

Is critical theory always for the white West and for Western imperialism? Beyond Westphalian towards a post-racist critical IR

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Abstract. In appraising critical IR theory after twenty-five years, this article begins by asking whether critical theory implicitly reinforces the ‘superiority’ of Western civilisation and naturalises Western imperialism. In revealing the Eurocentrism of much of critical IR theory the article proceeds to reconstruct it by steering it in fresh non-Eurocentric directions. This is not to say that extant critical theory is moribund since it undoubtedly has much to offer. But it is to say that until the problem of Eurocentrism is exorcised from its body theoretique, critical theory inadvertently lies in danger of joining the ranks of problem-solving theories. The first two sections deconstruct the leading schools of critical IR theory – Gramscianism, postmodernism and feminism – to reveal their frequent lapsing into Eurocentrism, while the final section seeks to decolonise ‘Westphalian’ critical IR by reconstructing a ‘post-racist IR’. And this in turn leads on to the conclusion, which sketches out a post-racist emancipatory political project that can help begin the urgent task of effecting global reconciliation between East and West.

Introduction

The short answer to the question posed above in the main title is ‘by no means always, but surprisingly far more often than might be expected’. Of course, it might be thought that it would be a standard critical IR theory refrain to debunk those generations of ‘scientific’ theories which proclaim the positivist fact/value distinction as a means to hide their underlying meta-narrative that ultimately glorifies Western civilisation. But the acute irony is that Gramscian IR and other versions of critical theory often, albeit inadvertently, reproduce the very Eurocentrism that so-called objective mainstream IR scholars all too frequently slip into.

Still, critical IR theory (CIRT) has achieved a great deal since Robert Cox’s seminal article was published in 1981,¹ not least in breathing fresh life into a discipline that was in danger of becoming stranded in a ‘neo-neo’ *cul-de-sac*, with the more recent emergence of constructivism so far offering disappointingly few prospects for escape. Cox’s mantra, that ‘theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose’,²

* Though in no way implicating them, I want to sincerely thank Adam Morton, Craig Murphy, and Nicola Phillips for their extremely helpful and extensive suggestions.

¹ Robert W. Cox, ‘Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory’, in R. O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and Its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986 [1981]), pp. 204–54.

² Cox, ‘Social Forces’, p. 207.

helped spur on the rise of feminism, postmodernism, post-structuralism, and historical sociology. And this idiom was, of course, harnessed to the proposition that theory is always the product of the theorist's position in time and place such that the fact/value distinction becomes impossible to maintain. This in turn flows directly into the distinction between *problem-solving theory* and *critical theory*. CIRT is differentiated from problem-solving theory on a number of grounds. Specifically, it is (allegedly) self-reflexive in that it is aware of its own values and biases, and it (supposedly) rejects problem-solving theory's ahistoricism that eternalises and naturalises the present, in favour of a historicism, which reveals the social forces that issue change in world-historical time. This in turn (supposedly) enables the identification of emergent emancipatory processes that are working to create a new world order.

But this is as good as any place to ask whether CIRT has always remained true to 'its' critical foundations,³ and whether it has been as self-reflexive as it claims. Cox's framework issues from his claim that: 'There is . . . no such thing as theory in itself, divorced from a standpoint in time and space. When any theory so represents itself, it is the more important to examine it as ideology, and to lay bare its concealed perspective';⁴ a point that immediately follows on from the previously stated mantra that 'theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose'. It is in this context that I return the gaze to interrogate CIRT by asking whether it is always *for* the White West and *for* Western imperialism? I respond to this rhetorical question by revealing the concealed Eurocentric perspective that underpins so much of CIRT. However this begs the obvious response: that whatever else CIRT is, it has surely always been critical of the West and Western imperialism. And indeed it has. But in the first section I reveal how this very response is embedded in Eurocentrism before fleshing out the hallmarks of Orientalism/Eurocentrism. In the second section I reveal the Eurocentric foundations of much of Gramscianism before turning in the third to critically reflect on two of the leading variants of CIRT—Western feminism and postmodernism. The fourth section simultaneously critiques Eurocentrism and sketches out my own 'post-racist IR', while the conclusion considers how this might be used to issue an emancipatory politics that can begin the long march to global reconciliation.

What is Eurocentrism?

To get to grips with answering the question 'how can critical IR theory be seen as *for* the White West and *for* Western imperialism?' it is noteworthy that much confusion surrounds the definition of Eurocentrism. Some assume that it refers to analyses that focus only on the West. But it is perfectly possible to write a Eurocentric book that focuses only on the East, since what matters here is the ideological lens through which the analysis is framed. Others assume that Eurocentrism is an explicit celebration of all things Western.⁵ But one can be Eurocentric at the same time as

³ For we should be aware that CIRT is not a monolith but is a highly complex and heterogeneous body of work; see especially Chris Brown, 'Turtles All the Way Down: Anti-Foundationalism, Critical Theory and International Relations', *Millennium*, 23:2 (1994), pp. 213–36.

⁴ Cox, 'Social Forces', p. 207.

⁵ As in the works of: Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1992); Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World*

being critical of the West. To resolve this confusion I differentiate ‘conscious’ from ‘subliminal’ Eurocentrism. ‘Conscious Eurocentrism’, as referenced above, is found in those writers who explicitly celebrate all things Western while consciously or explicitly denigrating all things Eastern. ‘Subliminal Eurocentrism’ is much more subtle, though no less Orientalist. It does not celebrate the West but is highly critical of it. But what makes it Eurocentric is the assumption that the West lies at the centre of all things in the world and that the West self-generates through its own endogenous ‘logic of immanence’, before projecting its global will-to-power outwards through a one-way diffusionism so as to remake the world in its own image. I call this pervading white mythology of IR the *Westphalian narrative* (twinned with its accompanying *Eastphobian narrative*). Indeed, the main problem with IR is not simply that it is constrained within a ‘*Westphalian* straitjacket’,⁶ but more that it is contained within a ‘*Westphalian* straitjacket’ that at once renders racist hierarchy and racism invisible in the world while simultaneously issuing racist Eurocentric explanatory models of the world.

Most significantly, the uncomfortable implication of this is that the extent to which many critical IR theorists reiterate the Westphalian narrative means that their analyses are *for* the White West and *for* Western imperialism in various senses. First is the assumption that self-generating Western agency and power in the world is ‘the only game in town’ which, when coupled with the dismissal of Eastern agency, unwittingly naturalises Western civilisation and Western imperialism. Second, it deserves emphasising that the *representational leitmotif* of British imperialism was the very notion of White Western supremacy and Black Eastern inferiority, which served to demoralise the colonised Other in order to portray resistance as futile. Of course, Gramscian IR prides itself on its ability to locate counter-hegemonic resistance. But by elevating world politics/economics into a panopticonesque Western fetish the prospects for Eastern resistance are unwittingly demoted. Moreover, when one scans Cox’s major writings, there is surprisingly little discussion of counter-movements and, where there is, the prospect for counter-hegemony is portrayed as very poor given the general representation of the (Western) working class as overwhelmed by the power of global capital.⁷ And though there are some notable exceptions,⁸ this problem is repeated across most of Gramscian IR.⁹ It is for these reasons, then, that much of Gramscian and other forms of CIRT turn out to be (unwittingly) *for* the White West and *for* Western imperialism.

But to understand this claim it is worth briefly outlining the essence of Eurocentrism. As is well-known, Eurocentrism or Orientalism is a discourse that was invented in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries by European thinkers as they

Order (London: Touchstone, 1996); David S. Landes, *The Wealth and Poverty of Nations* (London: Little, Brown, 1998).

⁶ Barry Buzan and Richard Little, ‘Why International Relations has Failed as an Intellectual Project and What to Do about it’, *Millennium*, 30:1 (2001), pp. 19–39.

⁷ Robert W. Cox, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), esp. pp. 191–207, 364–6, 471–90; R. W. Cox, *Production, Power and World Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987), esp. pp. 368–91.

⁸ For example, Mark Rupert, *Ideologies of Globalization* (New York: Routledge, 2000); Adam David Morton, ‘“La Resurrección del Maíz”: Globalisation, Resistance and the Zapatistas’, *Millennium*, 31:1 (2002), pp. 27–54.

⁹ For example, Stephen Gill, *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), esp. pp. 50–2.

went about constructing European identity.¹⁰ Prior to, and even during much of, the eighteenth century, Europeans often recognised that East and West were interlinked. But the emergence of Eurocentrism and the concomitant ‘production of alterity’ led to the construction of an imaginary *line of civilisational apartheid* that fundamentally separated or split East from West. Having split these mutual civilisations into ‘distinct entities’, Eurocentric thinkers then elevated the Western Self and demoted the Eastern Other. The West was imbued with exclusively progressive characteristics – including rationality and liberalism – which ensured that the West would not only make political and economic modernity single-handedly but would also be the torch-bearer of political/economic development in the world. By contrast, the Eastern Other was imbued with all manner of regressive and antithetical properties – including Oriental despotism and irrationality – which ensured that slavery and stagnation would be its lot. This culminated in Max Weber’s famous distinction between the Western ‘ethic of world mastery’ and the fatalistic Eastern ‘ethic of passive conformity’ to the world. Thus Western man was elevated to the permanent ‘proactive subject’ of global politics/economics – past, present and future – standing at the centre of all things. Conversely, Eastern ‘man’ was relegated to the peripheral status of global politics’ ‘passive object’, languishing on the Other side of an imaginary civilisational frontier, stripped of history and dignity. In this Eurocentric imaginary, then, the line of civilisational apartheid separates the Western heart of light from the Eastern heart of darkness.

