

RESEARCH ARTICLE

# The tripartite structure of critical international theory

Charlie Thame 

Faculty of Political Science, Thammasat University, Bangkok, Thailand  
Email: [thamec@tu.ac.th](mailto:thamec@tu.ac.th)

(Received 09 November 2024; revised 30 June 2025; accepted 06 July 2025)

## Abstract

The breakdown of liberal hegemony, the rise of the New Right, and the violent realignment of world order have been accompanied by a retreat from traditional humanist concerns in critical international theory, including emancipation, political subjectivity, social totality, universal history, and the anticipatory-utopian dimension of critique. Scholars have identified numerous shortcomings in first-generation and contemporary critical International Relations (IR), and our discipline still questions its purpose and object of study. This article proposes a more radical and realistic approach to critical international theory based on a reappraisal of Andrew Linklater's oeuvre. It frames the critical project in IR as a Lakatosian research programme and calls for a progressive problem shift that foregrounds what Linklater, drawing from Kant and Marx, calls the necessarily tripartite structure of critical theory. I argue that by tracing an alternative path through classical sources of the tradition, pivoting from Hegel and the deep social relationalism that follows, while integrating a tripartite commitment with a more rigorous reflexive methodology, we can revitalise the emancipatory approach to IR and provide renewed purpose and direction to the discipline. Grounded in a left-Hegelian tradition of thought, the argument aspires to resonate with other critical theoretical traditions both within and beyond IR.

**Keywords:** critical theory; critical international relations theory; international theory; Frankfurt School; Andrew Linklater; Hegel; Marx

Our task is continually to struggle, lest mankind become completely disheartened by the frightful happenings of the present, lest man's belief in a worthy, peaceful and happy direction of society perish from the earth.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Horkheimer [1937] 2002, 272.

## Introduction

A fundamental function of critical theory is to provide society with insights into the structures, institutions, and dynamics that link its parts together and influence our thinking and actions. It is distinguished by a commitment to reflexivity, historicism, totality, and emancipatory change.<sup>2</sup> Yet global turbulence, transnational waves of insurrectionary uprisings, growing popular support for the New Right, violent realignments of world order, and consummate breakdown of liberal hegemony have largely been accompanied by an incongruous lull in theoretical activities in critical international relations (IR). A proliferation of ‘turns’ has contributed to the fragmentation and pluralisation of its theoretical terrain,<sup>3</sup> while there has been a shift of emphasis towards *methods* of critical inquiry,<sup>4</sup> the *practice* of critique,<sup>5</sup> and the ‘*making*’ of international things.<sup>6</sup> This encourages collaborative, empirically grounded, and future-oriented research and closes the gap between theory and practice. However, a preoccupation among reflexivist scholars with radicalising a commitment to critical self-reflection while rejecting traditional epistemological and political commitments to systemic analysis and revolutionary change has left contemporary strands of critical theory suspicious of sociological and structural modes of analysis and ‘modernist’ notions of totality, humanity, and emancipation.<sup>7</sup> Consequently, while interest in new materialist philosophies has generated valuable post-humanist scholarship on challenges from the Anthropocene<sup>8</sup> to algorithmic governmentality,<sup>9</sup> exploration of humanist concerns, such as freedom, agency, and collective struggles over social and political institutions, has atrophied. Given our political and theoretical conjuncture, we might consider reasserting traditional concerns with social totality,<sup>10</sup> universal history,<sup>11</sup> metanarratives of emancipation,<sup>12</sup> political subjectivity, and the anticipatory-utopian aspect of critical theory.<sup>13</sup>

This article proposes a more radical and realistic approach to critical international theory. It argues that reconsidering and recentring key elements of the tradition that have been neglected could help revitalise critical IR’s sense of purpose and ambition. It does so by reflecting on Andrew Linklater’s enduring contribution to IR, motivated in part by his passing in 2023, providing occasion for an evaluative reappraisal of his body of work as such,<sup>14</sup> and personal respect for a scholar who has long been a source of inspiration. Its central argument is that Linklater’s most cogent and formative idea has been unduly neglected: what he calls the necessarily tripartite structure of critical theory. This is the notion that any critical theoretical approach remains incomplete

<sup>2</sup>Jahn 1998, 614; 2022, 80.

<sup>3</sup>Heiskanen and Beaumont 2023.

<sup>4</sup>E.g., Aradau and Huysmans 2014; Lacatus, Schade, and Yao 2015; Lai and Roccu 2019.

<sup>5</sup>E.g., Austin et al. 2019.

<sup>6</sup>Austin and Leander 2023.

<sup>7</sup>As argued by Conway 2021.

<sup>8</sup>Eroukhmanoff and Harker 2017.

<sup>9</sup>Aradau 2023; Rouvroy 2020.

<sup>10</sup>Koddenbrock 2015.

<sup>11</sup>Buck-Morss 2009.

<sup>12</sup>Butzlaff 2022.

<sup>13</sup>Benhabib 1986, 142.

<sup>14</sup>As opposed to focusing on major statements/strands of it. E.g., *Review of International Studies* 25 (1) (1999) and 43 (4) (2017). For a posthumous tribute, see Hill 2025.

unless it combines normative, sociological, and praxeological analysis. This enkindled an ambitious synoptic approach to the international that dealt with grandiose themes, including citizenship, community, harm, violence, and civilisation over broad sweeps of human history. However, Linklater's influence as a pioneer of critical IR waned later in his career, considering his own emancipatory project attracted more critics than champions, and a new generation of scholars largely defined their approaches in opposition to his work. I suggest that valid criticism of the content of his oeuvre has detracted from its tripartite form, and that widespread rejection of the former has led to neglect of the latter, contributing to fragmentation and retrenchment of the critical project *in toto*.<sup>15</sup> I do not defend the idiosyncrasies of Linklater's project, attributed to his mistaken insistence that critical theory must be 'post-Marxist.' Related deficiencies notwithstanding, I argue that a radical reconsideration of his tripartite structure that follows a different path through the classical sources of critical theory, from Kant to Hegel and Marx *without* returning to Kant, could help provide renewed vitality and coherence to the emancipatory project in IR.

In so doing, I endorse the Frankfurt School's aim of developing German Idealism into a critical theory of society with my suggestion that critical IR could be conceived and evaluated as a Lakatosian research programme.<sup>16</sup> This entails epistemological and political positions about science, rationality, modernity, and historical progress that other critical theorists would oppose. Not least because these concepts are part of the paradox of the Enlightenment, and it is widely understood that Frankfurt School theorists paid little attention to gender, race, and colonialism, advancing Eurocentric notions of freedom, subjectivity, and emancipation.<sup>17</sup> I view these as reasons for rectification, not rejection, and my argument aspires to resonate with these critics and others working with a more expansive understanding of the tradition by addressing scholarship oriented by the classical *sources* of critical theory – namely, Kant, Hegel, and Marx – and those interested in studying the meaning, conditions, and possibilities of human freedom in IR.<sup>18</sup> Many of whom are influenced by Hegel, Marx, and/or Foucault, sharing a commitment to critique in pursuit of human autonomy; yet there seems to be an unpropitious misconception that Linklater's neo-Kantianism is somehow an integral rather than contingent component of critical IR (or at least its Frankfurt School strand), marginalising contributions from those working from different conceptions of freedom. This encompasses those drawing on Hegel and Marx, who encourage a more immanent and worldly conception of freedom than Kant (a theme extended by postcolonial thinkers such as Fanon), but also Adorno, Foucault, and Butler, who re-signify emancipation in post-progressivist and post-utopian, or 'negativistic' ways.<sup>19</sup> Some remain suspicious of metanarratives of emancipation and tend to emphasise (micro)practices of freedom over (macro)processes of collective liberation, because emancipatory struggles have commonly been accompanied by new

<sup>15</sup>For notable critiques of his political theory, critical theory, and historical sociology, see Jahn 1998, Walker 1999, Lawson 2017, and Schmid 2023.

<sup>16</sup>Horkheimer [1937] 2002; Lakatos 1970; following Brown 2013.

<sup>17</sup>Adorno and Horkheimer 2002; Allen 2016; Bhambra 2021; Fraser 1985.

<sup>18</sup>The latter characterisation is Shapcott's (2008, 327). Alternative sources include Nietzsche and Freud.

