DAVID CAMPBELL

Walker, R. B. J. (1993), *Inside/Outside: International Relations as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press). Seminal discussion that critically examines International Relations as political theory, thereby establishing the possibility for poststructural analyses.

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

Although neither of these sites is self-consciously poststructuralist, the critical approaches to their objects of concern embodies the ethos of critique described above:

- The Imaging Famine project. Examines media coverage of famine from the nineteenth century to the present day. Focusing on photographic images, it contains background documents, reports as well as historic and contemporary photo essays.
  www.imaging–famine.org

- The Information Technology, War and Peace project. At Brown University's Watson Institute, it covers the impact of information technology on statecraft and new forms of networked global politics.
  www.watsoninstitute.org/infopeace/index2.cfm

Visit the Online Resource Centre that accompanies this book for lots of interesting additional material. www.oxfordtextbooks.co.uk/orc/dunne/

12 Postcolonialism

SIBA N. GROVOGUI

Chapter contents

- Introduction
- International morality and ethics
- Orientalism and identities
- Power and legitimacy in the international order
- Case study
- Conclusion

Reader's guide

Without impugning the eloquence and character of our precursors, any student of international relations may legitimately ask whether the likes of Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Kant give accurate accounts of the complex, varied, and unpredictable events that characterized their times. One may also ask whether their maxims of war-making and peace-making hold lessons for the present; and, importantly, whether their representations of human nature, power, and interest correspond to the experiences of societies conquered by Europe. Postcolonialism highlights that the views of politics held by these figures may not correspond to the experiences of non-Western societies. It offers new ways of knowing and thinking about the complex and fluid events that have shaped relations around the world by stressing the varying contexts of power, identity, and value across time and space. This chapter will, first, explore the morality and ethics in postcolonialism before moving on to discuss Said's work on 'Orientalism'. The chapter will then discuss notions of power and legitimacy in reference to the issue of nuclear proliferation. Finally, the case-study section discusses the issue of the nationalization of the Suez Canal from a postcolonial perspective.

Introduction

In 1961, a book appeared in France under the title of *The Wretched of the Earth* (Fanon 1968). Its author was Frantz Fanon: a black Frenchman born in Martinique and a psychiatrist by training, who had joined the anti-colonial Algerian struggle for independence from France. Needless to say, the book unsettled many who viewed its tone as 'angry'. Still, Jean-Paul Sartre, co-founder of French existentialism, noted in his introduction to Fanon's book the central reality that forms the backdrop to the book. Having once conquered and colonized other regions, an entity self-identified as 'Europe'[1] (later, the 'West') stipulated that the world contained 'Man' and 'native' (at the time 'five hundred million men' and 'one thousand five hundred million natives'). The European collectives, associated with the image of Man, believed themselves to be uniquely endowed with reason, science, and technology. As such, they aspired to dictate the direction of world affairs and to write the history of humanity as they willed and according to their own self-image (Trouillot 1995). This act was not merely hubris. It was accompanied by the degrading of the markers of culture, arts, and science in non-European societies to the status of folklore, myths, shamanism, and the like. Academic subjects such as Literature, Philosophy, History, and Anthropology – and now International Relations – contributed to this endeavour.

Now upon decolonization, Sartre reckoned, formerly native writers, artists, and scientists proclaimed themselves 'Men' of distinct will, conscience, and agency (Pillay 2004). Their advent as communities of citizens and free agents and actors did mean that the 'West' could no longer aspire to legislate and execute the 'will' of the entire world. It could still do so because it possessed the required political, military, and economic means. But the West could no longer aspire to such a position with legitimacy. Fanon's point was that others had never given permission to the West to be the ultimate judge of the propriety of values, desires, and interests. Like Fanon, formerly colonized entities everywhere imagined themselves as equal citizens of the world, equally unbound by place and time. They too aspired to reflect on international law and morality and to judge and be judged on the basis of actions and behaviours and their base systems of values, interests, and institutions.

In noting that decolonization required profound transformations in global values and institutions, Sartre summed up the ambition of postcolonialism, a phenomenon that figures in all former colonial expanses. In this chapter, I will use the term postcolonialism, with the obvious risks of anthropomorphizing, in order to provide an introduction to a multiplicity of perspectives, traditions, and approaches to questions of identity, culture, and power. Indeed, postcolonialism has multiple points of origination in Africa, Asia, Australia, Latin America, and the New World (see Gilroy 2005; Memmi 1965; Guha, Spivak, and Said 1988; Spivak 1987). These regions were subjected across time to different forms of governance and political traditions that account for the diversity of approaches to society, science, and knowledge (Mignolo 1995). Colonial histories also explain the overture of postcolonialism to a variety of theories, including liberalism, Marxism, postmodernism, and feminism and their applications to History, Philosophy, Sociology, Psychology, and Political Science. This diversity has led to confusions compounded by the academic confinement of postcolonial studies to ethnic, cultural, and regional studies

programmes or departments. Yet, postcolonialism does not limit itself to a single region or discipline (Bhabha 1994; Said 1979; Mignolo 1995; Appadurai and Breckenridge 1990).

Postcolonialism thus offers new ways for thinking about techniques of power that constrain self-determination, whether they emanate from within or without. Consistently, postcolonialism contests the views of Western rationalists, humanists, and other universalists that their modes of signification (or ways of making sense of the world) were superior and that 'Europe' possessed the finer forms of reason, morals, and law. Second, postcolonialism aspires to participate in the creation of 'truths', based on distinct modes of signification and forms of knowledge (or the manners of representations) that advance justice, peace, and political pluralism. It applies so-called local memories, arts, and 'sciences' to the subjects of History, Literature, and Philosophy among others. Third, postcolonialism rejects 'native essentialism', or the idea that the 'natives' bore essential and timeless features. This idea has been (ab)used by Western powers and postcolonial elites to opposite ends, both connected to the acquisition and retention of power. Finally, postcolonialism also highlights the precarious relations between 'freedom' and politics. In this regard, postcolonialism elucidates the persistence of the colonial intellectual legacy in the supposedly neutral and universal settings of knowledge production and policy-making. In short, postcolonialism entertains the possibility of alternative conceptions and imaginaries of society, law, and morals.