Having constructed Europe as superior and *exceptional*, by the early nineteenth century Romantic thinkers then extrapolated this conception back in time to Ancient Greece, thereby painting an ahistorical picture of permanent Aryan Western supremacy.¹¹ It was, of course, round about this time when the Social Sciences were emerging. But rather than critique this racist (meta)narrative, social scientists unreflexively endogenised this discourse into their theories. Accordingly they explain Europe’s rise by excavating causal variables that allegedly exist only within Europe. This presupposes the Eurocentric endogenous *logic of immanence* through which Europe’s rise is self-generated before it subsequently projects its global will-to-power in order to remake the world in its own image. Thus having extrapolated European supremacy back in time to Ancient Greece, they then trace forwards world political and economic development through an immanent journey of the Western ‘Oriental Express’. On the way the Western train passes through an imaginary linear series of pristine European/Western way-stations. The journey begins in Ancient Greece and then, having passed through Ancient Rome and European feudalism, steams on to the Italian commercial-financial revolution, through the Renaissance and the Iberian Voyages of Discovery, and then tracks northwards via Dutch hegemony to Westphalia and on through the Enlightenment before finally sweeping westwards, passing through British hegemony/industrialisation to arrive at the global terminus of history – the Pax Americana for liberals and communism for Marxists. Conversely, such a progressive linearity was absent on the Other side of the ‘civilisational frontier’. In the process the West is granted an ‘iron law of development’ while the East suffers an ‘iron law of non-development’. Accordingly, the Easterners could

¹⁰ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, [1978] 2003).

¹¹ Martin Bernal, *Black Athena* (London: Vintage, 1991); Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism* (London: Zed Books, 1989).

only passively await the arrival of the Oriental (imperial) Express which, fuelled by an *Occidental/Eurocentric Messianism*, steamed across to pick them up in order to either graciously deliver them to the emancipatory terminus of history (as for liberals and classical Marxists) or to relentlessly hold them down through exploitation (as for most neo-Marxists). How then is this Eurocentric discourse imbricated in CIRT?

Eurocentrism in Gramscian IR

There are various themes that are central to Gramscian IR/IPE, all of which are linked by the Eurocentric predisposition to reify the West as the self-generating, proactive subject of world politics – past and present (and future?). I shall take each in turn. But before doing so, it is noteworthy that some Gramscian IR/IPE scholars have variously challenged Eurocentrism, including Cox in his analysis of civilisations. Moreover, beyond IR/IPE, Gramscianism has gone a very long way in this regard. However, I choose not to consider this line of research in the immediate discussion given that it is not part of the familiar Gramscian canon in IR/IPE – though I shall return to it in the Conclusion. Nevertheless, to the extent that Cox's recent work on civilisations breaks with certain Eurocentric assumptions means that this contradicts the Eurocentrism of Cox's major works for which he is justifiably famous. So let me now turn to revealing this (though I shall supplement this with other prominent Gramscian references where relevant).

World hegemony as an exclusively Western phenomenon

While the Gramscian conception of hegemony was first imported into IR by Robert Cox in his seminal 1981 article in order to counter the conservative, ahistorical and structuralist approach of neorealism, paradoxically his conception serves to make Gramscianism and neorealist hegemonic stability theory (HST) appear as but mere variants on a common Eurocentric theme. How so?

For neorealist HST, American hegemony is viewed as a form of Western universalism, just as British hegemony was in the nineteenth century.¹² Here we learn of the hegemons' 'far-sightedness' to stand above the competitive fray of world politics and guide all other states to pursue progressive policies that they would otherwise not have followed had they been left to their own devices. Above all, it assumes that it has been the selfless generosity of both the US and Britain to make sacrifices for the greater global good that is solely responsible for bringing the light of economic development/order to the (implicitly dark) world. Is it a coincidence that both these powers are Anglo-Saxon?¹³ Either way, this vision is highly reminiscent of Rudyard Kipling's notion of 'the White Man's Burden'. And recall that an important aspect of the Burden lies in Kipling's warning (issued to the Americans in 1899) that

¹² For example, Robert Gilpin, *The Political Economy of International Relations* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1987).

¹³ Isabelle Grunberg, 'Exploring the "Myth" of Hegemonic Stability Theory', *International Organization*, 44 (1990), pp. 431–78.

the ‘civiliser’ should expect to incur the ‘blame of those ye better, the hate of those ye guard’. Likewise, for HST, hegemony is represented as the proactive civilising subject of world politics/economics, with all other states – especially Eastern – cast in the role of ungrateful ‘free-riders’ (think of Japan and, no doubt, China in the coming years).¹⁴ Thus following this logic, students may be forgiven for thinking that they can learn everything they need to know about IPE by studying Anglo-Saxon hegemony in the last 200 years. How then does Eurocentrism infect the Gramscian concept of hegemony?

First, a line of Gramscians echo HST in that they see the rise and decline of various Western hegemonies, ranging from The Netherlands (mid-seventeenth century) through Britain in the nineteenth century and on to the Pax Americana after 1945, as *the lens* through which the world political economy must be viewed.¹⁵ Of course, they signal two major differences: first, hegemony is ushered in by the exigencies of domestic class forces; and second, hegemony is predatory in an imperialist sense, functioning to maximise the profits of the hegemonic capitalist class at the expense of the rest of the world. But the considerable emphasis that is placed on domestic class forces within the hegemon returns us to the Eurocentric notion that the West self-generates through an endogenous logic of immanence. The predatory/imperialist aspect of hegemony as opposed to the benign formulation of HST echoes the key difference between neo-Marxist and classical Marxist conceptions of imperialism. Thus while Marx, Lenin and Trotsky saw in capitalist imperialism a civilising vehicle to spread Western capitalism around the world to thereby hasten the socialist day of reckoning, so neo-Marxists of most persuasions have abandoned this conception in favour of one that emphasises the exploitative relations between North and South.¹⁶ But does this break with classical Marxism imply a break with Eurocentrism?

Apart from the point that Gramscians and classical Marxists share in the Eurocentric assumption of a Western ‘logic of immanence’, the critical overlap here lies in the shared point that they deny the possibility of autonomous development in the East (that is, the Eurocentric ‘Eastern iron law of non-development’). Moreover, in reifying Western hegemony and consigning the East to the irrelevant periphery, so we return full circle to the Eurocentrism of Karl Marx. In this context, a revealing comparison can be made between Cox and Immanuel Wallerstein. Cox is critical of world-systems theory on the grounds that its excessive structuralist ontology precludes the agency of classes in the making of history, thereby rendering it a problem-solving theory insofar as it stands outside of history.¹⁷ But the lowest common Eurocentric denominator is that for both these scholars Eastern states/societies are represented as little more than *Träger* – as ‘passive bearers’ of anthropomorphic Western structural forces. Notable here is Stephen Gill’s analysis in which the exceptional power of the US is seen as exceptional even for a hegemon.¹⁸ And when coupled with the passivity of the East so he reinforces the ‘west-as-norm

¹⁴ See also Kim Richard Nossal, ‘Tales That Textbooks Tell: Ethnocentricity and Diversity in American Introductions to International Relations’, in R. A. Crawford and D. S. L. Jarvis (eds.), *International Relations – Still an American Social Science?* (New York: SUNY Press, 2001), pp. 172–5.

¹⁵ For example, Cox, *Production, Power and World Order*; Giovanni Arrighi, *The Long Twentieth Century* (London: Verso, 1994).

¹⁶ But see Bill Warren, *Imperialism, Pioneer of Capitalism* (London: New Left Books, 1980).

¹⁷ Cox, ‘Social Forces’, pp. 214–15.

¹⁸ Gill, *American Hegemony*, esp. pp. 75–7, 86–7, 93–5, 102–6, 222ff.

ideology'.¹⁹ But this notion of Western hegemonic supremacy is perhaps not so surprising given that in Gramsci's writings hegemony is represented as 'supremacy'.²⁰ Ironically, then, Gill's portrayal of the ubiquity of US power in the world is such that it might well prove reassuring to an American hawk.

Globalisation as Western provincialism writ large

While Gramscianism allegedly replaces inter-*national* relations with global-relations and globalisation as a core analytical focus, this is at best mitigated and at worst contradicted by an underlying Eurocentrism. First, Cox reiterates the Eurocentric logic of immanence treating the rise of globalisation as a pure product of endogenous Western developments. Thus a uniquely Western path is traced that leads at first very slowly from Westphalia and Dutch hegemony, through British hegemony and industrialisation, on to the era of rival European imperialisms before culminating very rapidly with the Pax Americana.²¹ As he puts it, 'the new [global] economy grew very largely as the consequence of the US hegemonic role and the global expansion of US-based corporations'.²² Thus the West (specifically the US) is represented as the subject of globalisation while the East is viewed as its passive object.

This is imbricated in the Gramscian accounts of states under globalisation, which are portrayed as having no choice but to conform to Western neoliberalism. Here we encounter two major aspects found in Eurocentric globalisation theory – what Ulf Hannerz calls the 'global homogenisation scenario' and the 'peripheral corruption scenario'. In the former, the West remakes the East in its own image by casting a Western blanket of domination over the East through globalisation – or, put differently, the East is forced to don a Western neo-colonial straitjacket. By contrast, the peripheral corruption scenario is one where the peripheral states adopt Western practices but then corrupt or pervert them to morally regressive ends.²³

At first in Cox's analysis, Southern states corrupt and pervert incoming Western influences. Thus in his words, internationalised Third World states in the 'early' phase of globalisation were until recently *military-bureaucratic regimes*

that sought to encourage export-oriented development together with the enforcement as necessary of domestic austerity upon the politically excluded elements of society. Physical repression, ranging from widespread violations of human rights to open civil wars, generates the 'refugee problem'. In part, it may be explained by a political psychology of authoritarianism but in its broadest terms, the refugee problem has to be understood as a systematic consequence of the globalization trend.²⁴

Here there are clear shades of the old Eurocentric Oriental Despotism argument, for it is the political irrationality/immaturity of Third World state forms that blunts the

¹⁹ L. H. M. Ling, *Postcolonial International Relations* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 2002), p. 56.