<sup>19</sup>Blühdorn et al. 2022. Ashley and Walker (1990) explicitly claim that their poststructuralist theorising is in a 'register of freedom,' albeit a Foucauldian commitment to critique aimed at transgressing boundaries and opening space for concrete freedom. Hegel's importance for critical IR is underappreciated (but see Brincat 2009 and Thame 2013).

forms of control and domination.<sup>20</sup> Feminist approaches also rightly insist that realising gender equality is an integral part of universal human liberation. In short, various critical traditions, despite their differences, share emancipatory goals and commonly generate normative, sociological, and/or praxeological analysis in pursuit of them.<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, by distinguishing its abstract metatheoretical form from the neo-Kantian content given to it by Linklater, I suggest that his proposition about the necessarily tripartite structure of critical theory might prove useful for the wider tradition.

My argument is developed in six parts. The first situates it in the context of debates about the state of international theory and critical international theory. The second conceptualises critical IR as a Lakatosian research programme, postulating first principles and auxiliary hypotheses. The third and fourth outline and assess Linklater's oeuvre with reference to the two most important auxiliary hypotheses that shaped it: (i) the necessarily tripartite structure of critical theory and (ii) the need to 'reconstruct' the historical materialist problematic, attributing its major shortcomings to the latter. The fifth traces a different path through the classical sources of the tradition, showing that Linklater never fully appreciated the deep social relationism that follows from the advances that Hegel and Marx made on Kant. The sixth shows how a more radical and realistic critical international theory could be developed according to a more rigorous methodological approach that integrates sociological, normative, and praxeological inquiry.

### The 'End of IR' and the stagnation of the critical project

In a 2007 *Millennium* article, Christine Sylvester observes that IR narrowed into numerous theoretical 'camps' following the fourth debate, centring around particularistic notions of the international and its key relations, with minimal agreement between them as to what the field is about.<sup>22</sup> This led her to suggest that IR theory as a shared endeavour had come to an end, prompting a bout of introspection and stocktaking across the discipline. This has come to be known as the 'End of IR' debate, which has yet to reach a conclusive denouement. The journal's 2025 annual symposium addresses the topic 'After International Relations,' asking *inter alia* 'what is now our object of study?' and 'for what purpose?'.<sup>23</sup> Dunne et al. argue in their intervention that IR's comparative advantage over other social sciences is that it is theory-led, theory-literate, and theory-concerned, but express concern that theory development has been in decline since the early 2000s.<sup>24</sup> For Chris Brown, this has been most pronounced among critical/late modern approaches relative to liberal, realist, and constructivist ones due to their limited success advancing distinctive research programmes since the fourth debate and thereby developing an integrated body of knowledge about the international on the basis of their 'hard core' central

<sup>20</sup>This point has deep roots in existentialist (e.g., Nietzsche) and phenomenological (e.g., Heidegger) sources of the tradition; Foucault is one of its most influential exponents. Michelsen 2021 helpfully distinguishes divergent approaches as synoptic and anti-synoptic or 'noncumulative.'

<sup>21</sup>I thank an anonymous reviewer for emphasising this point.

<sup>22</sup>Sylvester 2007.

<sup>23</sup>*Millennium* Volume 54, Call for Papers 'After International Relations: Beyond Critique,' March 2025.

<sup>24</sup>Dunne, Hansen, and Wight 2013.

propositions. He attributes this to their rejection of neo-positivist social science, claiming they tend to develop theories that are more ‘world-revealing’ than ‘action-guiding’.<sup>25</sup>

Similarly, glum conclusions have been drawn by exponents of Frankfurt School critical IR. Shortly after a 2007 special issue of the *Review of International Studies* took stock of its achievements, a collection of interviews and reflections by leading contributors was published, motivated by a sense that the critical project had reached an impasse.<sup>26</sup> This view has since become a common refrain. Sympathetic critics have identified a litany of shortcomings, including a loss of focus,<sup>27</sup> Eurocentric gaze,<sup>28</sup> detachment from contemporary world historical conditions,<sup>29</sup> and failure to engage with political practice and inform emancipatory praxis.<sup>30</sup> Several have concluded that critical IR has stagnated,<sup>31</sup> with some going so far as to claim the epithet ‘critical’ has become meaningless and should be dropped from scholarly parlance entirely.<sup>32</sup> Linklater’s work has been a frequent target of criticism, particularly its Habermasian and then Eliasian bent, often used as a point of departure by a new generation of scholars who have sought inspiration from other critical theorists such as Adorno, Horkheimer, Honneth, Gramsci, Lenin, and/or Marx in their attempts to reground and revive the critical project.<sup>33</sup>

Whether we are convinced by Brown’s assessment or not is of less significance for the argument here than the criteria by which he comes to it. Specifically, a loosely Lakatosian conception of a research programme, defined as a collection of theories and techniques clustered around ‘hard core’ central propositions, supported by auxiliary hypotheses that help generate new knowledge, new ways of looking at, understanding, and acting in the world, considered expendable or amendable when their validity is contested by new empirical discoveries.<sup>34</sup> This encourages us to embrace theoretical pluralism as a hallmark of IR as a mature discipline while retaining the ability to evaluate the contribution of respective approaches on their own terms, according to the extent to which they successfully advance their own research programmes by progressively generating empirical bodies of knowledge about the world. The object of appraisal is a set of theories rather than a single theory, and the aim is to develop their heuristic power based on a sophisticated methodological falsificationalism that blends an empiricist determination to learn primarily from experience with a Kantian activist approach to the theory of knowledge.<sup>35</sup> Competing research programmes are considered successful to the extent that they lead to progressive problem shifts, characterised by the adjustment or replacement of auxiliary hypotheses that defend the hard core, contributing in turn to the generation

<sup>25</sup>Brown 2013, 484, 489, 494.

<sup>26</sup>Ashley 1981; Cox 1981; Nunes, Lima, and Brincat 2012; Rengger and Thirkell-White 2007.

<sup>27</sup>Behr and Shani 2021.

<sup>28</sup>Bhambra 2021; Brincat 2012; 2018; Hobson 2017; Ling 2017.

<sup>29</sup>Fluck 2014; Jahn 2021; Koddenbrock 2015; Schmid 2023.

<sup>30</sup>Kurki 2011; Pahnke 2021; Tatum 2021.

<sup>31</sup>Conway 2021; Jahn 2021; Schmid 2018; 2023.

<sup>32</sup>Michelsen 2021.

<sup>33</sup>E.g., Bieler and Morton 2003; Brincat 2011; 2012; Fluck 2014; Koddenbrock 2015; Pahnke 2021;

cf. Saramago 2021; 2024.

<sup>34</sup>Brown 2013, 488; Lakatos 1970.

<sup>35</sup>Lakatos 1970, 122.

of greater empirical content, discovery of new facts, and corroboration of theoretical advances through empirical validation.<sup>36</sup>

What follows is an attempt to frame the critical project in IR in such terms. My aim is not to offer a catalogue of the tradition, or to gatekeep, but rather to trace in outline a collective endeavour while identifying key points of internal differentiation. A secondary objective is to assess Linklater's project, showing how it advanced first principles and can be distinguished by two further hypotheses not commonly shared by other critical IR theorists. I acknowledge that certain traditions of theory will object to being evaluated according to Lakatosian standards for not doing justice to their epistemological and methodological approaches, and/or the progressive temporality of research that it implies – in contrast to Khun's cyclical revolutionary temporality, or Feyerabend's anarchistic temporal pluralism, for instance.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, I propose that a Lakatosian lens offers a compelling meta-theoretical framework for understanding divergent post-positivist approaches to international theory, especially those taking orientation from Hegel and Marx. It is more accepting of theoretical pluralism than Khun's paradigmatic structure and more consistent with Hegelian–Marxian approaches to time, scientific progress, and truth than Feyerabend's epistemological anarchism. Lakatos's sophisticated fallibilistic realism – with its convergent commitment to approximating truth more closely over time through progressive theoretical development and empirical testing – is particularly valuable for Frankfurt School IR theory, which shares Lakatos's philosophical assumptions and has faced sustained criticism for failing to translate its anti-positivist epistemological position into a sustained research programme.<sup>38</sup>

### First principles and auxiliary hypotheses

Conjecturing as to what hard-core first principles characterise critical IR could begin by stating that it deploys scholarly critique that integrates normative commitments and empirically informed social and political analysis of social conflicts, contradictions, and tendencies within and across the international for purposes of social transformation.<sup>39</sup> We could then further delineate specific approaches branching off according to auxiliary hypotheses such as an explicit commitment to the emancipatory aims of critique, like those drawing on and extending contributions made by theorists associated with the Frankfurt School. This broad formulation has the benefit of including not only the latter but also those like Robert Cox who avoided the term 'emancipation' because the concept is loaded, essentially contested, and/or different intellectual influences, but who are nevertheless recognised as important contributors to critical IR.<sup>40</sup> Another benefit is that it encompasses approaches influenced by other strands of critical theory and social movements such as feminism,<sup>41</sup> poststructuralism,<sup>42</sup> postcolonial/decolonial theory,<sup>43</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Ibid., 120.