This chapter has two aims. The first is to highlight the insufficiencies of current international norms as means to international justice. The second is to illustrate the postcolonial ambition to undo the legacies of European imperialism (when Europe unilaterally projected power abroad) and colonialism (European settlement or rule over other regions) in order to transform the international order and associated notions of community, society, and morality. The chapter is divided in four sections. The first explores the prospect of international morality and ethics in postcolonialism (Fanon 1968; Césaire 2000; Said 1979; Ashcroft *et al.* 1990; Chatterjee 1986). This section touches upon Kantian notions of international morality and pacific union under republicanism. The second section discusses Edward Said's *Orientalism* as one stream of postcolonial discussions of political subjectivity and identity (Bhabha 1994; Anzaldúa 1999; Moreiras 2001). This leads to the third section about power and international legitimacy, focusing on the recurrent themes in the debates over nuclear weapons proliferation. The case-study section shows how a postcolonial perspective might orient understandings of international relations. It focuses on Gamal Abdel Nasser's 'nationalization' of the Suez Canal and the crisis that ensued.

International morality and ethics

Postcolonialism associates the development of international order and society and its political economies with specific kinds of violence (Hulme 1992; Cheyfitz 1997). This association is not new; nor does it imply that one should give up on the idea of global

orders. In the first instance, postcolonial critics find inspirations from a vast community of ecclesiastic, ethical, and moral thinkers worldwide who believed in the idea of common society or 'brotherhood' but expressed misgivings about the methods chosen by Europe to bring about this common society. Beginning with the conquest of the Americas, upon Christopher Columbus's 'discovery', Friars Antonio de Montesinos and Bartolomé de Las Casas initiated the first protests against the treatment of native populations (Galeano 1985: 57, 84). The protests of Montesinos and Las Casas were aimed at Spain but they reverberated later in other contexts where Christian powers conquered non-European lands. The methods of European conquest and expansion varied across time and space. While conquest led to European settlement or colonization in the New World, Europe's means of control elsewhere involved political control through multiple forms of colonial administration. They varied from protectorates (based on treaties of protection), to indirect rule (dual control by a colonial administration and native rulers), to direct rule (total administrative control). In any case, protests were heard everywhere whenever European imperial powers subjected new political entities to their own will through warfare and unfavourable political compacts – some of which were aptly named treaties of concession and capitulation while others were disingenuously categorized as protection and trusteeship.

In another instance, postcolonialism is cognizant that protests by the likes of Las Casas, although significant, did not prevent modern European imperialism, colonization, and colonialism. It also acknowledges that the institutions of modern European empires, settlements, and colonies laid the foundations for what the discipline of IR also calls international order, community, and/or society. In short, the coming together of the world as a single unit is one of the hallmarks of the modernity instigated by Europe. Postcolonialism perceives an irony in this event where others might not. In any case, postcolonialism does not take it for granted that the received world is preordained and given by force of nature: the world cannot be disentangled but its base institutions and systems of value and interest can be refashioned to reflect today's communities. In this regard too, postcolonialism has antecedents in revolts and revolutions by slave and colonial populations that sought justice in their particular locales by rejecting the moral, legal, and cultural foundations of their enslavement.

Postcolonialism and knowledge

Brought to the level of academic practice, postcolonialism today holds the motives and intentions of advocates of global institutions and systems of values separate from discussions of the systems of truths, values, and institutions that must shape the international or global order. Beginning with 'truths', postcolonialism notes that knowledge, or what is said to be, is never a full account of events. Gaps between what is said to have happened and what actually happened can be understood frequently by examining how imperial and colonial structures shaped such institutions as seemingly neutral as academic research. For instance, we can ascertain that colonial structures of power delivered the whole world to European and Western scholars as object of study. Among them, rationalists, humanists, and other cosmopolitans had 'universal' access to the whole world to which they applied the available scientific instruments, or methods of analysis, which allowed them to reach

certain conclusions or 'truths' about themselves and native peoples everywhere. However, as observed by Talal Asad (1983) and Edward Said (1979), this enterprise was not a collaborative undertaking that involved 'natives' in the conceptions and implementation of its objectives. The knowledge resulting from 'observations' of and about 'natives' was neither constitutively 'native' knowledge nor based on native concerns. Even when Western theorists and scientists were generous and sympathetic to native populations, they could not wilfully escape the structures of empires and colonies and the political and cultural instruments that excluded colonial populations from the processes of decision-making and research. Finally, imperial knowledge was not universally accessible to natives. Not even the most dedicated metropolitan observers could make up for the political and economic processes that left vast majorities of colonial populations in abject poverty and illiteracy.

For these reasons and others, postcolonialism disputes the validity of ideas and commonplaces that today figure authoritatively in academic and public discourses as 'expert knowledges' about the former colonial expanses. These ideas and commonplaces include understandings of the inherence of labour and property, enterprise and capacity, in race, culture, and the environment – understandings which once served as justifications of imperialism and its distribution of value (Cohn 1996). Postcolonialism also disputes propositions by rationalists and critical theorists that Western methods, particularly rationalism and humanism, can adequately critique imperialism and colonialism and, by this token, offer the way to comfort and salvation for others (Césaire 2000; James 1989; Du Bois 1999). This conceit is combined with obstinacy in the belief that the West has sole responsibility for charting the course of human history (Prakash 1999). In addition, postcolonialism is sceptical of the prevailing rationalities and historical justifications for and of empire (Chakrabarty 2000). More often than not, related representations of the ends of imperialism and colonialism are self-serving (Prakash 1994). Finally, postcolonialism is suspicious of colonial ethnography and its accounts of cultures, rituals, and their significations. More often than not, the social structures and rituals 'discovered' by colonial ethnographers reflected their own castes of mind which were frequently at odds with what existed (Dirks 2001). Colonial understandings were deeply steeped in alternate forms of natural history and/or scientific racism that divided humanity into races, ethnic groups, heathens, and barbarians (Bensmaïa 2003). In short, colonial ethnography was mapped onto a cartography of morals, temperaments, and human capacities that helped to justify imperial political economies, and their systems of laws and morals (van der Veer 2001).