²⁰ See the excellent discussion in Enrico Augelli and Craig N. Murphy, *America's Quest for Supremacy* (London: Pinter, 1988), ch. 6.

²¹ Cox, *Production, Power and World Order*, pp. 111–267.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 216.

²³ Ulf Hannerz, 'Scenarios for Peripheral Cultures', in Anthony D. King (ed.), *Culture, Globalization and the World-System* (London: Macmillan, 1991), p. 108.

²⁴ Cox, *Approaches to World Order*, pp. 195–6.

pure Westernisation thrust, perverting and morally degenerating it in the process. Of such a portrayal, Hannerz's description is worth quoting:

The peripheral corruption scenario . . . is deeply ethnocentric, in that it posits a very uneven distribution of virtue, and in that it denies the validity and worth of any transformations at the periphery of what was originally drawn from the center. There is little question of cultural difference here, but rather of a difference between culture and non-culture, between civilization and savagery.²⁵

Nevertheless, over time this 'corruption scenario' increasingly becomes replaced by the master-process of globalisation: what Cox calls the hyperliberal 'internationalisation of the state', or what Stephen Gill calls the neoliberal 'transnationalisation of the state'.²⁶ This is where the globalisation-as-homogenisation process becomes apparent. Thus while the previous liberal state (that is, the Keynesian welfare state) acted 'as a buffer protecting the national economy from disruptive external forces', now the hyperliberal state adapts 'domestic economies to the perceived exigencies of the world economy'.²⁷ In short, the latent Eurocentrism here is reflected in the fact that the hyperliberal internationalised state acts as a passive conveyor belt or valve, through which dominant Western capitalist practices and norms are transmitted from the Western core into the non-Western periphery. For as Cox puts it:

The domestic-oriented agencies of the state are now more and more to be seen as transmission belts from world-economy trends and decision making into the domestic economy, as agencies to promote the carrying out of tasks they had no part in deciding.²⁸

And this links up with Cox's Westphalian narrative of Western hegemony where he asserts that:

A world hegemony is . . . in its beginnings an outward expansion of the internal (national) hegemony established by a dominant social class. The economic and social institutions, the culture, the technology associated with this national hegemony *become patterns for emulation abroad*.²⁹

Thus, in sum, for all the talk of global relations that supersedes the 'thin' conception of mainstream theory's emphasis on inter-*national* relations, Gramscianism generally produces an equally thin, Eurocentric conception of the global – as the realm of *Western provincialism writ large*. And coupled with the extremely poor prospects for a radical challenge to this scenario, so globalisation is implicitly represented as the 'triumph of the West', if not the closure of history by the West.

Gramscian historicism as ahistorical Eurocentrism written backwards

This discussion culminates with the problem of Gramscian IR's historicity insofar as its basing in Eurocentrism renders it an ahistorical approach. Most Orientalist

²⁵ Hannerz, 'Scenarios for Peripheral Cultures', p. 109.

²⁶ For example, Cox, *Production, Power and World Order*, pp. 253–65; Gill, *American Hegemony*, p. 94.

²⁷ Cox, *Approaches to World Order*, p. 193.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 193. But for an alternative neo-Marxist conception see Andreas Bieler, Werner Bonefeld, Peter Burnham, and Adam D. Morton, *Global Restructuring, State, Capital and Labour* (London: Palgrave, 2006).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137, my emphasis; and Gill, *American Hegemony*, p. 76.

history takes the form of subliminal Eurocentrism. That is, such historians do not go out explicitly to make the West central to world history/politics. But the logic of their approaches and methodology leads directly into Eurocentrism. As Janet Abu-Lughod explains, 'The usual [Eurocentric] approach is to examine *ex post facto* the outcome – that is, the economic and political hegemony of the West in modern times – and then reason backward, to rationalize why this supremacy *had to be*'.³⁰ In this way, theorists end up by imputing an inevitability to the rise of the West as it endogenously self-generates through the logic of immanence before its power is universalised through imperialism/hegemony/globalisation, as is found in much of Gramscian IR.³¹

The acute irony, then, is that in reproducing Eurocentrism, Gramscian IR necessarily draws close to the very neorealist 'Other' against which it defines itself. Interestingly, in the 1986 Postscript to his famous 1981 article, Cox states that:

I accept that my own thought is grounded in a particular perspective . . . The troublesome part comes when scientific enterprise claims to transcend history and to propound some universally valid form of knowledge. Positivism, by its pretensions to escape from history, runs the greater risk of falling into the trap of unconscious ideology.³²

But as should be apparent by now, the troublesome part of much Gramscian IR is that it has effectively transcended history by propounding an ahistorical Eurocentric universalism written backwards, thereby leading it into 'the trap of unconscious ideology' (that is, subliminal Eurocentrism). In the process, then, this structuralist ahistoricism that creeps in through the Eurocentric back-door ultimately transforms critical Gramscianism into a problem-solving theory.

But this interpretation should not be read as one that applies only to Gramscianism since I believe that most Marxist analyses of IR suffer from a Eurocentric bias. This exists particularly within Marxist historical sociology of IR,³³ as well as in classical world-systems and early dependency theory,³⁴ even if there are some Marxist exceptions to this (as I shall also note in the Conclusion).³⁵ Moreover, Eurocentrism infects, albeit to varying degrees, other non-Marxist variants of CIRT, to a discussion of which I now turn.

Eurocentrism beyond Gramscianism: postmodernism and feminism?

A range of postcolonial scholars have claimed that postmodernism (as opposed to poststructuralism) and feminism often end up by slipping, albeit in different ways to Gramscianism, into Eurocentrism. Regarding postmodernism the problem is not so

³⁰ Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 12.

³¹ For example, Cox, *Production, Power and World Order*, pp. 105–50.

³² Cox, 'Social Forces', p. 247.

³³ For example, Benno Teschke, *The Myth of 1648* (London: Verso, 2003).

³⁴ For example, Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, vol. I (London: Academic Press, 1974); Arghiri Emmanuel, *Unequal Exchange* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1972).

³⁵ Cf. R. A. Denemark, J. Friedman, B. K. Gills and G. Modelski (eds.), *World System History* (New York: Routledge, 2000); A. G. Frank and B. K. Gills (eds.), *The World System: Five Hundred Years or Five Thousand?* (London: Routledge, 1996); Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*; Robbie Shilliam, 'Marcus Garvey, Race and Sovereignty', *Review of International Studies*, 32:3 (2006), pp. 379–400. See also notes 110 and 111 below.

much the reification of the West as we find in Gramscianism and Marxism. Rather, postmodernists seek to deconstruct the West and disturb its own self-selective narrative of power, which is undeniably an implicit vehicle to undermine Eurocentrism. Or as Robert Young puts it, 'Postmodernism can best be defined as European culture's awareness that it is no longer the unquestioned and dominant center of the world'.³⁶ But I want to raise a number of points that I feel serve to compromise postmodernism's implicit anti-Eurocentrism.

First and foremost, postmodernism refuses to entertain either the possibility of Eastern subjectivity/agency on the one hand, or the possibility of reconstructing an alternative non-Eurocentric narrative on the other. Accordingly, Lily Ling suggests that:

postmodernism cannot accommodate an interactive, articulating . . . Other. Its exclusive focus on the Western Self ensured, instead (neo)realism's sovereignty by relegating the Other to a familiar, subordinate identity: that is, as a mute, passive reflection of the West or utopian projection of the West's dissatisfaction with itself.³⁷

Sankaran Krishna issues a similar complaint.³⁸ Here the problem is that rejecting the notions of foundationalist reconstruction and subjectivity means that the Eastern agent is robbed of the agential capacity to resist the West, thus eradicating the possibility of emancipatory change. Krishna in particular argues for some notion of enabling essentiality – a 'strategic essentialism' or 'tactical essentialism' – that can enable activist subjectivity.³⁹ Deconstruction without reconstruction is targeted for harsh treatment by Edward Said, who complains that refusal to 'take the further step and exempt the interpreter from *any* moral, political, cultural or psychological commitments. . . . and to say that we are against theory . . . is to be blind or trivial'.⁴⁰

Second, these problems are reinforced by the point that for postmodernism the identity-formation process through which the Self constructs an Other is seen as an unavoidable or inevitable fact of social existence. This means that we are presented with an ahistorical picture of eternal conflict with no hope of transcending it (thereby transforming postmodernism and neorealism into strange bedfellows). Only if the logocentric identity-formation process can be reimaged out of this impasse can we properly entertain the prospect of an emancipatory politics.⁴¹

Ultimately, though, a growing number of postcolonialists single out the works of Baudrillard, Lyotard, Mouffe, Deleuze and Foucault for their reification of the West as self-contained and for failing to recognise the interactive relationship between East and West. Moreover, Foucault's exclusive focus on the micro-politics of the local irresistibly precludes such a picture from emerging. And it is noteworthy that even Edward Said – supposedly an erstwhile Foucauldian – turned in his later writings to criticise Foucault for ignoring the role of Eastern resistance in the making of global politics.⁴²

³⁶ Robert J. C. Young, *White Mythologies* (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 51.