<sup>37</sup>I thank an anonymous reviewer and the editors for flagging this objection and signalling these alternative perspectives. Godfrey-Smith 2021, chap. 6.

<sup>38</sup>E.g., by Jackson 2011 and Hamati-Ataya 2013.

<sup>39</sup>Drawing on and extending that offered for critical theory by Celikates and Flynn 2023.

<sup>40</sup>E.g., Ashley 1981; Neufeld 1995; see Brincat 2016; Cox 2012, 23–4.

<sup>41</sup>Ackerley 2012; Brown 2006.

<sup>42</sup>E.g., Ashley and Walker 1990.

<sup>43</sup>Bhambra 2021.

and/or psychoanalysis<sup>44</sup> that sometimes but not always explicitly cite freedom, liberation, and/or emancipation as orienting normative commitments.

The next step would be to identify distinctive theories or approaches and their auxiliary hypotheses. For instance, Andrew Linklater's project follows first principles by integrating a normative commitment to moral cosmopolitanism<sup>45</sup> with empirically informed analyses of citizenship,<sup>46</sup> community,<sup>47</sup> and harm,<sup>48</sup> with the aim of contributing to the progressive realisation of increasingly solidaristic forms of international and world society.<sup>49</sup> In addition to his commitment to the emancipatory aims of critique, his trajectory was distinguished by at least two further auxiliary hypotheses: (i) the necessarily tripartite structure of critical theory, a position outlined and defended below; and (ii) his view that the Marxian historical materialist problematic needed to be 'reconstructed.' This was shared with other neo-Kantian and post-Marxist critical theorists such as Jürgen Habermas, but is rejected here and by several other contributors to critical IR.<sup>50</sup>

In contrast, Robert Cox's contribution adheres to first principles by being guided by the pursuit of goals broadly related to an emancipatory politics. It is underpinned by historical/empirical analysis of social structures of hegemony and imperialism within and across the international, aiming to identify conflicts and contradictions in and between social forces, states, and world order in which possibilities exist for world politics to be changed through the strategic exercise of human agency.<sup>51</sup> In terms of auxiliary hypotheses, Cox's project relied on an essentially Marxian (i.e., Gramscian) historical materialist sociology concerned with relations of hierarchy, domination, class, and exploitation in social relations of production, focused on those disadvantaged by capitalist globalisation and restructuring of the international.<sup>52</sup> Although he did not elucidate his normative commitments and rejected characterisations of his work as 'emancipatory,' the politics of his project nevertheless includes emancipatory themes such as freedom from slavery, recovering control over public life, and subordinating the world economy to a regime of social equity.<sup>53</sup>

### The tripartite structure of critical theory

The scope and ambition of Linklater's project mean he has justifiably been credited with being the 'foremost critical theorist of IR'<sup>54</sup> and (perhaps too flatteringly) 'one of the leading social and political theorists working in the world today.'<sup>55</sup> This stature owes much to his commitment to what he called the necessarily tripartite structure of critical theory, which shaped his thinking from the beginning of his career to the end. Notably, this was inspired by Kant and Marx, not the Frankfurt School.

<sup>44</sup>Zevnik and Mandelbaum 2023.

<sup>45</sup>Linklater 1978; 2007.

<sup>46</sup>Linklater 1990b.

<sup>47</sup>Linklater 1998.

<sup>48</sup>Linklater 2011b; 2017.

<sup>49</sup>Linklater and Suganami 2006.

<sup>50</sup>E.g., Bieler and Morton 2003; Koddenbrock 2015; Schmid 2018.

<sup>51</sup>Brincat 2016; Cox 1987; Cox and Sinclair 1996.

<sup>52</sup>Cox 1999, 17.

<sup>53</sup>See *ibid.*, 26–7; Cox 2012; Brincat 2016.

<sup>54</sup>Rengger 2001, 97.

<sup>55</sup>Lang 2011, 1509.



According to his lifelong friend, colleague, and collaborator Hidemi Suganami, Linklater was probably first influenced by Raymond Aron's *Peace and War*, which he read in preparation for his final exams as an undergraduate in 1970/71 and which comprises of four parts: Theory, Sociology, History, and Praxeology.<sup>56</sup> Linklater's first three books – *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations*,<sup>57</sup> *Beyond Realism and Marxism*,<sup>58</sup> and *Transformation of Political Community*<sup>59</sup> – were all framed by this idea, which received sustained attention and detailed development in articles published in the early 1990s in *Alternatives* and *Millennium*.<sup>60</sup> It ultimately led to his trilogy of work on harm, violence, and civilisation,<sup>61</sup> and he reiterated his commitment to it in an interview in 2012. Asked about the future tasks of critical theory, he responded:

Going back to Kant and Marx, I believe there are three parts to it. First, the normative dimension, which is concerned with ethical ideas and their philosophical justification. Secondly, the sociological dimension, which analyses how people are simultaneously bound together in specific communities and divided from other peoples, how more and more people have become more and more interconnected over time, and how the tensions and loyalties to particular communities and pressures to develop 'post-national' practices are played out. The sociological dimension is where I think there is still an enormous amount to be done; however, the issues are slowly moving to the centre of the discipline. Finally, there is the praxeological dimension, which enquires into the moral and cultural resources that can be harnessed to the project of enabling people to live together amicably, with the minimum of violent and non-violent harm and with an increased capacity to cooperate in dealing with global problems that are in danger of spiralling out of control. This is what I call the tripartite structure of critical theory. It comes down to us from Kant and Marx and, in my view, has not been surpassed.<sup>62</sup>

As Linklater explained, his tripartite project recalls the three-layered approaches to IR found in Kant and Marx. In Kant, a normative defence of perpetual peace is found in the categorical imperative, tied in turn to a sociological account of the prospects for its realisation through logics of development (i.e., the transformative rise of republicanism and the evolution of commercial relations), and an adherence to an ethical foreign policy that would not undermine the extension of cosmopolitan obligations beyond the nation-state.<sup>63</sup> Similarly, the Marxian project of historical materialism entails a normative vision of free and equal producers, tied to an explanatory sociological framework according to which the internationalisation of capitalist social relations would erode constraints on the development of an increasingly cosmopolitan community, along with a praxeological commitment to proletarian

<sup>56</sup>Personal email 2023; Aron [1966] 2017.

<sup>57</sup>Linklater 1990b.

<sup>58</sup>Linklater 1990a.

<sup>59</sup>Linklater 1998.

<sup>60</sup>Linklater 1990c; 1992.

<sup>61</sup>Linklater 2011b; 2017; 2021. Hill 2025 refers to these as the second of his two trilogies, Linklater's first three books comprising the first.

<sup>62</sup>Linklater 2011a, 53–4.

<sup>63</sup>Linklater 1990c, 139; 1998, 4.



internationalism that could realise higher possibilities of human freedom immanent within capitalist society.<sup>64</sup>

The lesson that Linklater drew from Kant and Marx is that the normative, sociological, and praxeological are interdependent areas of inquiry, with a posture in one affecting positions taken in the others. He noted that it is usually that taken at the sociological level that holds the key to other levels of discussion, offering the example of the sociological emphasis in realism on the inescapable logic of geopolitical competition and war which, he argues, carries 'the implication that normative analyses of alternative world orders are redundant and inquiries into the character of "reformist" policy are otiose.' On the other hand, the competing claim that patterns of social and economic change have widened the sense of obligation and community beyond the nation-state conversely entails the implication that an 'analysis of the normative purpose of foreign policy and of alternative global economic and political structures immediately acquires greater significance.'<sup>65</sup>

Of the two, Kant was a far stronger influence than Marx. His 1978 PhD thesis *Obligations Beyond the State* was an essentially Kantian contribution to international political theory, later published as *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* in 1982.<sup>66</sup> The second edition, published in 1990, included a postscript on Habermas and Foucault, reflecting his 'turn' to Frankfurt School critical theory. Linklater's second book *Beyond Realism and Marxism*<sup>67</sup> was published in the same year and is commonly overshadowed by the 'mature' statement of his critical international political theory in *The Transformation of Political Community*,<sup>68</sup> but alongside the two aforementioned journal articles<sup>69</sup> remains pivotal in the development of his project and self-positioning as regards the field of international theory. It is here that he draws an important analogy between the dialectical development of the 'three sociologies' – positivism, hermeneutics, and critical sociology – and Martin Wight's 'three traditions' of international theory: realism, rationalism, and revolutionism. He argued that just as a critical theory of society ought to incorporate the achievements of positivism and hermeneutics, a critical theory of IR should aim to incorporate the achievements of realism and rationalism.<sup>70</sup>

Linklater reminds us that the primary concerns of those three traditions are power, order, and emancipation, each accompanied by distinctive sociological, normative, and praxeological positions. Realism is grounded in a sociology that regards the struggle for power and security as paramount in any system of states, linked to a normative critique of cosmopolitan designs and panaceas, and a praxeology concerned with the prudential conduct of foreign policy aimed at controlling or outmanoeuvring adversaries under conditions of conflict, managing the balance of power, and pursuing national interests. For its part, rationalism is grounded in a sociological vision of an anarchical society in which multiple communities interact, including the sovereign state, the society of states, and a potential world society. It is concerned with processes through which systems of states have been transformed

<sup>64</sup>Linklater 1990c, 139.