A postcolonial critique of the Western tradition

Postcolonial examinations of reason, history, and culture are necessary steps to re-envisioning the future (Scott 1999) and global designs (Mignolo 2000). Their aim is not, as has been argued (Hopkins 1997), to reject the principle of identifying and codifying international law and morality. To this end, postcolonialism forwards omitted or devalued *forms, ways of knowing* and their base-practices, or institutions, as possible expressions of valid moral concerns and, therefore, as the bases for valid formulations of value and interest. The postcolonial approach to this question upholds the principle of

coexistence while rejecting erroneous ideas. In the first instance, postcolonialism recognizes the intrinsic merits of Western attempts and the intellectual prowess of the iconic figures that stand behind them – from Herodotus to Machiavelli, Kant, and beyond. Nor does postcolonialism impugn on the credentials of Europe and the West as purveyors of civilization. In the second instance, most postcolonial readers take Western iconic texts with degrees of irony – and depressing bemusement. Take Immanuel Kant, for instance. Kant has been lauded recently by an assortment of liberals who praise his republican ideas as the foundation for a pacific union of democratic states abiding by 'cosmopolitan law' (Doyle 1997; Russett 1993). Postcolonialism does not scorn such praises, but asks questions about the logic of an international order founded upon Kant's ideas. Specifically, they always return to gaps in Kant's representations of the eighteenth century and the implications of such gaps for the validity of his theory. This return to the source then serves as a metaphor and a point of criticism for today's liberals and institutionalists who would change the present world without due attention to its complexity and the diverse stakes involved in change.

Irrespective of whether they hold that Kant was 'racist' like many of his contemporaries, postcolonial scholars generally take issue with today's readings of Kant. There are complex arguments here that cannot be exposed fully in an introductory text. But imagine, if you will, writing about moral commands, ethics, and pacific union. Imagine that you live in an era when slavery was both the reality and the most potent metaphor for the absence of liberty (Trouillot 1997). Imagine also living in an era marked by three revolutions (in the USA, France, and Haiti), one of which arose from demand by actual slaves for freedom. Would you omit actual slavery and the aspiration of slaves for freedom from three major treatises on love for humanity and the related moral sentiments of solidarity and hospitality? Would you expect the slave or former slave to take resulting speculations about peaceful coexistence at face value? You might, but it will not be as easy to dismiss Kant's 'gaps' as mere historical perspectives.

We can now begin to understand postcolonial suspicions about dimensions of Kant's notions of moral imperatives – the sublime and the picturesque that underpin his vision of international order. In one postcolonial perspective, Kant's accounts of the picturesque omitted the actual scenes of enactment of the pacific union extending beyond Europe as it was in actuality. When imperialism and concerns about race and masculinity transformed landscapes in the New World, Africa, and elsewhere, the picturesque was more like an assemblage of scenes of intended and unintended crimes, including the vanishing of native populations in the New World and the African slave trade. The places of enactment of European agendas of universal salvation, emancipation, protection, and modernization were therefore scenes of crimes. When read against the background of global events, the picturesque quickly loses its lustre and reveals itself as imperial cartography in which the cosmopolitan sentiment of love or empathy (or colonial trusteeship) is inserted into a poetics or landscape of conquest, repression, and expropriation through broken treaties and shared violence. This conclusion raises question about the nature of the sublime or love itself. After all, the enactment of European trusteeship over others brought about social decay in the zones of enactment (Dirks 2001).

I do not propose an indictment of Kant's view of slavery. I merely wish to ask whether the omission of such an important institution as slavery and enslavement from moral thought diminishes the moral reach of resulting theories of republicanism and

---

cosmopolitanism. I am therefore asking for a pause before proposing Kant as the prophet of ethics and pacific union. Although I personally favour the idea of global norms, questions remain about the origin of the norms; the manners by which they are attained; and their purpose. In these connections, postcolonialism draws three conclusions. The first is that it is not sufficient for theorists to simply embrace categories such as international order, international society, and international ethics. Because these concepts recall the era of European expansion and colonialism, they are not devoid of political effects. In fact, they exude a colonial anthropology in which a mythical righteous West poses as teacher for others, regardless of the context and purpose of engagement and the nature of behaviour.

Second, there is a double movement in Western moral thought involving 'presence' (when European authorship matters to the legitimacy and purpose of discourse) and 'erasure' (when European identity is necessarily concealed). There is strategy behind each mode of reasoning. For instance, the proposition that human rights are a universal value depends on a de-emphasis of their Western origins and the invocation of human rights by victims groups throughout the world. On the other hand, when Western intellectuals and politicians need to underscore European superiority, and the 'duty' or 'right to lead', they stress that human rights are civilizational markers of the West. The accentuation of Western origination of universal values then bolsters the position that the West may legitimately pose as moral teacher for others on value, morality, and ethics. Postcolonialism does not merely object that such debates close off inquiry on the merits and limits of related formulations of value, interest, and morality. Critics also note that discussions of Western universalism and moral rectitude obscure the Western origins of modern forms of political violence, including Nazism, Fascism, and Stalinism. These and the practices of total war witnessed in the two world wars of the twentieth century are thus relegated to recessive moments in the long Western march to emancipate Man. In short, there is political utility in the notion of the West as a modern, democratic, and prosperous province of the globe – just as other dimensions of the European trajectory are suppressed as a matter of political expedience.

Third, postcolonialism does not dispense with reason and universalism when practitioners propose that imperial Europe was self-interested and liable to historical follies. Nor would postcolonial critics claim that reason and pragmatism are not human faculties. However, postcolonialism is unmoved by the insistence in institutional narratives on the objectivity and neutrality of goals and methods of inquiry. These disciplinary narratives exude the sort of colonial hubris that mistakes one's desire for reality and one's own aspiration for universalism. Indeed, the related disciplinary perspectives are unable to speak to the world as a whole. They are the product of the kind of intellectual and moral presumptuousness that continues to lead to unpredictable (and at times dangerous) adventures disguised as liberation (like the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq) or humanitarian interventions (for instance in Somalia).