³⁷ Ling, *Postcolonial International Relations*, p. 50.

³⁸ Sankaran Krishna, 'The Importance of Being Ironic: A Postcolonial View on Critical International Relations Theory', *Alternatives*, 18 (1993), p. 402.

³⁹ Krishna, 'Importance of Being Ironic', p. 405 and n. 36, p. 415.

⁴⁰ Edward W. Said, 'The Politics of Knowledge', *Raritan*, 11:1 (1991), p. 29.

⁴¹ See especially, Vanita Seth, 'Self and Similitude: Translating Difference', *Postcolonial Studies*, 4:3 (2001), pp. 297–309.

⁴² Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), pp. 29–30, 335–6; and *Power, Politics, and Culture* (London: Bloomsbury, 2004), p. 53.

All in all, I think it fair to say that postmodernism presents an ambivalent critique of Eurocentrism, effectively stripping the self-designated sense of the West's sovereign subjectivity but simultaneously closing off the avenue into retrieving a global politics in which Eastern subjectivity/agency is accorded significance. And in turn, this connects up with the ensuing discussion of Western feminism, insofar as a growing number of feminists are seeking to go beyond postmodern scepticism which, as Ann Tickner points out, 'could lead to an abandonment of the political project of reducing women's subordination that has motivated feminism since its earliest beginnings'.⁴³

Turning, therefore, to feminism and feminist IR theory, it is now some two decades since Chandra Talpade Mohanty chastised much of critical Western feminism for its Eurocentrism,⁴⁴ and a quarter of a century since bell hooks chastised white feminist movements for their racism.⁴⁵ But while some progress has been made to overcome this problem in the social sciences, the gap between much of feminist IR and non-Eurocentrism remains. In developing Mohanty's argument further, there are a number of strands to note here. First, pioneering critical IR feminists such as Ann Tickner have located the specificity of gender by revealing how the world economy works to disadvantage women in relation to men, especially within the Third World.⁴⁶ This is an undeniably important project and I in no way wish to denigrate it. But the problem here is that revealing gender *exclusively in this way* runs the risk of returning us back into the Eurocentric *cul-de-sac* of rendering Eastern women as but passive victims of Western power, thereby stripping them of agency.

Second, much critical Western feminism presupposes a great divide between First and Third World women. The former are portrayed as educated, modern, having (relatively greater) control over their own bodies and the freedom to make their own decisions, while Third World women are (re)presented as ignorant, traditional/religious-oriented, passive, pathetic and victimised. In returning us back into the *cul-de-sac* of patriarchal and Eurocentric discourse, this tendency leads many Western feminists to construct themselves as the higher normative referent in a binary schema.⁴⁷ That is, Western women are represented as subjects while Eastern women are granted only object status, with Eastern women/societies consequently being judged negatively against the White Western female experience. And this problem is exacerbated even further given that women within the West are usually portrayed by feminists as having little or no agency.

Not surprisingly, this flows into the advocacy of yet another Western civilising mission and the idea of the White Woman's Burden. This occurs in two principal ways. First, socialist feminists view Eastern women's backwardness as a function of Eastern pre-capitalist social relations. Addressing this point Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar cite Maxine Molyneux's argument that:

There can be little doubt that on balance the position of women in imperialist, i.e. advanced capitalist societies is, for all its implications more advanced than in the less

⁴³ J. Ann Tickner, *Gendering World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), p. 20.

⁴⁴ C. T. Mohanty, 'Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses', *Boundary 2*, 12:3 (1986), pp. 333–58.

⁴⁵ bell hooks, *Ain't I a Woman?* (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 1981).

⁴⁶ Tickner, *Gendering World Politics*, ch. 4.

⁴⁷ Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism', *Critical Inquiry*, 12 (1985), p. 243.

developed capitalist and non-capitalist societies. In this sense the changes brought by imperialism to Third World societies may, in some circumstances have been historically progressive.⁴⁸

No less surprisingly, this reiteration of Marx's conception of imperialism as a civilising mission issued a hostile response by Black feminists. Amos and Parmar, for example, replied by stating that:

[W]hen Black and Third World women are being told that imperialism is good for us, it should be of no great surprise to anyone when we reject a feminism which uses Western social and economic systems to judge and make pronouncements about how Third World women can become emancipated. Feminist theories which examine our cultural practices as 'feudal residues' or label us 'traditional', also portray us as politically immature women who need to be versed and schooled in the ethos of Western feminism.⁴⁹

In a second version of the Western feminist civilising mission, it is Western woman who is portrayed as the dashing saviour who comes to the rescue of the uncivilised, enslaved Eastern woman. Martha Nussbaum is one of the more outspoken representatives of this genre advocating an emancipatory Western universalism against a relativism that in her eyes is complicit with the exploitation of Eastern women.⁵⁰ As she boldly put it, taking on the cultural relativists, 'we would rather risk charges of imperialism . . . than to stand around . . . waiting for a time when everyone will like what we are going to say'.⁵¹ In this genre, oppressive practices such as 'female genital mutilation', 'honour killings' and 'dowry deaths' are deemed to be so barbaric that they require female Western (humanitarian) intervention – though equally, the same logic was deployed by British male imperialists in the nineteenth century when confronting the Hindu practice of *Sati* (widow burning). While Nussbaum's claims are undeniably motivated by a profoundly empathic humanism that cannot be dismissed out of hand, the fact remains that her's is very much a white Western humanism.

Still, the critical issue at stake is where we draw the line. The extremely emotive issues that are often mentioned in this context should not be (ab)used as the basis to call for an eradication of *all* Eastern cultural practices regarding the treatment of women. Do we, for example, include the Asian arranged marriage system or the *nekaab* (Islamic veil) as signs of repression that must be done away with – as advocated by many Western feminists? Significantly, Lily Ling points out that many Muslim women *choose* to wear the veil, and that it can be worn as a sign of resistance to the West (as happened after the 1979 revolution in Iran). She concludes that 'nowhere did Nussbaum . . . consider that Others could [draw hope] from their own traditions'.⁵² Clearly, then, there is a very thin (if not permeable) line between a genuine humanitarian feminist concern and a female imperial civilising mission. And paradoxically, this position joins hands with the very postmodern cultural relativist Other against which Nussbaum defines her project, since both ultimately deny

⁴⁸ Maxine Molyneux cited in Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, 'Challenging Imperial Feminism', *Feminist Review*, 17 (1984), p. 6.

⁴⁹ Amos and Parmar, 'Challenging Imperial Feminism', p. 7.

⁵⁰ Martha C. Nussbaum, 'Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings', in M. C. Nussbaum and Jonathan Glover (eds.), *Women, Culture and Development* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), pp. 61–104.

⁵¹ Martha C. Nussbaum, 'Introduction', in Nussbaum and Glover (eds.), *Women, Culture and Development*, p. 2.

⁵² Ling, *Postcolonial International Relations*, p. 52.

Eastern women agency and the possibility for their own emancipatory politics.⁵³ For as Parita Trivedi notes here, this portrayal of a submissive Eastern woman who is repressed by the arranged marriage system (and other practices) is a figment of ‘racist imaginings which have taken strands from oppressive Hindu practices . . . and welded these into an inhumane whole which shackles us down. Your [ie., white women’s] task is to un-learn and re-learn. Our task is to create new imaginings’.⁵⁴ How then might we begin to imagine an alternative to Westphalian CIRT?

Decolonising Westphalian international relations: reconstructing a post-racist IR

Why post-racism?

Of course, that much of CIRT turns out to be Eurocentric means that it is not necessarily ‘wrong’ or without some merit. Indeed, Eurocentric CIRT constitutes a powerful challenge to a non-Eurocentric IR. Accordingly, in this section I provide a critique of Eurocentrism while simultaneously outlining my own alternative perspective. In essence I seek to return the Eurocentric fetish of Western supremacy back down to earth by ‘decolonising Westphalian IR’ through reconstructing a ‘post-racist IR’. But choosing this label requires me in the first instance to justify its usage. Just as postcolonialism refers to the point that since decolonisation neo-colonial structures of power and meaning continue to characterise global politics, so post-racism reveals the point that since the receding of scientific racism after 1945 cultural racism continues to infuse the global realm. Of course, this is a similar point to that made by most postcolonialists, which will elicit the obvious response: ‘why not just go with the term *postcolonial*?’ I am, however, unhappy with the term for a variety of reasons, a few of which are as follows.

First and foremost, the term ‘postcolonial’ seems increasingly to be straining at its seams, incorporating a proliferating series of theories with varying ontologies and epistemologies many of which are incommensurable, as even some postcolonialists recognise.⁵⁵ This is one, though not the only, reason why postcolonialism appears bewildering, if not incomprehensible, to ‘outsiders’. At one extreme are postmodern postcolonialists who, like all postcolonialists, seek to disrupt the singularity and centrality of the West. But they refuse to grant subjectivity to Eastern actors and thereby deny them agency, which returns us to the problems of postmodernism discussed earlier.⁵⁶ Moreover, they also treat history as inherently Eurocentric – which is precisely why they refuse to reconstruct an alternative historical narrative (past and present).⁵⁷ But as ironically postmodernists readily point out, everyday people consume, and live through, narratives. This is how they make sense of their place in the world – something that derives from the quest for meaning and the need

⁵³ Cf. C. T. Mohanty, ‘“Under Western Eyes” Revisited: Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles’, *Signs*, 28:2 (2003), pp. 518–21.

⁵⁴ Parita Trivedi, ‘To Deny Our Fullness: Asian Women in the Making of History’, *Feminist Review*, 17 (1984), p. 38; see also Mohanty, ‘“Under Western Eyes” Revisited’, p. 519.

