liberalism as Lockean Possessive Individualist Culture

The three liberal scholars discussed here share important similarities. Fukuyama is the most normative and outspoken apologist for liberalism. He views capitalism and democracy as teleologically beneficial to those who adopt and accept its ethos. Inequality is but a temporary condition and is necessary to maintain capitalism's dynamism and constant innovation. Keohane, in a much more subtle way, also accepts this positive description. While acknowledging that power affects outcomes, he also believes that positive-sum gains are possible much more frequently than realists contend. His work on regimes and international institutions leads him to contend that such structures can mediate the effects of anarchy and lack of information between states. Moravcsik, of the three, perhaps is the strongest proponent of liberalism because he clearly states his assumptions about social relationships, the state and capitalism in a

non-ideological and non-normative way. By appealing to a positive social science that is out to observe and study the world, he embeds capitalist social relations in his research. Particularly striking is his contention that social science is not the study of morality and ethics because it is different from "symbolic art, philosophy, rhetoric, journalism and historical description."[246] Hence, his role is to study politics as a natural scientist would study natural phenomena.

The purpose of this project could not be any more different. To claim that one is non-normative implicitly and logically accepts existing power relations as given. Moravcsik notes that discussions about "causal theory and the empirical record of world politics"[247] need to be justified and I could not agree more. Integrating one's research with core ontological, epistemological, and sociology of knowledge questions, helps give a clearer and more nuanced picture of society and its politics by placing one's scholarship and one's societal function in historical perspective. Not doing so allows the beliefs, values, and practices of liberalism as typified by Fukuyama, Keohane, and Moravcsik to dominate political and ideological "thinking space." The purpose of this project was to link this discourse to the embedded nature of market relations within the liberal tradition. Moreover, while liberals would agree with possible domestic sources of international politics, they do not link the core societal beliefs, so epitomised by the ontology of Locke and other prominent thinkers of the liberal canon, to the international system. Thus, just as in the case of realism, this link must be made explicit in order to see the reification of global hierarchy, a hierarchy so prevalent domestically.

Given realism's penchant for describing and theorising international politics in terms of conflict, mistrust and insecurity, liberalism's focus on co-operation, non-state actors, and institutions makes it well suited to replace much of realism's pessimism. To

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[246] Moravcsik "Theory Synthesis in International Relations" p. 133.

some extent, the advent of regional and multilateral institutions have provided better information gathering and sharing between states, which has allowed for greater inter-state understanding and the reduction of severe conflicts. Despite this positive development, liberalism does not seriously address the historical origins and progression of domestic politics. Its attempts to alter the dynamics of international politics will ultimately prove futile if the possessive individualist ethos remains. Thus, on the surface, the realist-liberal debate would seem to suggest significant differences in their respective ontologies; however, despite the apparent differences, both approaches share many important assumptions about the state, the market and the individual. There even seems to be greater agreement amongst realist and liberals themselves on this point.

Macpherson proves instructive in suggesting why this agreement can take place. His nodal concept of *possessive individualism* links the liberal view of international politics to a competitive individualist understanding of the international system consisting of legally equal states mediated through an acceptance of capitalist market relations. Thus, liberal notions of co-operation and interdependence entail conforming to capitalist market practices such as free trade, economic competitiveness and comparative advantage, which inevitably result in winners and losers. Therefore, liberal prescriptions and practices—not unlike realist ones—constitute a culture. Thus, despite the liberal criticisms heaped upon realism for its static and reified conception of anarchy, liberalism itself entrenches its own version of anarchy through interstate rivalry, competitiveness and hierarchy through trade and commerce, and a through a discourse of co-operation, interdependence and equality.

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[247] Moravcsik "Theory Synthesis in International Relations" p. 133

Chapter 5
Sketching Out A Neo-Macphersonian Research Programme

All roads lead to property—C.B. Macpherson[248]

This project has attempted to re-examine C.B. Macpherson's contribution to political theory and political science, and connect this re-examination to international political theory. His main contribution is in his systematic study of liberalism. In theory, practice, and as a worldview, liberalism has become globally hegemonic. He achieved a theoretical penetration of this worldview through immanent critique using insights from Marx's notion of *surplus value* (most notably in his latter work) to include the entire ensemble of social relations. He wanted to retrieve the best aspects of liberalism by extricating it from the inherent inequality of capitalism. This attempt was not well received by either liberals or Marxists (among others). In essence, he was examining the ideology that drove the engine of modernity.

An Overview of Macpherson's Contribution to International Political Theory

The broad implications of his project allows for an examination of international political theory. The working hypothesis of this project has been that the ontology of domestic liberalism is evident and an inherent component of international political theory including its key concepts of anarchy, survival, co-operation, rivalry, and self-interest. These are tied to domestic understandings of individuals living within society and of human nature itself. These *a priori* assumptions drive theoretical understandings of international politics and help to reify the very subject under study. This observation is, in and of itself, not revolutionary. Other critical perspectives have commented on the self-referential nature of mainstream scholarship. His model, however, avoids a descent into post-modern epistemology, and thus makes his model potentially more accessible to a

wider audience. This project has therefore attempted to extend his model through an examination of international political theoretical discourse and linking his model to the constructivist turn in IR/IPE. Embarking on such an endeavour is ambitious and daunting. Obviously, the project only begins the task of such an enterprise since its purpose was to first establish the relevance of his model to the study of international politics. The potential scope and breadth is, however, significant.