<sup>65</sup>Ibid., 138.

<sup>66</sup>Linklater 1978; 1990b.

<sup>67</sup>Linklater 1990a.

<sup>68</sup>Linklater 1998.

<sup>69</sup>Linklater 1990c; 1992.

<sup>70</sup>Linklater 1990a, 31–2; Wight 1991.

into societies of states regulated by principles of coexistence through socialisation and a pragmatic shared interest in restraining the use of force. This is accompanied by an interest in the normative grounds and scope of the principles and patterns of their mutual relations, such as state autonomy, human rights, and humanitarianism, and the praxis of maintaining order and civility while managing primary goals of international and world society through institutions, including diplomacy, law, and war. Meanwhile, revolutionism rejects the view that empirical divisions between states are anything more than transitory, emphasising instead a deeper sociological reality of a universal community of humankind that exists at least as a potentiality. Accordingly, the principal lines of conflict across the international are not between nation-states, but trustees of this immanent community and those preventing its emergence. Both transcendent (e.g., Kantian) and immanent (e.g., Marxian) normative grounds are offered for this cosmopolitical sociological position, linked to praxeologies, including reform of existing international institutions by 'duty-bound moral politicians' (e.g., Kant) and international proletarian revolution (e.g., Marx). The gulf between these two poles led Wight to distinguish 'soft' revolutionists like Kant and Nehru from 'hard' revolutionists like the Jacobins and Marxists, and concede that a quadruple classification might be more apt.<sup>71</sup>

Linklater's own project can best be understood as a contribution to the 'soft' revolutionist tradition and an extension of the solidaristic approach to the English School. He sought to mediate and transcend insights of realism, rationalism, and Marxism according to a dialectical logic of sublation, underwritten by a Kantian progressivist concern with the development of increasingly decent forms of world political organisation. A central contention was that the tripartite framework could serve as a tool to facilitate a back-and-forth between different theoretical perspectives that may be valid but nonetheless remain limited and one-sided from the perspective of critical theory. For example, he endorsed Marx's commitment to universal emancipation but thought that Marxism underestimated logics of power, order, strategic competition, and war. Consequently, we must appreciate the need for classical realist methods of protecting the state and rationalist defences of order and legitimacy in the context of anarchy at this stage in history, because emancipation would not progress if international order was in decline.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, from the perspective of critical theory, realism can only be true if the species is unfree: it offers an account of historical circumstances that humans have yet to bring under our collective control, and lacks an account of how this could be achieved. Linklater thought that the theoretical resources to pursue this task could be found in the English School. For instance, by extending Wight's sociology of state systems while focusing on prospects for the transformation of international society into more solidaristic forms of association by foregrounding developments that might strengthen the bonds of the international community, while nevertheless acknowledging that the struggle for power and security constrains progress in IR and recognising that States commonly prioritise order over justice.<sup>73</sup>

During a bout of introspection in the early 1990s about what IR is and ought to be about, not dissimilar to that of the 2010s, Linklater combined his hypothesis about

<sup>71</sup>Bull 2012; Linklater 1990a, chap. 2; 1992; Wight 1991, 267–8.

<sup>72</sup>Linklater 1990a, 32.

<sup>73</sup>Linklater 1990a, 14; 2002; Linklater and Suganami 2006; Wight 1977.

the tripartite structure of critical theory with his reading of Habermas to propose that critical IR was uniquely positioned to map a way forward for the discipline by assembling powerful strands of argument from competing perspectives 'into a more systematic and comprehensive whole.'<sup>74</sup> Premised on the view that an emancipatory approach ought to be more central to the field, 'the next stage' of international theory would be to recover the project begun in different ways by Kant and Marx, giving the field renewed direction and coherence by reunifying IR under the guidance of critical theory.

This is an appeal for ambitious, nuanced, intellectually engaged, and epistemologically reflexive inquiry, encouraging us to draw from and augment a diverse array of scholarship, including different theoretical approaches, seen as potentially complementary sources of internal dynamism and vitality. Paralleling his own 'soft' revolutionist rationalism, Linklater approvingly cites Ken Booth's *Security and Anarchy* as an example of how an emancipatory approach might be incorporated into realism and strategic studies.<sup>75</sup> Both scholars shed light on central issues of world politics from the perspective of human liberation, anticipating contemporary introspection about IR's object and purpose of study.<sup>76</sup> If heeded, Linklater's proposal would actively counter the kind of fragmentation and self-referentiality that has concerned contributors to the End of IR theory debate, or retreats into scholasticism or metatheory that others have identified as a weakness of contemporary critical IR,<sup>77</sup> while remaining transparent about its normative commitments: a notable shortcoming of other critical theories, including Cox's.<sup>78</sup> To an extent, it was. Booth deserves more credit than Linklater for the so-called 'Aberystwyth School(s)' of critical security and terrorism studies, but the theoretically consonant approaches the pair developed as luminaries of critical IR left an indelible mark on research trajectories of generations of scholars, not least hundreds of them (this author included) who passed through Aberystwyth's Department of International Politics since 1999 when they were appointed as EH Carr and Woodrow Wilson chairs, respectively. Yet this is not an indication of the scholarly purchase of Linklater's metatheoretical proposition, which has largely been neglected in the literature.<sup>79</sup>

Although Linklater cites Kant, Marx, and Habermas as influences, his epistemological warrant is provided by Hegel.<sup>80</sup> This is well explained by Richard J. Bernstein, who provides a more comprehensive account of the 'three sociologies' as mirroring the movement of self-reflection that reason takes through forms of consciousness in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* to achieve a fuller understanding of their respective contributions and limitations on the way to freedom. The crux is that an adequate social and political theory must be empirical, interpretive, *and* critical, because these are mutually implicated and internally related moments of theoretical consciousness. This is why Jahn's criticism that Linklater equates realism with positivism and rationalism with hermeneutics is somewhat unfair.<sup>81</sup> Linklater's analogy is not that

<sup>74</sup>Linklater 1990c, 138.

<sup>75</sup>Booth 1991; Linklater 1992, 78.

<sup>76</sup>Ibid., 77.

<sup>77</sup>E.g., Devetak 2018.

<sup>78</sup>As argued by Hamati-Ataya 2013, 677, 682 and Brincat 2016, 6.

<sup>79</sup>But see Cano, Sørensen, and Bhattacharya 2024, 538.

<sup>80</sup>Linklater 1990a, chap. 1; 1992, 98.

<sup>81</sup>Jahn 1998, 626, n. 80.

all realists are positivists and all rationalists are interpretivists, but that an adequate international theory needs to be realist, rationalist, *and* revolutionary, because these are all necessary and complementary perspectives on the whole (i.e., social totality/the international). As Habermas argues, it is the emancipatory interest of the critical social sciences to provide us with insights into relations of power. Realism and rationalism both do this, but they remain insufficient from the perspective of critical theory until their insights are oriented towards emancipatory praxis.<sup>82</sup> As we will see, the problem with Linklater's project is that he commits the same mistake as Habermas: smuggling in his normative biases about what emancipation actually means in the guise of an objective analysis of reason.<sup>83</sup> This structures and informs his approach, and became a lightning rod for critical engagement with it, overshadowing what I suggest remains his most important contribution: the necessarily tripartite structure of critical theory. It can also be avoided – by pivoting from Hegel rather than Kant.