⁵⁵ Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

⁵⁶ See the excellent discussion in Phillip Darby, ‘Pursuing the Political: A Postcolonial Rethinking of Relations International’, *Millennium*, 33:1 (2004), pp. 1–32.

⁵⁷ For example, Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

to feel good about themselves. Not just everyday people, though, but politicians too. Given this, the clear and present danger of ‘reconstructionist refusal’ is that in the absence of an alternative non-Eurocentric narrative, Eurocentrism will remain by default rather like the USA after the demise of the Soviet Union – as the only one left standing. I do not, however, believe that we have to give up either on history or in producing an alternative narrative, since empathy and imaginative thinking – which *inter alia* draws on many of the insightful ideas from postcolonialism’s postmodern wing – can produce a post-racist IR that avoids the pitfalls of either a pure Orientalism or Occidentalism; a task that I set myself in the following pages.

Nevertheless, the main reason why I label my approach ‘post-racist’ lies in the point that for many postcolonial-inspired scholars the assumption is that the antidote to Eurocentrism lies in ‘retrieving the imperial’ (to quote the title of one of Barkawi and Laffey’s important articles).⁵⁸ But this can be done while retaining Eurocentrism – as in, for example, world-systems theory and neo-Marxism more generally. Moreover, East–West relations have for the majority of word-historical time existed *outside* the orbit of empire, thus rendering a central focus on imperialism as inadequate to the task of revealing Eastern agency. And even today Eastern agency is frequently enacted in the interstices of the neo-colonial net behind the backs of the neo-colonialists (of which more later). Above all, the deafening silence that rings out in critical and mainstream IR is not the ‘E-word’ (empire) as Niall Ferguson argues in a different context,⁵⁹ but the ‘R-word’ (racism). Modern IR’s *weltanschauung* has worked, usually subconsciously, to render not so much neo-colonialism but above all racism as all but invisible. This may take the form of representing world politics in terms of West–West relations that revolve around bipolar great-power rivalry (as in neorealism); or characterising North–South relations in predominantly economic terms (as in neo-Marxism); or through the frequent assumption that the rise of the UN and the end of the legal standard of civilisation broke fundamentally with the racism of the old imperial period (as in much of Constructivism and the English School).⁶⁰ Accordingly we need to deconstruct this intellectual containment strategy in order to reveal how post-racist hierarchy has marked the post-1945 era of world politics/economics.

Post-racism is in its purest form ‘racism without racialism’, or more specifically, cultural racism (Eurocentrism) without scientific/genetic racism’. This is what Etienne Balibar usefully calls ‘neo-racism’.⁶¹ Except that the whiff of explicit racism still very much lingers, and has become more poignant in the West since the end of the Cold War.⁶² In essence, cultural racism, in locating difference in terms of culture and institutions, elevates the West to exceptional status. Nevertheless, it is the association of genetic/explicit racism with European imperialism that reinforces the myth of the end of contemporary racism (given the assumption that decolonisation sounded scientific racism’s death-knell and that racism is generally conflated with its scientific

⁵⁸ Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, ‘Retrieving the Imperial: *Empire* and International Relations’, *Millennium*, 31:1 (2002), pp. 109–27.

⁵⁹ Niall Ferguson, ‘Hegemony or Empire?’, *Foreign Affairs* (September/October, 2003).

⁶⁰ But see Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

⁶¹ Etienne Balibar, ‘Is There a Neo-Racism?’, in Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class* (London: Verso, 1991), p. 21.

⁶² Kenan Malik, *The Meaning of Race* (Houndmills: Palgrave, 1996).

variant). But while scientific racism did indeed mark European imperialism, so cultural racism also played its part.

This argument links directly into a further reason why race has been rendered invisible today. In his pioneering book, *Colonial Desire*,⁶³ Robert Young argues that in our rush to celebrate the rise of contemporary ‘multiculturalism’ (though certainly not everyone is complicit in this project!) we have exaggerated the racist aspect of Western thinking in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. That is, an (a)historical temporal great divide or binary schemata has been constructed in which the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are (re)presented as more racist than they were so that the post-1945 era can be portrayed as less racist than it is. Ironically, the postcolonial mantra – that the Enlightenment was fundamentally racist – must share some of the blame. A fairer picture of the Enlightenment reveals it as schizophrenic – or better still, ambivalent – oscillating between the two faces of racism and non-racism. For while Eurocentrism emerged during the Enlightenment we should not forget that many Enlightenment thinkers reached out in a genuinely positive way to Eastern cultures, as did the Romantic thinkers of the nineteenth century.⁶⁴

Nevertheless, while scientific racism was not important to the Enlightenment, many philosophers emphasised the role of climate in shaping civilisations, which, of course, opened the door to the idea of ‘polygenesis’ and the rise of explicit or scientific/genetic racism that took off in the nineteenth century. But even the rise of scientific racism, which flourished in Britain only after 1840, had an ambivalent relationship to colonialism. Not all ‘racialist theorists’ called for imperialism. Some such as Robert Knox and Comte de Gobineau explicitly rejected colonialism. Colonialism would either fail because it would lead to a degeneration of the superior race, or it was pointless because the inferior races were incapable of being civilised. Thus European thinking in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was neither purely racist (in a genetic sense), nor did all of it reject other cultures, and nor was scientific racism always imperialist.

Significantly, the discourse of imperialism flourished under cultural racism though with a significant injection of scientific racism into its discursive corpus. Since 1945 scientific racism has receded (though not disappeared) with cultural racism forming the mainstay of contemporary Eurocentrism, or what I call post-racism. And today’s Western civilising missions – whether via US hegemony/neo-imperialism or human rights regimes and humanitarian wars – echo the themes of British imperialism. In sum, despite various differences there are also crucial continuities in the discursive contexts between the earlier and contemporary periods under review. Thus I choose ultimately to use the label of post-racist IR in order to highlight the very point that racism and ‘racist hierarchy’ continues as a major constitutive force in contemporary global politics/economics. Or as Robert Young asserts: ‘the question becomes not colonial discourse or even neo-colonialism [*per se*] but racism. Colonial discourse shows the enactment of racism in its colonial moment. Analysis needs to be extended now to the discursive forms, representations and practices of contemporary racism’.⁶⁵ How, then, might this be achieved?

⁶³ Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire* (London: Routledge, 1995).

⁶⁴ Young, *Colonial Desire*; J. J. Clarke, *Oriental Enlightenment* (London: Routledge, 1997).

⁶⁵ Young, *White Mythologies*, p. 218.

Key concepts and analytical focus of post-racist IR

First, because I use the terms ‘East’ and ‘West’ it requires me to explain why, since this might convey the false impression that I adhere to the conventional Eurocentric meta-geography.⁶⁶ Congruent with Eurocentrism, I (somewhat controversially) locate everything that is not in the West in the East. This includes Africa and Latin America – which are conventionally portrayed in Orientalist terms – even though they are located in the same lines of longitude as Europe and the USA respectively. But *contra* Eurocentrism, I see neither African nor Latin American peoples as passive victims of the West and accord them certain amounts of agency. Moreover, this broad categorisation enables me to show in a simple and direct way how an exclusive focus on the West as the only agent of global politics/economics is inadequate. And, of course, if not East and West, then what? This is a massive question that I cannot solve in this article. Accordingly, I continue to deploy the terms ‘East’ and ‘West’ only as a convenient heuristic device; one that unlike the more familiar ‘North/South Divide’ brings racism to the fore. What then of the major concepts of my post-racist IR?

As Lily Ling recently argues, Eurocentric IR theory works within a *monological* perspective, which produces a reductive narrative in which only the West talks and acts.⁶⁷ It is essentially a ‘winner/loser’ paradigm that proclaims the East as the loser thereby ensuring that central analytical focus is accorded to the West. But when we grant agency to the East (as well as the West) we shift towards *dialogical* thinking that transcends the either/or, winner/loser logic. For one does not have to equate winners with everything that goes on in the world economy. This entails revealing first, the manifold ways in which the East shapes and retracks the West as well as *vice versa*; and second, how East and West interact to produce global politics/economics. In the process this elevates *hybridity* to analytical centre stage. Thus as the East shapes the constitution of the West (and *vice versa*) so new hybrid civilisational entities are formed, which reveals the Other in the Self and the Self in the Other;⁶⁸ something that lies at base of my post-racist emancipatory politics (see the Conclusion below). And in turn, this points up the process of ‘hybridised mimicry’ (to adapt Bhabha’s concept of mimicry),⁶⁹ or ‘inflections’,⁷⁰ wherein imported Western influences are not passively received and absorbed but are negotiated and refracted into specific Eastern cultural contexts (and *vice versa*) to produce new hybrid civilisational forms. All in all, recognising this co-constitutive process means that we can no longer talk of East and West as if they are separate and pure or pristine entities.

In turn, going beyond the winner/loser framework brings to light what Ling calls ‘interstitiality’ or what Michael Mann calls ‘interstitial surprise’.⁷¹ In contrast to the Eurocentric depiction of civilisations as billiard balls that meet only in direct head-on conflict where the West wins and the East loses, civilisations promiscuously entwine

⁶⁶ The best discussion of this issue is in Martin Lewis and Kären E. Wigen, *The Myth of Continents* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997).

⁶⁷ Ling, *Postcolonial International Relations*, ch. 1.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 20–2. Also, Arlene B. Tickner, ‘Seeing IR Differently: Notes from the Third World’, *Millennium*, 32:2 (2003), esp. pp. 305–7.