These comments are part of the suspicion that postcolonialism harbours toward today's institutional approaches to international relations. These approaches see regimes and 'international morality' as sublime (Kantian) settings for the enactment of value, without prior identification of value or deliberations on the nature or origin of the proposed institutions. Specifically, liberal and neoliberal discourses often appear as rationalizations

of hegemony disguised as universal humanism. For its part, cosmopolitanism risks becoming a tangle of self-serving mis-representations of reason, solidarity, and the common good. Finally, constructivist notions of mutuality and co-constitution of norms appear to the postcolonial ear as an ironic attempt to embellish the resigned entry of constitutionally weakened and politically defeated postcolonies into existing international regimes.

Orientalism and identities

In the English-speaking world, postcolonialism has been associated with the study of identities and cultures. This is because the concept brings to mind such writers and works as Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1979); Gayatri Spivak, *In Other Worlds* (1987); Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986); Homi Bhaba, *The Location of Culture* (1994); Bill Ashcroft *et al.*, *The Empire Writes Back* (1989); and Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontiera* (1987). These authors and their texts have equivalencies in the French, Spanish, and Chinese-speaking worlds. Collectively, they have generated and supported scholarly genres and journals, including *Subaltern Studies*, *Presence Africaine*, and more recently *Nepantla*. Yet, contrary to what has been charged (Hopkins 1997; Todorov 1993), the post-colonial attention to identity and culture is neither chauvinism nor an endorsement of **essentialism** – the idea that identities and culture have their own essential features which are impermeable to others. Rather than proclaim fixity for identity and/or authenticity for culture, postcolonialism appropriates their historical representations for their legitimate uses in more fluid postcolonial contexts.

In most of Africa, for instance, few postcolonial theorists would use the idea of nation without a degree of dread. This is because the colonial populations that now form African 'nations' cannot be said to be linguistically or culturally coherent entities. Frequently, African states brought together under the umbrella of 'nation' are groups that speak different languages and that a mere century ago lived in separate political spaces under their own rules. Thus, the state provides a container for separate groups engaged in exercises of self-invention and self-determination. Likewise, the citizens of Latin American states have to formulate nationhood in fluid dynamics and symbolic competitions between and among the descendants of native Indians and the descendants of European settlers. The processes of self-invention and self-determination produced real effects in these contexts as they do in Africa. They allowed formerly colonial populations to divest themselves of colonial subjectivity, for instance tribes in Africa, in favour of new institutions, including nations. It follows that, in these contexts, notions of authenticity, indigeneity, and the like are embraced anew but not for their prior implications which suggested inherent and fixed qualities. They are embraced because they give historical credibility and legitimacy to political or ethical projects on account of authorship (Warrior 1994; Memmi 1965).

Postcolonialism acknowledges that there are dangers and opportunities contained in these rapid transformations in identity and culture even as it strives to divest science and

politics of Western vestiges of identity and culture. This is particularly the case with historical Western views of 'natives' as the modern 'barbarians'. To illustrate these points, let us return to Said's most celebrated and controversial book: *Orientalism*. The title describes its object, the Oriental and the study of 'his' habits, as a phenomenon born of Europe's dominance of the world, including the Middle East. According to Said, Orientalism does not merely account for the reality of a geo-cultural space called the Orient because it is situated east of Europe. Rather Orientalism is a technique of power based in language and processes of translation of the identities, cultures, and religion of the Middle East. Through these techniques, European (and Western) intellectuals and public officers created a mythical space that only partially bore resemblance to the place it described. Through readings of English texts, Said illustrates how colonial representations of the (formerly) colonized are institutionalized as instruments and/or features of cultural dominance. Accordingly, Orientalist texts have material existence that can be detected only if one places such texts in the context of actual strategies of textual production.

Said helped to develop propositions about the cultural and political impact of European conquest of other regions and thus colonization and colonialism. In the tradition of the French philosopher Michel Foucault, Said claims that the histories revealed in texts are not unearthed from fixed 'burial grounds' of the past. Orientalist histories highlight the terms and stereotypes that formed the foundations of Europe's policies towards this region and linger today in policy-making circles as bases for current policies. In this light, *Orientalism*, first, illustrates cultural and political struggles in all colonies and postcolonies between imperial societies and colonial ones; struggles over **knowledge and power** and their respective ends. Second, Said provides useful methods for analysing imperialism and post-imperial cultural engagements. In this instance, he deconstructs authoritative – that is politically and culturally salient – Western discourses of self and others with an eye to their utility and instrumentalities. In another instance, Said lays the foundations for alternative discourses of self and others. Said also provides empirical and methodological frames for queries about identity and culture. For instance, he highlights how humanism countenanced colonial violence (which may be found in Fanon); how liberal constitutional orders in the USA and elsewhere underwrote racism (Du Bois 1999); and who was 'Man' and who spoke on 'his' behalf and about what subjects (Morrison 1993).

It is an understatement to say that Said provides useful tips for understanding Western political discourses about others. From Said's perspectives, the present terms and Western public understanding of Arab regimes as despotic, traditional, and irredeemable reiterate today yesterday's images of 'Oriental despotism' (Mill, 1806–73) and of the everyday of Bedouins and others as cave-dwelling (Montesquieu, 1689–1755). One can also detect echoes of Orientalism in the now declared long war on terrorism. The war on terrorism, it must be recalled, began with the identification of the terrorist, a specific type of individual or groups of individuals, and not any denunciation or call for the renunciation of the use of violence as a means to an end. The war on terrorism is in actuality a war on pre-assigned terrorists who hold identified beliefs and inclinations. In Western policy circles, the terrorists practise a sordid brand of Islamic fundamentalism; exude moral intolerance and hatred for the West and Western way of life; and are the product of social and political decay in the Muslim world. The war on terrorism dispenses therefore with the political rationality of the terrorists in that it has been determined in advance that the terrorists

have no just cause that warrants the use of force or violence. Because terrorists do not have legitimate or just cause, civilized societies (the 'victims') have the right to violently combat terrorism and, yes, kill the terrorists with all available means – now, we understand, irrespective of international conventions and norms.