### The 'reconstruction' of historical materialism

Linklater's project was weakened by several crucial shortcomings. Prime among them was that it remained detached from real-world struggles, leading the question of emancipation to become increasingly alienated from the experiences of the dominated themselves, located instead in civilising processes taking place above them.<sup>84</sup> Consequently, his normative commitments and sociological outlook grew increasingly out of step with empirical realities, and his praxeological analysis remained underdeveloped and unconvincing. This is because, rather than grounding his normative and praxeological claims in critical sociological analysis of relations of power, it was his normative position that ultimately grounded his sociology and praxeology. Despite emphasising the importance of historical sociology, Linklater never really engaged in empirical sociology, nor indeed political practice. Instead, he developed an empirical philosophy of history that focused on the evolution of moral norms by drawing on the sociological work of Elias and Wight.<sup>85</sup> Although he made the convincing argument that normative arguments 'are incomplete without a parallel sociological account of how they can be realised in practice, and normative and sociological advances are incomplete without some reflection on practical possibilities',<sup>86</sup> his sociological analysis played a subordinate and functional role: helping to realise the normative claims of critical theory.<sup>87</sup>

Linklater's central premise was a foundational commitment to a particular kind of moral universalism. This led him to explore philosophical, sociological, and practical questions of moral inclusion and exclusion across the related problem areas of community, citizenship, and harm. His defence of moral universalism in *Men and Citizens* drew on Kant to reconcile ethical obligations to fellow citizens with those that we owe to the rest of humanity, restated in *Transformation* where Habermas's

<sup>82</sup>Bernstein 1979, esp. xix–xx, 174, 191, 193, 198, 204.

<sup>83</sup>*Ibid.*, 209. Jahn's criticism is only *somewhat* unfair because this is the general thrust of an otherwise compelling argument.

<sup>84</sup>As argued by Brincat 2011, 312, 314–5.

<sup>85</sup>Linklater 1990a, 7; 1990b, 210; 2017; for a critique, see Lawson 2017.

<sup>86</sup>Linklater 1998, 10.

<sup>87</sup>E.g., Linklater 1992, 92.

discourse ethics was deployed to argue that all human beings have a *prima facie* right to be included in universal communities of discourse to decide the legitimacy of global arrangements.<sup>88</sup> His procedural universalism was reconfigured once again in later work, which drew on Norbert Elias and others to theorise harm, violence, and civilisation. His order of priority is clearly demonstrated in the introduction to *The Problem of Harm*, wherein he wrote: ‘the case for a sociology of states-systems is constructed in light of the moral belief, which moved to the forefront of social inquiry during the Enlightenment, that human beings can reorganise the social world to end cruelty and misery.’<sup>89</sup>

This normative commitment fundamentally shaped Linklater’s sociology. He extended Habermas’s emphasis on social learning, the capacity to engage all others in inclusive and universal discourse, and moral-practical learning, according to which human beings create increasingly consensual social relations over time, to his consideration of the international. This initially took the form of an exploration of how globalisation was contributing to the development of post-Westphalian forms of community governed more by dialogue and consent than by power and force, such as in Western Europe in the late twentieth century,<sup>90</sup> before later work extended Martin Wight’s sociology of state systems combined with Norbert Elias’s process sociology of moral-practical learning to explore how moral communities have expanded and contracted over the course of history, and independent political communities have established shared principles of coexistence.<sup>91</sup> Linklater’s final works focused on the development of a sociology of symbols in world politics and how they might promote wider solidarities between peoples and non-human species and ecosystems.<sup>92</sup> The common thread was to try to identify socio-political indicators of cosmopolitan commitments that might presage a move beyond the particularism of nation-states to a potentially universal society of free beings and achieve progress in organising societies’ external relations in accordance with universalistic principles such as harm conventions, international human rights norms, and laws of war.<sup>93</sup>

Having demonstrated that structures and practices of modern IR have changed in the past and might be changed in the future leads to questions of practice and transition.<sup>94</sup> Yet Linklater’s understanding of praxeology is more moralistic than realistic, defined as: ‘reflecting on the moral resources within existing social arrangements which political actors can harness for radical purposes.’<sup>95</sup> Consequently, his neo-Kantian constitutionalist approach to international society was more reformist than radical, principally concerned with the construction of a humanistic world order, prevention of unnecessary suffering, and advancing a politics of universal inclusion through human rights, cosmopolitan conventions, and a global ethic of responsibility for nature.<sup>96</sup> Somewhat naively, the agents of emancipation are

<sup>88</sup>Linklater 1998, 10.

<sup>89</sup>Linklater 2011b, 22.

<sup>90</sup>E.g., Linklater 1998.

<sup>91</sup>Linklater 2011b; 2017; 2021.

<sup>92</sup>Linklater 2019.

<sup>93</sup>1990a, 163–4, 172; Linklater 1990c, 143; 1992, 96; 1998, 4–5; 2011b; as summarised by Brincat 2018, 1442.

<sup>94</sup>Linklater 1990b, 216; 1998, 3.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid., 5.

<sup>96</sup>Linklater 1990b, 219; Linklater 1990c, 151.

presumed to be state officials because, again following Kant rather than Marx, Linklater equates praxis to the exercise of an ethical foreign policy, whereby 'the potential for internationalism which exists in most modern states can be realised in international conventions which enshrine the moral principles of an alternative world order.'<sup>97</sup>

These shortcomings can ultimately be attributed to Linklater's second auxiliary hypothesis: that Marx's historical materialist problematic needs to be 'reconstructed.'<sup>98</sup> This is premised on his neo-Kantian understanding of freedom, which underwrote his 'post-Marxist' sociology that eschewed traditional Marxist concerns with capitalism, class, crisis, and the collective self-emancipation of the proletariat. The regrettable result is that the political economic dimensions of contemporary capitalism are not a primary concern, emancipatory possibilities are foreshortened, and radicalism is abandoned in the foremost strand of critical IR.

Linklater thought that 'genuine emancipation' depended on our historically and socially conditioned capacity to adopt a universalistic point of view as members of the human race, and he considered Marx too 'partisan' for failing to 'penetrate beyond the level of particular class interests to disclose the fundamental interests of mankind as such.'<sup>99</sup> Here, Linklater found common ground with Habermas, somewhat tendentiously reading Frankfurt School critical theory as a critique of historical materialism.<sup>100</sup> He shared Habermas and Giddens' assessments that sociological analysis must move beyond a Marxian focus on the paradigm of production to the paradigm of communication and develop a more sophisticated historical sociology than that found in Marxism. This would recognise class and production as one of several axes of exclusion (N.B. *exclusion* rather than alienation, domination, or exploitation) and offer an improved normative standpoint according to which universal emancipation is not confined to the self-emancipation of the proletariat, but is aimed instead at overcoming class inequalities and democratising *all* dimensions of social, economic, and political life.<sup>101</sup> Linklater thought that Marx overestimated the importance of the proletariat for social structure and historical change and underestimated the role of interaction and language in the creation of orderly societies. He also criticised Marx for underestimating the impact of strategic competition and war on human history and thought it necessary to provide 'a more sophisticated analysis of the anchorage of the state than the Marxist tradition has provided,' particularly given the unprecedented development of instruments of physical violence, which Marx could not foresee. In terms of his normative orientation, Linklater endorsed Habermas's neo-Kantian voluntaristic position that good societies should express the will of their members, which he believed provided a more adequate account of social evolution and an improved normative standpoint to evaluate social relations than could be found in the Marxist tradition.<sup>102</sup>

Linklater's second hypothesis was a misstep for the critical project in IR and has largely been recognised as such by a new generation of scholars.<sup>103</sup> It is predicated on

<sup>97</sup>Linklater 1978, 214; 1990c, 135; 1992, 84–5, 96–7.

<sup>98</sup>E.g., Linklater 1996.

<sup>99</sup>Linklater 1990b, 210; 2011a, 39.

<sup>100</sup>Linklater 1990a, 2.

<sup>101</sup>Habermas 1979. Linklater 1990a.

<sup>102</sup>Ibid., 171; Linklater 1996.