⁶⁹ Bhabha, *Location of Culture*, ch. 4.

⁷⁰ Pal Ahluwalia, *Politics and Post-Colonial Theory* (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 124–30.

⁷¹ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power*, vol. I (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 15–19.

through what Mustpaha Pasha usefully calls ‘chains of elective affinities’,⁷² thereby shaping each other in complex ways. But the major aspect here lies in the point that although the East is (currently) subordinate to the West in general terms, the West cannot be likened to a machine that locks the East within a vice-like grip of tightly linked cogs or plugs (whether this be in the forms of international institutions, US/British hegemony or globalisation more generally). It is more akin to a poorly constructed net wherein Eastern agents slip through its many interstices in all manner of ways so as to shape the world in manifold ways. In turn, this attention to interstitiality overcomes the monological assumption that we can only entertain the prospect of Eastern agency should it successfully challenge the West and win. Moreover, interstitiality is vital to understanding a post-racist emancipatory politics where Eastern agents work within the interstices of Western discourse to reveal its contradictions and double standards (see Conclusion).

More generally, an emphasis on post-racism emphasises the importance of identity and culture in the making of IR; something which is surprisingly underdeveloped in most Gramscian IR.⁷³ Nevertheless, I do not advocate a *pure* post-structuralism since materialist forces also require ontological weighting. So, for example, in analysing great power politics/economics, we would begin by bracketing culture/identity and trace the materialist origins of the power base upon which great power rests. We then bracket material power and move to identity, which inscribes power with moral purpose and thereby channels great power in specific directions. Thus, for example, while China was the leading power between 1450 and c.1800 its specific identity led it to construct an international system in which imperialism was largely absent. By contrast, British identity channelled its great power in a specifically imperialist direction.⁷⁴ Pure materialist analysis cannot adequately reveal these different *expressions* of great power without falling into teleological functionalism, while pure post-structuralism is ill-equipped to reveal why it was China and Britain and not Russia or the US that rose to the top in the period before the twentieth century. Nevertheless, it should be noted that identity/culture and material power are ontologically inseparable since they are at once co-constitutive.

I can now introduce the final series of concepts by considering the key analytical focus of my approach – the dialogues and dialectics of civilisations. First, the *dialogues of civilisations* refers to the manifold ways in which each civilisation develops through the borrowing and assimilation of ‘resource portfolios’ (ideas, technologies and institutions) that emanate from other civilisations. This process has been going on since at least 500 CE and embodies a non-conflictual relationship. Here I suggest that in the dialogue, the meeting point of civilisations is a two-way ‘dialogical zone’ that generates poly-civilisational hybridity through what Pratt calls ‘transculturation’,⁷⁵ in what amounts to a form of ‘dialogical negotiation’ (as opposed to a monologic one-way passive receptivity).

⁷² Mustapha Kamal Pasha, ‘Islam, “Soft” Orientalism and Hegemony: A Gramscian Rereading’, in Andreas Bieler and Adam David Morton (eds.), *Images of Gramsci* (London: Routledge, 2006), p. 153.

⁷³ See the excellent discussion in Pasha, ‘Islam,’ pp. 149–64. But see Augelli and Murphy, *America’s Quest*.

⁷⁴ For a full discussion see J. M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), esp. pp. 305–12 and 50–70, 219–42.

⁷⁵ Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes* (London: Routledge, 1992).

But the ‘edges’ of civilisations can simultaneously be conceptualised as *imperial dialectical frontiers*. This emerges in the *dialectics of civilisations* where Western imperialism/neo-imperialism and Eastern resistance dialectically engage and entwine. At first sight this might seem reminiscent of Huntington’s ‘clash of civilisations’ thesis. Huntington’s civilisational edges are likened to volatile ‘fault lines’ where self-constituting, monolithic civilisations meet and clash. In his conception there is no possibility for a two-way transcultural socialisation process since civilisations retain their autonomous and ‘natural cultural essences’ after social interaction. But in my alternative formulation, which I adapt from the pioneering analysis in Jan Nederveen Pieterse’s book, *Empire and Emancipation*,⁷⁶ these ‘edges’ can better be imagined as *permeable two-way dialectical frontiers* where civilisations once again shape and retrack each other, thereby coming to constitute and guide each other’s internal social constitutions and developmental trajectories. In contrast to Eurocentric monologism, this process of ‘dialectical negotiation’ reveals, as Nederveen Pieterse emphasises, a bottom-up logic of emancipation/resistance entwined with a top-down logic of imperial domination. Indeed, the Eastern peoples never simply lay passively underneath the (neo)empire thinking of England as the British and Americans went about doing their thing, as we shall see below – a point that connects with the ‘dialogical dialectic of civilisations’, which lies at the very heart of post-racism’s emancipatory politics, as I explain in the Conclusion.

All in all, this framework enables us to reveal what Edward Said calls ‘the voyage in’ through which the ‘empire writes back’.⁷⁷ This is a vital emancipatory strategy, wherein resistance is viewed as writing back to the Occident in an attempt to break down the very discourse that splits the Self and Other into separate, self-constituting entities. As Said puts it, ‘The conscious effort to enter into the discourse of Europe and the West, to mix with it, transform it, to make it acknowledge marginalized or suppressed or forgotten histories . . . I call this effort the voyage in’.⁷⁸ How, then, might this be achieved?

The first voyage in: revealing the dialogues between East and West in the making of globalisation

The familiar Westphalian narrative represents globalisation as a Western relay race, in which in the aftermath of the Voyages of Discovery the Iberians passed the global batôn to the Dutch, who then passed it to the British before culminating with the American anchor-man, who ran the final leg in record time. But this obscures globalisation’s emergence during the era of what I call the ‘Eastern Age of Discovery’ after c.500 CE.⁷⁹ The creation of a global economy (and the process of ‘Oriental globalisation’) owes much to the West Asian Muslims after about 650 CE. With the exception of the Americas and possibly Australasia, the rest of the world was drawn together into a complex trading and capitalist network that was initially reproduced mainly by the Muslims but also by the Japanese, Jews, Indians, Chinese and Africans.

⁷⁶ Jan P. Nederveen Pieterse, *Empire and Emancipation* (London: Pluto, 1990), ch. 15.

⁷⁷ For an excellent discussion, see Ahluwalia, *Politics and Post-Colonial Theory*, ch. 2.

⁷⁸ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, pp. 260–1.

⁷⁹ For a full discussion of Oriental globalisation see Hobson, *Eastern Origins*, chs. 2–4.

According to Janet Abu-Lughod this global economy reached its nadir in the thirteenth/fourteenth centuries before it was taken over by the Europeans.⁸⁰ But this obscures the important role provided by the Chinese after 1450; a role that is traditionally dismissed by Eurocentrism on the grounds that China withdrew from the international trading system with the pronouncement of the official ban on foreign trade in 1434. However, between 1450 and c.1800 China stood at or near the centre of the global economy,⁸¹ which simultaneously gives the lie to Eurocentrism's assumption that all great powers in the last millennium have been Western. Crucially though, having recently converted onto a silver standard and, given the point that China's economy was the strongest in the world, China effectively *sucked the Europeans directly into the global economy*. How so?

Europe's trade deficit with Asia and China was only paid for by sending across the majority of the plundered bullion from the Americas. This was partly carried eastward by European ships round the Cape as well as westward from Acapulco to China via the Philippines aboard the Spanish Manila galleons. And it was the gold/silver arbitrage system which centred on China that provided the Portuguese, Dutch and English with the majority of their profits (in addition to their role in the so-called Asian country-trade). Nevertheless, while this granted the Europeans a direct presence in the global economy, they remained only bit players in the Indian Ocean trading system right down to about 1800.⁸² It was only really during the nineteenth century that the Europeans began to colonise – formally and informally – Asia and Africa. But it would be misplaced to assume that from the early nineteenth century on the Western story is the only one that matters. For the fact is that Eastern agents carried on their everyday economic intercourse often in the interstices of so-called Western imperial control. One such example lies in the developmental role that the Chinese business diaspora has played throughout much of East and South-east Asia during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Still, this discussion should not be read as an ahistorical projection of globalisation back in time, since Oriental globalisation differed in many profound ways from modern globalisation. But the key point is that the presence of Oriental globalisation fundamentally disrupts the Westphalian narrative of globalisation.

The second voyage in: revealing the dialogues of civilisations in the making of the West

While the Westphalian narrative portrays the rise of the West as a self-generating process, this obscures the civilisational dialogues that propelled the West forwards. Because I have laid out these arguments elsewhere in detail, I shall merely skim over some of the key claims.⁸³ To counter the Westphalian narrative of a self-generating West, I note that at every major turning point in the rise of the West, Eastern 'resource portfolios' were assimilated as they diffused across through Oriental

⁸⁰ Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony*.

⁸¹ A. G. Frank, *ReOrient* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998); Hobson, *Eastern Origins*, ch. 3.

⁸² Hobson, *Eastern Origins*, ch. 7.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, chs. 5–9.

globalisation. Beginning with the crucial economic revolutions of the post-1000 era, I note that almost all of the financial institutions for which the Italians unjustly became famous, originated in, and diffused across from, Islamic West Asia. Moreover, there would in all likelihood have been no Italian/European commercial revolution without the Eastern trade that flowed into Europe via West Asia and Egypt. Nor might there have been a Renaissance without the assimilation of Chinese, Indian, Jewish, African, but above all, Islamic ideas. Nor might there have been a European Age of Discovery, given that the critical trans-oceanic nautical and navigational techniques/technologies that made the voyages possible diffused across from Islamic West Asia and China. Nor would the European military revolution (1550–1660) have occurred in the absence of the Chinese military revolution (850–1290). In turn, all these Eastern impulses fed directly into the rise of the sovereign European state.⁸⁴ And while the European Enlightenment was heavily influenced by Chinese ideas, so these ideas, coupled with Chinese technologies and methods, in turn spurred on the British agricultural and industrial revolutions. Moreover, all the aforementioned Eastern portfolios diffused across through Oriental globalisation.