Regardless of one's views of current events, one can detect ideological slippages in the Orientalist continuum from actual reactions to actual events to invocations of a dubious cartography of region, religion, and culture. These slippages have caused many critics (and not just postcolonialists) to ask themselves about the interchangeability of Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq; or wonder what it means that Bin-Laden and Saddam Hussein are indistinguishable in political standing; how it became legitimate to advocate the overthrow of the Afghan Talibans and Iraqi Ba'athist for the real sins of Al Qaeda; and, finally, how a majority in the USA and a minority in the UK can still believe in a collusion between Saddam Hussein and Bin-Laden – two men who belong to antagonist political movements.

One explanation might be that discourses on terrorism have found an easy entry point into three tenets of Orientalism: (1) the existence of separate, unequal, and hierarchical spheres of civilizations; (2) the need to maintain the boundaries between them by defending Western civilization's goods or values against corrupt ones without; and (3) the necessity for moderate or secular Arab groups to join the West in introducing progressive values in their region. Again, these ideas are not new. They go as far back as the end of the Crusades. Still, it is untrue that Europe has an original civilization, formed over an unbroken time-span within a homogenous space. Nor is it possible to draw a boundary or a straight line between 'civilized Europe' and the violent cultures without, including a place called the Orient. One would have to negate historical co-dependencies between Europe (and the West) and other regions: for instance, Byzantium and vast expanses beyond it. One would also have to argue that Russians and Bosnian Muslims do not share ethnographic traits with, say, the Franks. Finally, one would have to expunge Moorish Spain from memory as the cultural antecedent of contemporary Spain.

It is somewhat mystifying therefore that international theorists, from Hugo Grotius, in seventeenth-century Netherlands, to James Lorimer, in nineteenth-century England, would erect metaphysical boundaries between Europe and others (Grovogui 1996). They were not alone. The Berlin Africa Conference (1884–5), which finalized colonial boundaries in Africa, was also derivative of Europe's civilizational discourse that masked actually violent processes with humanitarian disguises (Fetter 1979). Today, pretentious civilizational discourses provide sustenance to the belief that Muslim émigrés within the gates of Europe would work in tandem with Muslim barbarians beyond to destroy Europe (Huntington 1998). These views are mistaken about the pervasiveness of political corruption and violence in modern life. Indeed, it is near fictitious to maintain an opposition between 'total European virtue' against 'total Oriental barbarism'. For this opposition to hold, one would have to negate that Nazism and Fascism were manifestations of modern European ideologies and practices. The photographs of atrocities taking place in Abu Ghraib and other US detention centres provide sufficient evidence that techniques of torture and barbarism are not the sole province of Middle East states.

It is beside the point that the 'facts' of the phenomenon of Orientalism are wrong. It functions to sow the seeds of antipathy to the Orient and its religion and culture in the

West. One view is that the European anxiety of being overtaken by Muslims has persisted because Islam does not easily lend itself to translation by the state, at least not by a democratic state. Further, individual European Muslims have remained on the margins of European societies and it is not yet clear how they and the collectives in which they exist will convey their 'gratitude' for the privileges of European citizenship. As the French 'Affaire du Foulard' (or Head Scarf Affair) showed, multitudes of European Muslims are not ready to divest themselves of their prior Islamic traditions as a condition of their entry into European political processes. On this and other scores, Orientalism has succeeded in generating great antipathy towards Islam and Muslims. Would-be defenders of secular Western norms may plead innocent as they help to proliferate mistaken views on the nature of European society and Islam as a religion and practice (Asad 1993). They may also point to the antipathies towards the West among Muslims and by people in the Middle East, with their equal share of unfounded beliefs. But, in a context of power, Orientalism has greater political effects.

It is not exaggerating to suggest that Western anxieties and antipathies towards Muslims are exerting considerable influences on debates about terrorism. For instance, outraged denunciations of Palestinian terrorism might rightly point out the cowardliness of would-be liberators and the devastating psychological toll of suicide bombing on non-combatant Israelis. The latter are cast as innocent victims who are violated in their legitimate expectation of security everywhere. All these concerns are real in that they are pertinent to the ability of people to function in society. But, in the West, few express equally emphatic outrage about the toll of daily violence on Palestinians due to military occupation by Israel. Fewer still ask themselves whether Palestinian children may be psychologically scarred by bombs that slam into any Palestinian building, any time of day, without notice, on the sole Israeli suspicion of an adverse activity in the abode. It would seem that the ethical reflex that demands that bus riders feel safe on their way home to their families, relatives, and friends, would demand that fathers and mothers be able to ensure the safety of their children at home – away from the streets and the riots. Due partly to Orientalism, the Western war on terrorism depends upon moral injunctions (the equivalent of fatwa) against total violence upon civil populations on one side of the civilizational-cum-political divide. By contrast, Western foreign policies most of the time countenance total violence against Palestinian civilians (Muslims and Christians alike) caught on the other side of the civilizational divide.

Power and legitimacy in the international order

Postcolonialism requires some degree of dexterity in thinking. It begins with views of empire and imperialism that contrast with the existing disciplinary common sense. To go back to Kant, Europeans might have experienced imperialism as a positive enterprise. Even a simple expression like *Pax Britannica* suggests that those involved in constructing empire believed that imperialism met metropolitan needs and desires – and therefore approval.

These and similar Western expressions of power, dictums about the use of power, and moral commands are now encoded as international morality. Approaches such as those of the English school remind us that empire and imperialism are the genetic ancestors of international order and morality. Postcolonialism begins with the truism that European institutions have occupied a central place in the development of such concepts as 'international order', 'international morality', and 'international law'. But, postcolonialism asks questions about the international order and international law and morality that do not comply with disciplinary verities or received notions of critique and judgement. Again, the key to postcolonial difference rests in the fact that the experiences of the conquered and colonized contrast with those of the conquerors and colonizers. Whereas the latter might recall *Pax Britannica* among other events as the flawed beginnings of a positive enterprise, the former might recall it as a quilt of nightmarish scenarios lived across time and space.