<sup>103</sup>E.g., Bieler and Morton 2003; Brincat 2011; Fluck 2014; Schmid 2018; Thame 2013.

untenable normative and sociological assumptions, including liberal norms of consent, the power of dialogue, an ultimate harmony of interests, and a functionalist understanding of capitalism, as opposed to one that assumes an antagonistic social totality based on the exploitative accumulation of capital and class struggle.<sup>104</sup> His distinction between his own normative commitment to the species as a whole as the object of universal emancipation from a classical Marxian focus on the international proletariat is philosophically questionable,<sup>105</sup> and he overestimates the historical agency and emancipatory potential of white male metropolitan elites.<sup>106</sup>

Empirical and theoretical realities have also changed since the anti- and post-Marxist 1980s and 1990s. Although Linklater insisted that capitalism was not the dominant social logic of the times,<sup>107</sup> it is undermining the material basis of a habitable planet and is central to overlapping crises transforming world order. The threat that it poses is no longer primarily to the international proletariat but increasingly also to humanity at large, non-human species, and ecosystems. It is internally contradictory, constitutively imperialist, and cannot be universalised as a form of life within the earth's biophysical limits.<sup>108</sup> His suggestion that states pursue ethical foreign policies and promote principles of social justice by acting as 'good international citizens' and local agents of a world common good<sup>109</sup> may reflect the 'zeitgeist of 1990s globalisation theory'<sup>110</sup> but appears almost quaint today. As Samir Amin put it: 'at this stage the [world] system deserves to be called senile and therefore its only future is to cede its place to 'another world' that may be better or worse,' and the struggle over which of these two eventualities will be brought about will be determined by the active intervention of *all* social forces, not just the proletariat.<sup>111</sup> Meanwhile, advances in Marxist sociological, normative, and critical theory on the state, geopolitics, war, revolution, imperialism, world order, ecology, gender, and race undermine Linklater's criticisms that these shortcomings warrant a post-Marxist critical theory.<sup>112</sup>

### (Re)vitalising the emancipatory project

It has been argued so far that Linklater's tripartite framework was a compelling way to frame the critical theoretical approach to IR, but that shortcomings attributed to his 'post-Marxist' hypothesis weakened his project. One benefit of conceptualising critical IR in Lakatosian terms is that it encourages us to periodically reconsider its 'hard core' and auxiliary hypotheses, accounting for changes in empirical realities and advances in theory development. This may lead to a progressive problem shift if altering or replacing principles and/or methods increases the programme's explanatory power, allowing it to grow in significance, generate new facts, new techniques, and new theories consistent with the hard core.<sup>113</sup> This section suggests that

<sup>104</sup>As noted by Bieler and Morton 2003, 490–1.

<sup>105</sup>Linklater 1990a, chap. 2.

<sup>106</sup>Go 2017, 619–20; Lawson 2017, 675–7.

<sup>107</sup>Citing Giddens, Linklater 1990a, chap. 2.

<sup>108</sup>Arrighi 2007, 387–9.

<sup>109</sup>Linklater 1990c, 145; Linklater and Suganami 2006, 8.

<sup>110</sup>Schmid 2018, 216.

<sup>111</sup>Amin 2020, 158.

<sup>112</sup>Linklater 1990a, 25, 30–1; see, e.g., Anievas 2014; Bieler 2025; Bieler and Morton 2018.

<sup>113</sup>Lakatos 1970, 133.



reconsidering Linklater's first principles derived from Kant and Marx, shorn of his secondary hypothesis, while following a different path through classical sources of the tradition, could lead to such a shift.

First, we must rectify the order of priority in the tripartite structure so that any critical approach is grounded in concrete historical and political analysis rather than normative bias.<sup>114</sup> As Jahn notes, a substantial part of the writings of first-generation Frankfurt School critical IR is taken up with rejecting Marx and Horkheimer's insistence that critical theory must rest on a substantive analysis of society. This is generally considered to be *the* task of a social science, but their epistemological critique of the positivist distinction between facts and values was not used as a basis to develop a more rigorous, reflexivist, post-positivist methodology that incorporated both empirical and normative analysis, leading to a kind of speculative idealism that impedes what Marx calls 'real humanism.'<sup>115</sup> A detailed explication of what this might entail is beyond the scope of this article, but from a left-Hegelian perspective of detranscendentalised reason, rationality is simultaneously context-dependent and context-transcendent. Following this immanent-transcendent and inter-subjective conception of reason, the substantive content of general concepts such as freedom, equality, and emancipation is mediated by changing experiences and concrete relations of society, but the concepts themselves remain sufficiently autonomous to act as normative anchors that generate a basis of critique and permit consideration of counter-factuals: not just what is the case, but what *could* be.<sup>116</sup> The critical theorist's role is to mediate between the immanent and the transcendent, navigating gaps between ideas, their practical actualisation, and potential to overcome them through social transformation. The validity of concepts and proposals remains subject to critique, extension, and transformation, allowing them to reach beyond their initial context depending on further social and political validation.<sup>117</sup>

The ontological correlate is an understanding of freedom and emancipation that is more immanent, historical, and worldly than can be found in Kant. Although Linklater incorporates Hegel and Marx into his international theory, he ultimately treads a path from Kant to Hegel and Marx and back to Kant again.<sup>118</sup> Kant, Hegel, and Marx all understood emancipation as an ongoing process of negating the conditions that negate human freedom. For Kant, this was achieved by removing barriers to the subject's critical use of reason in pursuit of enlightenment as a condition of exercising individual autonomy (i.e., ethical subjectivity). Hegel and Marx advanced Kant's critical philosophy by *collapsing* the distinction between subject and object, overcoming Kant's abstract formalism and detranscendentalising reason to emphasise the deeply relational, socially, and historically conditioned nature of subjectivity, freedom, and emancipation. The result is a conception of the subject that is fundamentally interpenetrated by the objects that it confronts; that

<sup>114</sup>Echoing, *inter alia*, Fluck 2014; Brincat 2012, 2018; Schmid 2018.

<sup>115</sup>Jahn 1998, 620 refers primarily to Linklater's work but also that of Mark Hoffman, Mark Neufeld, and Richard Devetak. Similar critiques of Frankfurt School-inspired critical IR's methodological shortcomings have since been made by Jackson 2011 and Hamati-Ataya 2013.

<sup>116</sup>Adorno's negative dialectics, Horkheimer's immanent critique, Habermas's communicative theory, Honneth's recognition theory, and Linklater's process sociology are all modes of immanent-transcendent thinking.

<sup>117</sup>Drawing on Strydom 2011, Oliveira 2018, and O'Mahony 2023.

<sup>118</sup>Thame 2013.

is, the totality of social relations. The problem is that Linklater never adequately grasped this deep social relationalism, or its epistemological and ontological repercussions.<sup>119</sup> Instead, he reads Hegel through ‘the kaleidoscope of a Kantian conception of the subject’ via his normative foundationalism and conception of emancipation as the historical self-actualisation of the constitutive ethical subject, a conception to which Hegel was profoundly opposed.<sup>120</sup>

For Hegel, emancipation is the historical realisation of the overriding normative value of autonomy, its universalisation, and institutionalisation in an emancipated form of life. It begins with the negation of external authority (such as God, Nature, the monarch) but ends with recognition that this negation must itself be given positive form in social and political institutions that articulate and ground substantive forms of freedom and equality.<sup>121</sup> Principles of individual freedom and collective self-determination become increasingly universalised as standards of social emancipation as we learn from historical experience to recognise each other as free agents through institutions that we feel increasingly ‘at home’ with (*bei sich*) when they constitute us as such.<sup>122</sup> The French and Haitian revolutions represent the apotheosis of this process because they announced the end of traditional authority, whereby the will accepts no authority that is not created out of the will itself, laying the foundation for potentially non-alienated modern political forms in which universal values of freedom, equality, and solidarity might be realised and upheld.<sup>123</sup>

For his part, Marx was notoriously inexplicit about what he thought emancipation actually meant, beyond contrasting human emancipation from merely ‘political’ emancipation.<sup>124</sup> Needless to say, ‘genuine’ emancipation involved the labouring masses liberating themselves from economic exploitation. However, as Bromberg has argued, it is better understood as a ‘vague and distant’ vision aimed at overcoming *all* forms of exploitation, oppression, class distinction, and class struggles, to realise a different kind of *social* freedom through a (second) revolutionary transformation of society that would actualise the immanent potential of the one-sided and limited civic-political freedoms secured in bourgeois revolutions such as those of England and France.<sup>125</sup> Marx thereby extends Hegel’s logic of emancipation as a social and historical process of overcoming alienation, generalising it from the ‘ethical state’ to the products of our labour and humanity at large, aimed not only at overcoming capitalism and class society, but also the full development of consciousness and human relations through a continuous transformation of society (a ‘revolution in permanence’).<sup>126</sup> The central difference between them is that whereas Hegel thought the task of philosophy was essentially retrospective and passive, aimed at understanding contradictions and reconciling with the irreducibility of contradiction, Marx emphasised the *active* side of thought and hence the importance of practical

<sup>119</sup> I argue this with reference to Linklater’s normative theory; others have made analogous critiques of his historical sociology, for example, Lawson 2017.

<sup>120</sup> As argued in Thame 2013, 134, 210.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid.; McGowan 2019.

<sup>122</sup> This reading of Hegel is influenced primarily by J. M. Bernstein, as well as by Martin Hägglund and Jensen Suther.

<sup>123</sup> Hegel 1995, 244–5.

<sup>124</sup> Marx 1994a.

<sup>125</sup> Bromberg 2016, esp. 253–4.