None of this is to say that the Europeans were the passive beneficiaries of an Eastern diffusion process, since they put all the assimilated resource portfolios together through hybridised mimicry, while their agency was also apparent in their colonial policies that proved vital in stimulating industrialisation in Europe.⁸⁵ But either way, the conclusion must be that without the Rest there would be no West (certainly not the one that actually emerged).

The third voyage in: the dialectics of civilisations at the imperial dialectical frontier

As noted earlier, here I draw from and build upon Nederveen Pieterse's discussion.⁸⁶ In this conception civilisations also entwine through imperialism/neo-imperialism and resistance, thereby remaking and retracking each other continuously across the imperial dialectical frontier. Thus, for example, in the Haitian revolution of the 1790s Toussaint L'Ouverture claimed for the Black Haitians the founding principles of the French Revolution – *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité*.⁸⁷ And with the declaration of Haitian independence in 1804 it soon became clear that this was a seminal event that marked a turning point for those on both 'sides' of the imperial frontier. This then ricocheted back and forth, inspiring new Black resistance movements that in turn issued new defensive strategies by the West. Black resistance to American slavery was then responded to by the Emancipation Proclamation in 1863, which in turn led on to new modes of oppression such as the Jim Crow Laws, and the establishment of the Ku Klux Klan in 1866. Attitudes hardened because of emancipation 'as evidence that black people were beginning to count. Some forms of racism are premised on the threat of equality rather than on the simple assumption

⁸⁴ J. M. Hobson, 'Provincialising Westphalia: Eastern Origins of Sovereignty in the Oriental Global Age' (forthcoming).

⁸⁵ Hobson, *Eastern Origins*, chs. 10–11.

⁸⁶ Nederveen Pieterse, *Empire and Emancipation*, ch. 14.

⁸⁷ C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins* (Harmondsworth: Penguin [1938] 2001).

of inequality'.⁸⁸ Significant too were Christian ideas that were appropriated and converted into Black emancipatory ideas (which Nederveen Pieterse aptly dubs 'strange opium'), and which guided many Black resistance movements throughout the twentieth century.

Within the British Empire, colonial resistance emerged in the 1857 Indian 'Mutiny' and the revolt in Morant Bay, Jamaica in 1865, which in turn led to a rapid hardening of English attitudes thereby furnishing a permissive context for the flourishing of scientific racism in Britain. This led not just to a more repressive colonial policy but prepared the way for the 'Scramble for Africa'. Simultaneously this occurred at the time when KKK brutality heightened to such a point that 'the bloody era of the new imperialism advertised the affinity of expansionist consciousness and racism'.⁸⁹ This consciousness led to the creation of many radical African movements including Pan Africanism (associated with W. E. B. Du Bois), the Back-to-Africa idea of Marcus Garvey, and the Négritude movement (associated with Aimé Césaire and Leopold Senghor).⁹⁰ In turn, I argue that these movements fed into the decolonisation wave after 1945, which in turn led on to major changes in the international sphere. Standard analyses of globalisation – critical and liberal – assume that the Pax Americana was vital in stimulating modern globalisation. But this obscures the resistance agency of Eastern nationalist movements that ultimately secured decolonisation, which in turn directly expanded the reach of the global economy beyond the islets of formal empire within which it had previously been contained. Moreover, these dialectical relations have continued on throughout the period down to the War on Terror, with even the latter revealing mutual interconnections. Indeed, Osama Bin Laden's thinking reveals a 'long history of interconnections and mutual constitution . . . [which draws on] currents of Western, Arab and Islamic cultures and histories [and] modern technologies and communications'.⁹¹

In sum, the dialectics of civilisations reveal how efforts at imperial control are resisted and negotiated and how in the process East and West co-constitute and retrack each other in highly complex ways. Moreover, this process is enhanced much further through the civilisational dialogues and dialogical negotiations that have occurred at the same time. Thus these multiple forms of inter-civilisational negotiative relations have constituted the driver of world politics/economics throughout the last millennium. And in turn, this means that contemporary globalisation cannot be conflated with Westernisation/Americanisation precisely because the global is the product of continuous negotiative interactions between Western and Eastern agency. In recognising this we can secure what Nicola Phillips calls the 'globalising of globalisation studies'.⁹² And so we might conclude our discussion of these three voyages in by posing Nederveen Pieterse's important rhetorical question: 'is not part of the meaning of "globalization" that already the East is in the West and the West is in the East?'⁹³

⁸⁸ Nederveen Pieterse, *Empire and Emancipation*, p. 338.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 345.

⁹⁰ See especially Shilliam, 'Marcus Garvey, Race and Sovereignty'.

⁹¹ Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, 'The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies', *Review of International Studies*, 32:2 (2006), p. 347.

⁹² Nicola Phillips, 'Globalization Studies in International Political Economy', in N. Phillips (ed.), *Globalizing International Political Economy* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 20–54.

⁹³ Nederveen Pieterse, *Empire and Emancipation*, p. 374.

Racist double standards and the contradictions of Western hegemony/imperialism

Finally, one of the most important aspects of post-racist IR that leads directly into an emancipatory politics lies in revealing the manifold racist double standards and contradictions that underpin British and American hegemony/imperialism. There are three fundamental contradictions that have marked these civilisational projects. First, hegemony/imperialism is sold as a benign policy of ‘cultural conversion’ through which Eastern societies can be raised up or civilised. But this is a strategy of ‘ethnocide’ through which the imperial powers *attempt* to eradicate Eastern cultures/identities in order that Western supremacist identity be shored up. Second, the strategy of ‘cultural conversion’ has gone hand-in-hand with ‘containment’ in which Eastern societies are ‘helped up’ but contained at a point where they could not pose an economic challenge to the West. And third, despite the proclamation of helping through civilising, the Western hegemons and empires have exploited Eastern economies on the basis that because Eastern peoples/cultures are deemed to be inferior so they are axiomatically considered as ‘ripe for exploitation’. What then of double standards? Gramscianism’s materialist focus on capitalism as the motor of hegemonic discourse brings to light the issue of hypocrisy.⁹⁴ But locating racism/post-racism at the core of hegemonic discourse definitively places the issue of double standards at the analytical centre.

Turning to British ‘hegemony’ in the nineteenth century, a litany of racist double standards emerges through its free trade policy. Cox, implicitly echoing Friedrich List, argues that despite public pronouncements to the contrary, British free trade maximised the economic power of the British economy at the expense of her Continental European counterparts and the Third World.⁹⁵ But British free trade policy could not have been designed to maintain Britain’s lead over Continental Europe, given that the British did very little to promote free trade in Europe in the first place nor did they take any action to prevent the return to continental protectionism after 1877–79.⁹⁶ This passive stance that the British adopted *vis-à-vis* their ‘civilised’ White neighbours contrasted strikingly with their aggressive imperial free trading policy. Thus while the British negotiated ‘reciprocity treaties’ with their European ‘contracting partners’, they unilaterally imposed ‘unequal treaties’ throughout the East. Moreover, while the European powers industrialised through tariff protectionism free of British military intervention, many Eastern economies were held down by virtual free trade backed up by the British threat of, and frequent resort to, violence. And there were many other racist double standards too numerous to report here.⁹⁷

Turning now to US hegemony, I begin by noting that American identity, which significantly informs US foreign policy, has been defined through a sense of exceptionalism, endangerment and paranoia that issues the need to maintain eternal vigilance against the non-Western Other.⁹⁸ Notably, while American and British

⁹⁴ But see Augelli and Murphy, *America’s Quest*.

⁹⁵ Cox, ‘Social Forces’, pp. 219–23.

⁹⁶ J. M. Hobson, ‘Two Hegemonies or One? A Historical Sociological Critique of Hegemonic Stability Theory’, in P. O’Brien and A. Clesse (eds.), *Two Hegemonies* (London: Ashgate, 2002), pp. 305–25.

⁹⁷ See Hobson, *Eastern Origins*, pp. 258–77.

⁹⁸ David Campbell, *Writing Security* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1992), chs. 5–6; Richard Slotkin, *Regeneration Through Violence* (Middleton: Wesleyan University Press, 1973).

identities in their respective hegemonic phases have shared many similarities, the American differs in that its fear of the Other is yet more pronounced which, in turn – in an ever-moving show – constantly feeds the US desire for manufacturing new enemies and then containing them in order to maintain American identity. The racist double standards of the US civilising mission abound, whether these be in its uneven-handed free trade policy (as the recent breakdown of the Doha Round talks reveals); or through its wielding of the IMF as a vehicle to help indebted countries but in fact imposing cultural conversion and containment of the East in the debt crisis after 1982 and the Asian financial crisis of 1997; or again in its policies that were imposed on Japan in the 1980s.⁹⁹ Moreover, the War on Terror opens up a Pandora's box of racist double standards where, *inter alia*, indiscriminate American bombing and the killing of tens, if not hundreds, of thousands of non-Whites differentiates US foreign policy from 'Islamic terrorism' only in terms of the many more innocent lives that are taken by the former. When will this global nightmare end?