Non-proliferation from a postcolonial perspective

By way of illustration, I wish to sketch postcolonialism's response to supposed violations of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty. So-called Third World countries universally greeted the idea that the spread of nuclear weapons must be prevented. However, they expressed concerns at the drafting of the treaty that led to two separate but complementary sets of prohibitions: one, against vertical proliferation (or the increase of nuclear capabilities within declared nuclear states), and another, against horizontal proliferation (from country to country). The ban on vertical proliferation has largely been ignored in public debates today in favour of the illegitimacy of the quest by so-called rogue states for nuclear weapons. Organizations such as the Wisconsin Project and the Carnegie Foundation for International Peace have on occasion noted the irregularity of omitting vertical proliferation, but they mostly attribute the danger of nuclear weapons to their possession by small albeit 'mal-governed' postcolonial states. However, if you were an African imbued in the history of arms control, it might occur to you that the political instrumentalization of the ban on weapons of mass destruction under the non-proliferation treaty has a kin in the Brussels Treaty in 1890. That treaty prohibited the sale of breechloaders to Africans between the 20th Parallel North and the 22nd Parallel South (Headrick 1981). The cartography of the ban allowed white regimes in Southern Africa and colonial powers to arm themselves with weapons inaccessible to Africans during the crucial period of formal colonization upon the 1885 Berlin Conference that delineated European colonial expanses in Africa.

From this perspective, political subjectivity in international theory and modern international regimes depends upon the use of violence by the few who monopolize the means of violence against the many who must be denied those means domestically (for national security) or internationally (in the national interest). Paired with the uses of modern weapons in the former colonial expanses subsequent to the two world wars, it is not paranoid to maintain the following belief: international regimes of arms control have largely kept the peace among the great powers but they have permitted ruinous wars against other peoples from Indochina to Africa to the Middle East. What should one make of the omission of such ruinous wars by disciplinary fields like realism and neoliberalism, particularly given their immodest claims to objectivity? There are many answers in postcolonial circles. For instance, realist propositions that mandate the defence of the

national interest through the monopoly of the means and use of violence by the state seem to the postcolonial theorist to be nothing more than a compendium of narratives of salvation without ends and purposes, except for states able and willing to engage in arms races and the extra-territorial pursuit of national interests.

On such matters as nuclear non-proliferation, postcolonialism is at best ambivalent about enforcement under the current conditions – that is an arbitrary adjudication by the few about who should or should not get nuclear weapons.[2] On this particular matter, the postcolonial critic is caught between two untenable positions (Roy 1998). On the one hand, postcolonialism endorses a compelling international regime that would ensure human survival in peace and dignity. In this instance, one must oppose Third World attempts to acquire nuclear weapons. On the other hand, postcolonialism does not condone hegemony and unilateralism disguised as reason. Here, one must combat hegemonic reflexes on the part of so-called rationalists and universalists who would disguise parochial interests as the common good. The resolution of this dilemma can come only if and when the ethico-political language of great powers is exposed as obsolete and illegitimate. Until then, formerly colonial entities and weaker powers will try to secure their own place in the global economy of power. In the meantime, it would be difficult for postcolonialism to fully endorse solutions to global problems that are in no way universal.

Case study: the Suez Canal Crisis

As I have argued, postcolonialism arises from a temporal rupture in European modernity following the end of formal colonial rule. It is preceded by anticolonialism, or opposition to colonial occupation or administration, and other anti-imperialist movements, including resistance to the so-called colonial penetration. In short, postcolonialism signals the demise of the European colonial order and associated truth claims. It makes sense of this postcolonial moment by inviting re-examinations of the intellectual, political, and moral foundations of colonialism. In the political instance, postcolonialism insists on a new international order free of the legacies of colonialism or colonial institutions. As actualized today, postcolonialism has distinct goals that can be traced to the 1955 Bandung Conference, the 1961 Non-Aligned Movement, and Cuba's Tricontinentalism, among others. The Bandung Conference assembled leaders of Africa, Asia, and Latin America under the stewardship of Chou En Lai of China, Jawaharlal Nehru of India, and Sukarno of Indonesia. Its purpose was to decolonize international practices on questions of foreign policy and development. The Non-aligned Movement complemented the spirit of Bandung by underscoring the need for a community of interest to advance the single objective of equality, free association, and mutuality in international affairs. Finally, the idea of Tricontinentalism was to develop a new ethos of power and subjectivity for the three concerned continents through foreign policy.

These and antecedent agendas and demands were partly inspired by the United Nations Charter proclamation of self-determination as one of the cornerstone of the international order. They motivated decisions by Gamal Abdel Nasser and other so-called Third World leaders, including the decision to nationalize the Suez Canal in 1956. Still, most accounts of the Suez Canal Crisis tell a story of a superpower balance of power, uneasy Cold War

alliances, and the 'recklessness' of Third World 'nationalism'. They might even refer to the event as the 'Suez Canal War'. This is because Nasser's ambition to nationalize the Canal resulted in a war of aggression against Egypt by the UK, France, and Israel. The prevailing Western narrative of events leading to the war is based upon simple axioms. To summarize a long story, the Canal was realized under the direction of Ferdinand de Lesseps, between 1854 and 1856, on concessions from Said Pasha, the viceroy of Egypt. It became operational on 15 December 1858 and, under agreement, was to be managed by the Suez Canal Company (also *Compagnie Universelle du Canal Maritime de Suez*) for ninety-nine years. Under European and US agreement, the Canal was to be open to ships of all nations under a plan drafted by Austrian engineer Alois Negrelli. Come 1956, Nasser, a left-leaning Arab Nationalist, if not Pan-Arabist, decided to annul the regime governing the Suez Canal. Nasser was then cast as an ally of the Soviet Union. He was said to be recklessly ambitious with little regard for the subtleties of international law. This narrative takes it for granted that the UK and France were obligated to pre-empt Nasser's actions, if only to deter similar actions by other Third World activists. Thus, the UK and France took umbrage at Nasser's decision to take over the Canal. Israel was worried about the 'right of passage' of ships bound for the port of Eilat.