<sup>126</sup> Dunayevskaya 1982.

activity, thinking-in-practice, or simply *praxis*, aimed at overcoming contradictions through proletarian self-emancipation. For both, a commitment to the actual universality of freedom and equality is a historical achievement, only realised and sustained by us.<sup>127</sup>

Antonio Gramsci's oeuvre represents one development of this tradition.<sup>128</sup> As Peter Thomas argues, Gramsci considered the process of subalternisation to be an essential logic of political modernity, advanced through passive revolutionary transitions of the late nineteenth century and the establishment of the bourgeois integral state. He extends Marx's revolutionary project into a praxis of subaltern self-emancipation, through which subaltern classes rediscover and develop their capacity for social and political autonomy and remove themselves from servitude through the practice of desubalternisation. Here, emancipatory politics can be understood as an open-ended constituent process aimed at constructing a future autonomous socio-political order within and by means of forms of struggle in the present, and the art of trying to produce progress by resolving immanent contradictions of existing socio-political orders in enabling ways. As such, historical progress is understood not in terms of an abstract empirical philosophical anthropology of universal moral sentiments, but rather that which is at stake in concrete socio-political struggles. Importantly, emancipation must be *actively produced* by subaltern political subjects contesting and resolving the contradictions of political modernity, forcing bourgeois society beyond itself through the immanent sublation of its own constitutive limits. For instance, if popular sovereignty is affirmed in theory but not in practice, as it commonly is in IR, what changes are necessary to better ground social institutions in the active consent of those from whom power and authority is ultimately derived?<sup>129</sup> This represents one way of developing a more persuasive and praxeologically attuned approach to emancipation, conceived not in terms of the capacity to adopt a universalistic moral point of view over the long durée, as Linklater's Kantian reading of Hegel and Marx concludes,<sup>130</sup> but rather upholding 'the categorical imperative to overthrow all conditions in which man is a debased, enslaved, neglected, and contemptible being'<sup>131</sup> by continually 'translat[ing] the challenges of a given conjuncture into the organisational forms and practices that represent their real critique and resolution.'<sup>132</sup>

This should not be read simply as a call for a return to Hegel, Marx, and/or Gramsci; or indeed a rejection of Kant. Instead, the aim is to show how critical IR might advance based on Hegel's completion of Kant's critical philosophy and Marx's radicalisation of it. Of several profound ontological and epistemological implications that follow includes a critical theory that is animated by a different kind of universalism and a different kind of subject: a universalism grounded in subaltern struggles and emancipatory praxis and a non-constitutive subject that is more thoroughly interpenetrated by the totality of social relations; a totality that, in turn, remains an object of critique and ongoing transformation. Placing greater emphasis on the actual

<sup>127</sup>As summarised by Hägglund in Hägglund and Ypi 2023.

<sup>128</sup>Gramsci's Marxism is commonly recognised; less so is that he identifies with the Hegelian tradition of state theory. Thomas 2024, 68.

<sup>129</sup>See Thame 2024.

<sup>130</sup>E.g., Linklater 1990a; see also Linklater 1990b.

<sup>131</sup>Marx 1994b, 64.

<sup>132</sup>Thomas 2024, 12, 14, 32, 128, 168, 234.

praxis of emancipation would recognise what Linklater's project apparently elides: that universal history is not written in the academy but is forged in transformative struggles from below.<sup>133</sup> Drawing on Gramsci to illustrate the point is nonetheless deliberate: to foreground his revolutionary concern with self-emancipation that Cox and other neo-Gramscian approaches to IR have been rightly criticised for underemphasising,<sup>134</sup> and to demonstrate that the creative problem shift called for here is not limited to those inspired by the Frankfurt School tradition, but all those taking inspiration from Kant, Hegel, and Marx. To an extent, other approaches are already consonant with this deeper social relationism, including poststructuralist ethico-political frameworks, relational international theory, and sociologies such as uneven and combined development or global historical sociology.<sup>135</sup> These are potential sources of inspiration for Frankfurt School approaches, which would be distinguished by their emphasis on the necessity of totalising critique and a practical interest in human freedom. That is, critical reflection on questions of totality (e.g., world society) and structure (e.g., global capitalism) and normative commitment to their emancipatory transformation.<sup>136</sup>

## Radical realism

This section demonstrates how we might combine Linklater's tripartite structure with a more rigorous reflexive methodology while eschewing his neo-Kantian foundationalism to develop a more radical and realistic approach to critical international theory. The basic proposition is that what Wight calls the 'hard' revolutionary tradition deserves greater prominence in the discipline today.<sup>137</sup> To overcome the shortcomings of first-generation Frankfurt School critical IR, this must be more praxeologically attuned and sociologically grounded in contemporary world historical conditions and emancipatory struggles, particularly those beyond the West.<sup>138</sup> It would be more radical by analysing them through a holistic and totalising critique to shed light on their underlying causes and permissive conditions in world society and global capitalist relations of production, remaining open to the potential necessity of transformative change to resolve them.<sup>139</sup> It would be more realistic by being empirically grounded in the realities of political life, recognising the centrality of power, the ineradicable nature of sociopolitical conflict, and the potential for theory to have practical force through *praxis*.<sup>140</sup>

Sociologically, normatively, and praxeologically, this radical realism would be of a more internationalist, rather than simply cosmopolitan (or even statist), disposition.<sup>141</sup> As Pal reminds us, Marxist scholarship challenges liberal, realist, and English School sociological assumptions about the emergence of the modern world as a

<sup>133</sup>Buck-Morss 2009; Tomba 2019; Wilson 2022.

<sup>134</sup>Budd 2013, 178–9.

<sup>135</sup>See, e.g., Campbell and Shapiro 1999 (I thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing this to my attention); Anievas and Nişancıoğlu 2015; Bieler and Morton 2018; Go and Lawson 2017; Jackson and Nexon 1999; .

<sup>136</sup>Koddenbrock 2015, 257–8.

<sup>137</sup>Wight 1991, 267–8.

<sup>138</sup>Brincat 2018; Fluck 2014; Schmid 2018.

<sup>139</sup>Koddenbrock 2015.

<sup>140</sup>Echoing political theory's 'new realists.' See Brown and Eckersley 2018, 8; Geuss 2008; Williams 2008.

<sup>141</sup>See Halliday 1988, 187.

European *qua* international order of nation-states, foregrounding instead relations of domination, exploitation, and power asymmetries at the heart of capitalist globalisation and state formation.<sup>142</sup> This undermines cosmopolitan assumptions underlying Linklater's solidarist reformism and its sanitised account of the international in favour of an internationalist sociology recognising that the rise of global modernity, inter-state system, and spread of capitalist social relations is predicated on conflictual and contested inter-societal dynamics that include racism, colonialism, and imperialism.<sup>143</sup> Just as Marx was not a political economist but a critic of political economy, and Gramsci was not a political scientist but a critic of political science,<sup>144</sup> critical international theory might best be understood as a critique of IR, at least to the extent that the discipline still assumes ontological primacy of states over social relations rather than vice versa. This is not a novel assertion, or a controversial one. E. H. Carr (following V. I. Lenin) recognised that 'politics begins where the masses are.'<sup>145</sup> Yet as Heine and Teschke observe, with the notable exception of Fred Halliday and his work on revolutions, 'no-empirically controlled theoretical account emerged in post-war IR which dealt systematically with the role of the masses or collective social action in the making and unmaking of regimes, states, or even entire states-systems.'<sup>146</sup> Thirty years later, better grounding international historical sociology on the premise that history is ultimately made by 'masses in motion' remains a priority.<sup>147</sup>

Renewed geopolitical conflict, nuclear escalation, and proliferation of deadly new means of warfare mean that the traditional 'core' of the discipline, as concerned with inter-state war, security dilemmas, and strategic challenges, cannot be left to the mainstream, underlining the continued importance of approaches such as Booth's utopian realism as one strand of this project.<sup>148</sup> Nevertheless, sociopolitical and economic crises and breakdown of liberal order means that another must continue looking beyond a conception of the international *qua* inter-state relations, emphasising concerns of the Majority World, conflicts between champions of the existing order and challengers, feasible alternatives to it, and potential for emancipatory sociopolitical transformations; while accounting for the role of mass politics and 'force and iron ruthlessness' in world history.<sup>149</sup> This would recognise the need for new post-national political forms to address 'dual imperatives of popular sovereignty (autonomy) and international solidarity (or interdependence)'<sup>150</sup> but also shortcomings of the European Union as a possible blueprint for a post-Westphalian order.<sup>151</sup> Those with Hegelian–Marxian sympathies might extend the tradition of crisis critique to various contemporary and historical crises, the social contradictions giving rise to them, and the prospects for 'realistic utopias'<sup>152</sup> that might be found

<sup>142</sup>Pal 2022; Seth 2011.