Conclusion. Bringing the world to heal: post-racist emancipatory politics and the dialogical dialectics of civilisations

If Eurocentrism portrays the West as bringing the world to heel, post-racist emancipatory politics seeks to bring the world to heal. How, then, might we begin to imagine this? Post-racist IR singles out analyses of identity-formation and civilisational dialogues/dialectics as the first port of call for a global emancipatory politics. The centre-piece of racism as it has been constructed in the West is a repressing of the Other in the Self. It is precisely this that underpins the Eurocentric construction of a line of civilisational apartheid, which creates the illusion of a pure, self-generating, supremacist White Western Self. Accepting the Other in the Self and recognising that the Self is therefore hybrid must be central to the process of global reconciliation.

The second step is, however, much more fraught but all the more pressing nevertheless – namely the creation of a political dialogue between East and West.¹⁰⁰ This can take the form of a counter-hegemonic bloc comprising a rainbow coalition of groups from the West though mainly from the East, which can articulate an alternative discourse to challenge Eurocentric post-racism. Still, there are undoubtedly many hurdles that stand in its way. These include the not inconsiderable spiritual capital that Westerners have invested in their Eurocentric identity; the economic interests of capital in maintaining post-racist neo-colonialism; and, ironically, those Eastern political elites who embrace Eurocentrism in order to hold on to power. But global reconciliation need not be portrayed as an impossible dawn, for there *is* historical precedent here in the shape of the Eastern nationalist movements that successfully challenged the discourse of empire. And while decolonisation has been succeeded by the imposition of post-racist policies this should not detract from the success of Eastern resistance agency in terminating formal empire. Decolonisation

⁹⁹ See J. M. Hobson, 'Civilizing the Global Economy: Racism and the Continuity of Anglo-Saxon Imperialism', in Brett Bowden and Leonard Seabrooke (eds.), *Global Standards of Market Civilization* (New York: Routledge, 2006), pp. 60–76.

¹⁰⁰ Mohammed Khatami, *Islam, Liberty, and Development* (Binghamton, NY: Institute of Global Cultural Studies, Binghamton University, 1998).

also provides a crucial precedent given that ‘the setting of the sun on the British empire’ was always portrayed by the British elites as an impossible dusk. Salutory too is that Nelson Mandela’s long walk to freedom would also have appeared prior to its success as a feat too far.

Naeem Inayatullah and David Blaney argue that this political dialogue needs to work on an empathic approach in which both sides appeal to their own experiences of suffering.¹⁰¹ This needs to be coupled with a major injection of humility in the West, which can be enabled by revealing, and facing up to, the massive moral debt that it owes the East (given that the East did so much to enable the West’s rise through both dialogue and sacrifice). In any case, failure to do this is to be complicit with that which went on not just in the past but also in the last fifty years. But alongside these rhetorical manoeuvres, the Eastern and Western spokespersons need to emphasise the contradictions and double standards that underpin contemporary post-racist Western foreign policy. Here they need to engage not simply in dialogue but a *dialogical dialectic* wherein the East prosecutes the unfair and hypocritical practices of the post-racist West in what might be called the ‘global court of social justice’. This is not a legal entity, though it is governed like any (formal) court by a certain set of (social) norms that adjudicate over what is right and wrong. The nationalist movements effectively prosecuted the West in the global court of social justice through ‘mimetic challenge’,¹⁰² or ‘rhetorical entrapment’,¹⁰³ where they rendered empire illegitimate by appealing to Western social norms of justice, since there was no other way of revealing the racist double standards that the West committed in its imperial policies (much as the Black Jacobins had done in the earlier Haitian revolution).¹⁰⁴

Crucially, if revealing the racism of empire had such powerful import in effecting decolonisation, then why cannot the strategy of revealing post-racism today equally be used to decolonise contemporary neo-colonialism? Thus a counter-hegemonic bloc needs to work within the interstices of Western discourse to reveal the post-racist contradictions and double standards that it consciously and subconsciously smoothes over, in order to demonstrate how the West currently fails to uphold its own self-referential norms of human justice. Appealing only to Eastern norms would most likely be rejected out of hand by the West with no progress forward possible. Indeed, ‘[f]or the oppressed it is a strategic necessity to address the oppressor in its own language, the language which it knows and understands: indeed the point is to manipulate the self-understanding of the oppressor’.¹⁰⁵ Besides, no court can operate according to conflicting norms. And it is to the West that the East must turn if only because it currently holds disproportionate (though not anthropomorphic) power.

¹⁰¹ Naeem Inayatullah and David L. Blaney, *International Relations and the Problem of Difference* (London: Routledge, 2004).

¹⁰² J. M. Hobson and Leonard Seabrooke, ‘Everyday IPE: Decentering the Discipline – Revitalising the Margins’, in Hobson and Seabrooke (eds.), *Everyday Politics of the World Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), ch. 1.

¹⁰³ Frank Schimmelfennig, ‘The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union’, *International Organization*, 55:1 (2001), pp. 47–80.

¹⁰⁴ Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

¹⁰⁵ Nederveen Pieterse, *Empire and Emancipation*, p. 368; also Said, ‘Politics of Knowledge’, pp. 30–1.

Still, this dialogical project is one that can simultaneously benefit the West.¹⁰⁶ For as noted, Eurocentrism leads to the repression and sublimation of the Other in the Self. Thus doing away with Eurocentrism can end the sociopsychological angst and alienation that necessarily occurs through such sublimation. Indeed, the ultimate irony is that racist/post-racist Western imperialism has *underdeveloped* the Western Self. And so, hopes for Western emancipation must to an important extent lie with the 'Eastern civilising mission' and the associated 'Black Human's Burden', which can launch the Western peoples on an ethnographic maiden Voyage of Self-Discovery that, with humility, empathy and above all sincerity, steers around the icebergs of tragic self-deception to return fully humanised. In the process, we take one giant leap towards a global dream that exorcises the global nightmare of cycles of war and Western civilising missions – a dream in which the dusk of post-racism brings in its wake the dawn of a new era wherein the peoples of the world can finally sit down at the table of global humanity and communicate together as equal partners.

But in the end none of this is possible until we begin the task of reconstructing world politics – past and present – through alternative critical post-racist imaginings. And at the most fundamental of levels, post-racist IR is founded on two core principles. First, IR's obsession with anarchy/sovereignty, hegemony, or capitalist globalisation serves to obscure the presence of a *post-racial hierarchy* which, entwined with inter-civilisational dialectics and dialogues, forms the racial sinews of power and agency that bind together and generate contemporary global politics/economics. Accordingly, I hope that we can begin the urgent task of breaking the 'norm against noticing' the presence of racism,¹⁰⁷ so as to reveal the operation of the 'invisible colour line' in both IR theory and the practice of world politics, past and present. And second, both Self and Other are not merely interconnected, rather than separate and exclusive, but are intimately entwined. Thus, to critically reflect on Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, the point is *not* to dispense with interpreting the world *in favour* of changing it, as if the two are mutually exclusive. Rather, the point is to (re)interpret the world *in order* to change it.

In closing, however, I want to counsel against one possible interpretation of this article in which my approach is offered as a 'remedy' to other forms of 'flawed' critical theory, especially Gramscianism and Marxism. For as I signalled earlier, especially outside of IR, Gramscianism and Marxism have undoubtedly gone some way towards producing non-Eurocentric enquiries that speak to many of the themes of my own preferred perspective.¹⁰⁸ Indeed it is not hard to recall the influence of Gramsci on Edward Said, or on the likes of Partha Chatterjee and the Subaltern Studies group.¹⁰⁹ And though within IR Gramscianism has further to go in this

¹⁰⁶ See more generally: Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983); Tzvetan Todorov, *The Conquest of America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984); Inayatullah and Blaney, *International Relations and the Problem of Difference*.

¹⁰⁷ Robert Vitalis, 'The Graceful and Generous Liberal Gesture: Making Racism Invisible in American International Relations', *Millennium*, 29:2 (2000), pp. 331–56.

¹⁰⁸ For example, Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1944); James, *Black Jacobins*; Eric R. Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1982); Peter Gran, *Beyond Eurocentrism: A New View of Modern World History* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1996); S. Hall, 'The Work of Representation', in S. Hall (ed.), *Representation* (London: Sage, 1997), pp. 15–74; Amin, *Eurocentrism*; Malik, *Meaning of Race*.

¹⁰⁹ Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World* (London: Zed, 1986); Ranajit Guha, *Subaltern Studies*, vol. I (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1982).

regard,¹¹⁰ nevertheless the recent Gramscian turn towards civilisational analysis – particularly in the works of Cox and Mustapha Pasha for example – speaks to an intensifying common-ground.¹¹¹ Moreover, by no means is all feminist CIRT Eurocentric, and the growing affiliations between feminism and postcolonialism are surely to be welcomed even if this thrust has occurred largely outside, or on the margins, of IR.¹¹² Thus I very much hope that the dialogues that I have spoken about above might be extended further to bridge all these perspectives within and without IR, wherein a collective reinterpretation of the world can enable us to discover a better future for all.

¹¹⁰ But see Randolph B. Persaud, *Counter-Hegemony and Foreign Policy* (New York: SUNY Press, 2001); David Slater, *Geopolitics and the Post-Colonial* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004); Adam D. Morton, *Unravelling Gramsci* (London: Pluto, 2007), ch. 3.

¹¹¹ Robert W. Cox, 'Civilizations and the Twenty-First Century: Some Theoretical Considerations', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, vol. 1 (2001), pp. 105–30; cf. Pasha, 'Islam'.

¹¹² Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*; Mohanty, '“Under Western Eyes” Revisited'; Sandra Harding, *Is Science Multicultural?* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1998); but in IR see, for example, Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair (eds.), *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2002); Ling, *Postcolonial International Relations*.