The above narrative also poses the reactions of the world's two major powers – then, the USA and the Soviet Union – as logical and delicate balancing acts. Accordingly, the USA was a NATO ally of France and the UK but, on the geopolitical schemes of the Cold War, the Hungarian Crisis was a more efficacious terrain to fight Soviet power. The USA also faced a potential public relations embarrassment in the Third World if it criticized the Soviet Union's military intervention in Hungary while condoning military intervention by former colonial powers in one of their former provinces. The Soviet Union was allied with Egypt but had greater worries for the Hungarian Crisis, which threatened the very idea of communism. To show consistency in projecting its powers in defence of its allies, the Soviet Union had also promised to defend Egypt. In the end, the Franco-UK-Israeli operation to take the Canal was highly successful from a military point of view. But, from a geopolitical perspective, it proved a diplomatic and ideological disaster for the UK and France. So too was the Israeli occupation of the Egyptian Sinai.

Questioning conventional accounts of the Suez 'crisis'

This widely circulated reading satisfies realists and others, but it is a bit removed from the primary issues underlying the takeover of the Suez Canal by Egypt. To postcolonialism, the letter of the Suez agreements is not unimpeachable, and the decision by Britain, France, and Israel to wage war on Egypt was illogical, absurd, and reckless in its own way. For explanation, imagine this writer in his introductory course in international law on the topic of international regimes of waterways. Guinea, his country of birth, had been independent from France for less than two decades. The professor, a Frenchman, wrote on the board the name of three canals: the Suez Canal, the Panama Canal, and the Kiel Canal (Kaiser-Wilhelm-Kanal). He then proclaimed confidently that, although entirely within Egyptian territory, Suez was an international passageway. The Panama Canal, which cuts across the state of Panama, was actually an American canal. The Kiel Canal, on the other hand, was German property because it was located in Germany. You can imagine that, if

the professor intended to communicate respect for international law, he was not successful. While the professor perceived normative certainty, this student and his friends perceived colonial hubris and arrogance. We could not make sense of the argument that Germany claimed proprietorship of the Kiel Canal due to its location but Egypt could not claim Suez on accounts of colonial understandings. We were particularly incensed when, through an indiscretion, the law professor mentioned that the excavation of the Suez Canal was due mostly to the forced labour of poor Egyptians. Every student in the class could recall that unequal treaties, forced or slave labour, and discriminatory international regimes had in fact been the hallmark of colonialism!

The internationalization of the Suez Canal under private European management appeared to us to be a throwback to European notions of 'imperial sovereignty'. Thus, whereas we were supposed to be outraged by Nasser's 'adventure', we wished we had been there for the cheers. Nasser was in fact right that the letter and spirit of colonial agreements were inconsistent with postwar notions of self-determination. In this postcolonial contest, Nasser was not alone. Nor was it unique to this circumstance that former colonial powers attempted to preserve colonial privileges against Egyptian claims. Nasser was preceded by Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran (1953) who was removed from power by Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, the Shah of Iran, and pro-monarchy forces in a coup orchestrated by UK and US intelligence agencies. His sin: the desire to renegotiate turn-of-century oil deals that gave control of Iranian oil to UK firms. Mossadegh and Nasser were nonetheless followed by many more Third World leaders and movements from Africa to Asia and Latin America. However corrupt it may appear today, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting States (OPEC) was partly connected to postcolonial insurgency against such 'residual colonial forms' as reflected in the international regimes on waterways.

You might wonder why a simple lecture would offend anyone. But you would be mistaken in thinking that the justifications of unequal treaties, forced or slave labour, and discriminatory international regimes were mere political acts undertaken as a matter of expediency. This is not the case. Such actions were steeped in specific ways of thinking and relating to the world that were common among European and Western elites. Philosophers and political theorists condoned such actions and their processes through proprietary articulations of society and law; labour and property; and reason and moral sentiments. From the seventeenth century, European thinkers, including French *philosophes* and British utilitarians, developed historical understandings of societies and their institutions as bases for merits and entitlements. These understandings were complex and at times contradictory, and outside of the aims of this introduction. But, to elaborate on an earlier theme, they were grounded in presumed relationships of peoples to territory and economy, leading to conclusions that 'natives' had no firm moral connections to land that may result in property. The central view was that natives were less industrious and lacked reason to properly perceive the collective good. In contrast, Europeans were assumed to be endowed with reason to manage industry, to aspire to property, and to be nobly motivated. They were thus to bring science and value to the less fortunate, including through coercion. One could therefore extract concessions from a subservient viceroy, enlist forced labour to dig a canal, make money on it, and call it the common good. In this light, Nasser's action annulled in one stroke centuries-old European assumptions about the relationships of 'native' populations to nature (or their environment) by reclaiming Egyptian rights to

the Canal. These assumptions, eloquently framed by the likes of John Locke (1632–1704) and Montesquieu (1689–1755), had been the bases for Europe's extra-regional claims to sovereignty and property.

These justifications have not disappeared from disciplinary narratives today. When it is convenient, the discipline of International Relations has embraced past 'imperial follies' and their rationalizations as 'state practice'. It is not uncommon to come across the axiom that great powers have the greatest influence in the world and, as such, should be willing to use their capabilities to nudge international order in particular directions. This assertion is made without questions about how particular great powers use their influence and the means and ends to which they apply their capabilities. Fortunately, considerable minorities among the citizens of great powers are somewhat sceptical of the implied wisdom.[3] From a postcolonial perspective, such truisms reflexively evoke memories of prejudices, discriminations, and privations. In such instances, the discipline appears more like an instrument of empire than a science.

Conclusion

Postcolonialism does not merely seek out points of convergence on formal planes of understanding of already-existing norms. Postcolonialism aspires to produce new political forms based on contingent and empathetic understandings of the trajectories of human societies. In this sense, postcolonialism conveys a sense of ethical and political possibilities after colonialism. It favours an ethos of egalitarianism, social justice, and solidarity. It has faith in its own reasonableness and decency (Scott 1999). Postcolonialism is also certain of its responsibility and duty towards other members of the international community. Postcolonialism, in fact, aspires to a different kind of universalism, one based on deliberation and contestations among diverse political entities, with the aim of reaching functional agreements on questions of global concern. This kind of universalism differs from one resulting from universal injunctions by self-assured subjects.