Macphersonian IR/IPE: Some Introductory Notions, Intuitions and Comments

The first component of such a research programme is to develop key concepts and definitions that will provide a clear and direct method of employing this model. Any such development must include a conscious normative component and the belief that a claim to objectivity is itself another form of normative commitment. Continuing the integration and connection to constructivism will help in this regard due its focus on rules, norms, practices, identities etc., and the fact that constructivism has a ready made set of methodological tools and vocabulary that provide for immediate dialogue.

Possessive Individualist Identity
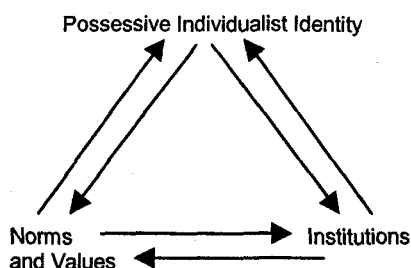
Norms → Institutions
and Values ←

Figure 1 The Intersubjective Nature of Possessive Individualism

As noted in Figure 1 above, Macpherson's model is an intersubjective one: the *possessive individualist* identity creates norms and values which infuse the function and structure of institutions. Institutions, in turn, create material structures, which reproduce and maintain these norms and values as well as the *possessive individualist identity* of individuals. Like the neo-Gramscian approach, this model emphasises the importance of

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[248] Macpherson "A Political Theory of Property" p. 121

ideas that sustain a system of power relations—or *hegemony*. The main difference is the broader focus and recognition on how these ideas have developed *historically* and how they fit into the hegemonic discourse to make them appear normal and natural.

	Hobbesian State of Nature	Lockean State of Nature
Domestic	- War of Each Against All - Life Nasty Brutish & Short	- Rational cooperation - Competition and Rivalry
International	**Realist Anarchy** - Perpetual Insecurity - Survival - Need for Balancing - Negative Sum Interactions	**Liberal Anarchy** - Regimes - International Institutions - Complex Interdependence - Positive Sum Interactions

Figure 2 Liberalism's Domestic Analogy Within International Political Theory

When applied internationally, Macpherson again proves instructive. An international model, in the way I am conceptualising it, has two main areas of focus: one is the ideational and ideological character of *possessive individualism* inherent within international political theory; the second is the effect of this worldview on state behaviour, the structure of international organisations, institutions, and their impact on economics and trade. In Figure 2, the diagram illustrates the intersubjective world inherent within the two dominant ontological streams of liberal capitalism, which create identities that entrench *possessive individualist* behaviours domestically. Since this is the ontology that international political theorists draw from (as demonstrated in Chapter 4), it seems logical that their models would posit state behaviour in similar *possessive individualist* terms and produce similar outcomes of inequality, hierarchy and competition. Models of development, when defined and understood under this worldview, also produce similar outcomes but also environmental degradation and global overconsumption. These stem from liberalism's core assumption that individuals possess an almost infinite range of desires that necessitates ongoing, continuous consumption as capitalism "requires the consumption of nature."[249]

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[249]   Yosef Gotlieb *Development, Environment and Global Dysfunction: Towards Sustainable Development* Delray Beach: St. Lucie Press, 1996 p. 11.

Moving from abstract theoretical investigations to more concrete empirical ones, a study of political and economic policies of states, international political organisations, and non-governmental organisations is the next logical step. All three are predicated on IR/IPE theories and models of development that have a possessive individualist core. The effects of organisations such as the IMF, the World Bank, the WTO, and their respective policies of structural adjustment, export driven economic growth, and trade liberalisation can be more readily identified, explained and critiqued using a broader, more nuanced historical understanding of who these policies benefit, where they come from, and the potential to change them. Although these structures benefit powerful corporate, state and class interests in both developed and developing nations, no mainstream IR/IPE theory seriously addresses "the fact that industrial countries represent 22 percent of the world's population but produce approximately 83 percent of the global GDP and consume 80 percent of the world's goods."[250] This, however, is only part of the problem because these models and structures have embedded notions of identity that make inequality normal and markets positive sum. Even when problems of systemic inequality are identified (as in the case of reform liberals), solutions are labelled as perpetually problematic due to the self interested and competitive character that constitutes human nature. Recognising these latter assumptions as having a cultural and historical origin rather than mere scientific "facts" within a so-called objective ahistorical model, helps to broaden the scope of inquiry as well open up new theoretical possibilities for change, reform and transformation.

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[250] M. Shamsul Haque "The Fate of Sustainable Development Under Neo-Liberal Regimes in Developing Countries" *International Political Science Review* Vol. 20 No. 2 1999 pp.197-218 p. 201.

Personal Observations, Normative Biases, and Important Influences

Overall, my attempt in this project has been to reintroduce Macpherson's cogent, insightful analysis of the liberal tradition, and the capitalist system it legitimises, into a study of international political theory and international politics itself. My personal frustration with traditional realist and liberal accounts of international politics left many, many questions unanswered or simply ignored. I intuitively recognised Hobbes and Locke in realism and liberalism and instantly recognised Macpherson as a guide. My concern with issues of distributive justice and inequality has directed me into a critical normative direction that is reflected in my attempt to examine the worldview that perpetuates these issues. Nodal concepts of hegemony, discourse, and intersubjectivity are an integral part of this project and are connected to a critical scholarship that recognises the impossibility of claiming one's work to be an objective description of reality, and the need for social change and transformation—all components readily apparent in Macpherson's work. By extending his work to an international level of analysis, it is hoped that it will begin the process of transcending the reification of a 17th century *possessive individualist* identity in order to broaden our sense of community, our humanity, and provide a means that would allow liberalism to reach its full potential by outgrowing its "capitalist market envelope."[251]

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[251] Macpherson *Life and Times of Liberal Democracy* p.2

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