In these ends, postcolonialism maintains consistent positions on politics that do not distinguish between the domestic, national, and international spheres. In the international instance, postcolonialism is mindful of the failure of hegemonic powers to integrate postcolonial states into the decision-making processes of the international system. Yet, postcolonialism's ambivalence on these and other questions of international morality does not flow from outright rejection of systems of thought, whether rationalism, universalism, humanism, liberalism, and the like. Postcolonial antipathy is directed at the imperial desire for hegemony, or the aspiration to set the terms and rules of politics and culture unilaterally; to adjudicate international outcomes singly; and/or to manage knowledge and the memory of international relations. In the domestic instance, postcolonialism also denounces, with equal vigour, the failure of postcolonial elites to integrate co-citizens – and/or domestic social and cultural formations – into democratic structures of governance within the state. Postcolonialism, thus, is a broad commentary on present models of politics, economy, and ethics.

In both instances, postcolonialism must confront anxieties of survival that arise among subjects in any fluid and uncertain context. Again, postcolonialism embraces fluxes and the resulting opportunities, including the hybridity of culture and identity (Bhabha 1994). To do so, postcolonialism must rethink the boundaries between self and others (Anzaldúa 1987) as well as recognize transculturation as an inevitable historical process (Moreiras 2001). Thus, postcolonialism seeks to connect with progressive elements at home and in the former metropolises in order to productively engage the fields of culture and identity to eliminate violence and/or escape the problematic legacies of class hegemony, gendered exclusion, colonial domination, and capitalist exploitation (Scott 1999). All these themes are present in postcolonialism as articles or declarations of faith. The postcolonial order envisaged by postcolonialism would be more inclusive and solicitous. This future world would be based on tolerance toward self-criticisms and criticisms of the self by others; reverence for contingency and historical flows; and more fluid understandings of values, ethics, and the common good. You would not object to such a world, would you? If not, then you must always open your mind to new (and just) possibilities!

? QUESTIONS

1. Why is 'postcolonialism' as a phenomenon difficult to define and pinpoint as a single theoretical tradition?

2. What is the author's definition of postcolonialism?

3. What are some of the goals and agendas of postcolonialism?

4. How does postcolonialism approach 'truth' and 'knowledge'?

5. Discuss the postcolonial critique of Immanuel Kant and subsequent theories based upon the work of this theorist.

6. What is the postcolonial objection to 'human rights' as a 'universal value'?

7. How does Said's book *Orientalism* illustrate and elucidate the relationship between Europe and the East?

8. Describe the relationship between Orientalism and the discourses on terrorism including the 'war against terror'.

9. How does postcolonialism's response to the Non-proliferation Treaty illustrate its opinion about Western ideas of international morality and law?

10. What is the significance of the internationalization of the Suez Canal for postcolonialism?

11. What is the postcolonial approach to the future?

12. Compare the approaches of liberal internationalism, constructivism, and postcolonialism.

≋ FURTHER READING

▦ Darby, Phillip (2000), *At the Edge of International Relations: Postcolonialism, Gender and Dependency* (Cambridge: Continuum International Publishing Group). Examines how a postcolonial perspective contributes or challenges traditional conventions in International Relations theory.

▨ **Spivak, Gayatri Chakavorty (1999),** *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* **(Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press).** Divided between Philosophy, Literature, History, and Culture, this work gives extensive insight into the colonial and postcolonial paradoxes in the Western intellectual tradition and its viability for contemporary politics and ethics.

▨ **Nevzat, Soguk (1999),** *States and Strangers: Refugees and Displacements of Statecraft* **(Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press).** An important work on the ways refugee and refugee law challenge traditional concepts in International Relations such as the state and the citizen.

▨ **Chowdry, G. and Nair, S. (2002) (eds),** *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations; Reading Race, Gender and Class,* **Routledge Advances in International Relations Global Politics (London and New York: Routledge).** This collection covers a wide range of contemporary topics in International Relations from questions of the secular to recent debates over the future of human rights.

▨ **Grovogui, Siba N. (2006),** *Beyond Eurocentrism and Anarchy: Memories of International Order and Institutions* **(New York: Palgrave Macmillan).** Revisits a postwar encounter between a group of French-African intellectuals and Western elites as evidence of the importance of a genuinely global and equivocal perspective on International Relations.

▨ **Krishna, Sankaran (1999),** *Postcolonial Insecurities: India, Sri Lanka, and the Question of Nationhood,* **Borderlines series (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota).** Addresses the question of nation and state formation as a political and ethical project.

▨ **Biswas, Shampa (2001), ' "Nuclear Apartheid" as Political Position: Race as a Postcolonial Resource?',** *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political,* **26/4: 485–522 (38).** Continues the discussions about the colonial legacy of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty.

▨ **Lynn Doty, Roxanne (1996)** *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North–South Relations,* **Borderlines Series (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press).** Engages how policy-making is informed and even proceeded by cultural and racial representations. Doty takes the position that politics is fundamentally interpretative.

IMPORTANT WEBSITES

○ Postcolonial studies at Emory websites
  http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/contents.html

○ Edward W. Said
  http://sun3.lib.uci.edu/~scctr/wellbeck/said/index.html

Visit the Online Resource Centre that accompanies this book for lots of interesting additional material. www.oxfordtextbooks.co.uk/orc/dunne/

13 Green Theory

ROBYN ECKERSLEY

Chapter contents

Reader's guide

This chapter explores the ways in which environmental concerns have influenced International Relations (IR) theory. It provides a brief introduction to the ecological crisis and the emergence of green theorizing in the social sciences and humanities in general, noting its increasing international orientation, and then tracks the status and impact of environmental issues and green thinking in IR theory. It shows how orthodox IR theories, such as neorealism and neoliberalism,[1] have constructed environment problems merely as a 'new issue area' that can be approached through pre-existing theoretical frameworks. These approaches are contrasted with green IR theory, which challenges the state-centric framework, rationalist analysis, and ecological blindness of orthodox IR theories and offers a range of new green interpretations of international justice, development, modernization, and security. The case study of climate change is explored to highlight the diversity of theoretical approaches, including the distinctiveness of green approaches, in understanding global environmental change.