<sup>143</sup>Anievas and Nişancıoğlu 2015; Buzan and Lawson 2015.

<sup>144</sup>As Denning 2021 reminds us.

<sup>145</sup>Carr 2016, 97, citing Lenin.

<sup>146</sup>Heine and Teschke 1996, 404.

<sup>147</sup>Paraphrasing Dunayevskaya 1982, 288; a theme also raised by Cunliffe 2020. Anievas 2014 and Lawson 2019 make notable headway in this regard.

<sup>148</sup>Booth 1991; 2007.

<sup>149</sup>Engels cited by Carr 2016, 97, 108, 210; Cunliffe 2020, xiii–xiv, 31.

<sup>150</sup>Wilder 2022, 39.

<sup>151</sup>E.g., Chatterjee 2016, 333; cf. Linklater 1998.

<sup>152</sup>Following Erik Olin Wright, Raymond Geuss, and others. Lawson 2019, 245–7.

within them. This includes the profusion of transformation crises worldwide wrought by pressures placed on social orders by configurations of global modernity and the transition towards a decentred globalist world order.<sup>153</sup>

A substantive normative anchor could be provided by the Hegelian–Marxian conception of emancipation as the historical actualisation of universal values of freedom, equality, and solidarity. As Çubukçu explains, citing Balibar, internationalism can be further distinguished as a value and a practice from the vague and abstract invocations of a universal human community or global society often found in the normative and English School traditions, their differences traceable to the divergent legacies of Kant and Marx.<sup>154</sup> While cosmopolitanism tends to appeal to an ‘objective,’ *a priori*, and/or transcendental unity of a singular humanity, radical internationalism stresses instead its plurality, unevenness, differential, and uneven constitution. The former conjures an idea of humanity as a single race that shares ‘the world’ in common, whereas the latter emphasises the differences, conflicts, and *work* of diverse political agents involved in the formation and self-consciousness of an always partial and limited collective human ‘we.’ An internationalist approach demands not just rhetorical invocation of the human race as an abstract but ‘objective unity’ (such as of a biological or ontological kind) or claiming its contemporary ‘empirical unification’ (such as by processes of globalisation) but also acknowledging the crucial role of movements and social forces (e.g., feminist, socialist, indigenous, black, Third Worldist, peasant, and ecological) *actively engaged* in the ongoing construction of a humanity-to-come through collective struggles against injustice, oppression, exploitation, despoilation, degradation, and militarism.<sup>155</sup> Linklater’s criticism that Marx was too partisan is premised on a naïve and dated neo-Kantian ideal that fails to appreciate the fundamentally partisan nature of ‘real’ politics, primarily concerned with power and oriented towards action and practical interventions.<sup>156</sup> It also betrays the fact that, from abolitionists in Haiti or the American Civil War, suffragettes and anti-fascist partisans in World War Two, to uprisings against oppressive regimes and direct action against profiteers in planetary destruction and/or genocidal military campaigns, it is often the partisan who advances the position of humanity as such. This is because, as Çubukçu continues, emancipation is always a necessarily collective and partisan task; it is always a partisan and partial ‘we’ who resolves to take sides to challenge and oppose the social, political, and economic faultlines that divide us, thereby negating that which negates the idea of ‘a world’ that we share in common.<sup>157</sup> It is in collective struggles for a more humane world, against political and socioeconomic forces experienced as alienated, oppressive, or exploitative, that we might find subjective agents of human emancipation, not the halls of formally constituted political power.<sup>158</sup>

Praxeologically, a more radical and realistic approach would generate scholarship that offers better insights for action, not simply hoping to inform elite-led reforms from above but also building knowledge and power from below, to make another world socially possible.<sup>159</sup> For 50 years, activists and organisers have been encouraged

<sup>153</sup>Buzan and Lawson 2015, Part III.

<sup>154</sup>Çubukçu 2024.

<sup>155</sup>Ibid., 570–3. Balibar 2022.

<sup>156</sup>Linklater 2011a, 39; Geuss 2008, 95.

<sup>157</sup>Çubukçu 2024, 570–1.

<sup>158</sup>Hardt and Negri 2017, 32–7.

<sup>159</sup>Cox and Nilsen 2014, 206.

to channel progressive demands through bourgeois frameworks, including human rights and democracy promotion while engaging in transnational activism centring on the United Nations and dominant liberal states. This has helped undermine popular power and stabilise a transnational elite agenda.<sup>160</sup> Yet increasingly even reformist liberal claims are met with indifference and multilateral institutions are outdated and riven by dysfunction. Not only must we cultivate greater self-reliance, but, as Celikates reminds us, the emancipation that critical theory aims for is *self-emancipation* and the transformation it aims for is *self-transformation*. In other words, we must reconsider the relation between critical theory and its addressees, look beyond the traditional intra-scientific context of justification, better engage with the needs and interests of the wider public, and be more concerned with having a practical effect.<sup>161</sup> This may entail emphasising the agency and political importance of progressive subaltern social groups challenging dominant forms of order, being more responsive and accountable to them and their aims, and producing work that is accessible and of interest to them. It could involve clarifying concrete possibilities for emancipatory political action, and ways to more fully actualise their capacities to act as autonomous political forces to exert greater influence in collective struggles over what Touraine called ‘historicity,’ the way that society produces and reproduces itself.<sup>162</sup> It might include an explicit concern with strategy,<sup>163</sup> such as how to better engage in collective action, build movements and political parties, gain leverage against oppositional forces, strengthen internationalist bonds of solidarity, and engage effectively with states and multilateral institutions.

Methodologically, some might emulate Linklater’s grand synthetic approach, although a less daunting task would be to conceive of the critical project in more piecemeal terms as a collective endeavour undertaken by a community of inquiry (in the classical pragmatist sense) predicated on a shared adherence to its hard core central proposition(s). Various scholars could thereby contribute to the progressive development of critical IR as a pluralist, critical-theoretically driven research programme comprised of a set of theories, techniques, methods, and objects of analysis through an accumulation of case studies and associated theoretical refinements, thereby democratising the generation of emancipatory knowledge about the international. One benefit would be a synoptic approach to critical IR that does not necessarily entail a loss of nuance.<sup>164</sup> Another would be a more inclusive conception of the tradition that remains open to scholars who remain unconvinced by the substantive content of first-generation/Frankfurt School approaches and generate knowledge based on alternative auxiliary hypotheses and theoretical and practical influences.

Acknowledging that empirical research is theoretically driven, influencing case selection, data generation, and interpretation, is a hallmark of reflexive social science. Rather than becoming ‘meaningless,’<sup>165</sup> the epithet ‘critical’ would hereby denote not only a normative commitment guiding scholarly inquiry and practical engagement, but also an explicit adherence to a more *substantive* conception of theory that

<sup>160</sup> Ibid.; Robinson 2013.

<sup>161</sup> Celikates 2018, 162–3.

<sup>162</sup> Cox and Nilsen 2014, 55; Touraine 1981, 29.

<sup>163</sup> Pahnke 2021.

<sup>164</sup> As Michelsen 2021, 489 argues, it does.

<sup>165</sup> A concern raised by Conway 2021.



integrates normative, sociological, and praxeological analysis. Reflexivity also commits us to recognising the contingency of *all* normative orientations, including the Hegelian–Marxian one offered herein. While this philosophical tradition provides my normative anchor, a more realistic (and less moralistic) approach will recognise that the substantive content of any such anchor will be socially and historically mediated and must therefore remain subject to methodological principles of reflexivity. Consequently, normative ideas and the analyses based on them remain open to critique, extension, or even replacement. Hence, the importance of elucidating our own biases *and* conducting research that clarifies the normative stakes and emancipatory ethos of specific struggles: How is emancipation understood by the theorist? What does freedom mean in specific contexts? This, in turn, will help better guide responses to them. Finally, and most importantly, our biases and analyses remain subject to intersubjective validation; and not just by other academics or critical theorists, but the wider public: Are the claims of an analysis valued by those concerned and affected by them? Can they be put to practical use? If not, they must be revised or extended to meet the reflexive standards of critical social theory.<sup>166</sup>

## Conclusion

Critical theory is a living tradition that works from the assumption that all knowledge is historical. Emerging in the context of the fourth debate, critical international theory was fundamentally shaped by its epistemological focus and the political and intellectual climate of the 1980s and 1990s. The discipline of IR has since become increasingly fragmented, leading to persistent questions about its purpose and object of study, while theory development is in decline, particularly among critical and late-modern approaches. A major shortcoming has been an increasingly reductive approach to reflexivity, stripped of its systemic and political dimensions.<sup>167</sup> Meanwhile, our world-historical conjuncture has witnessed the breakdown of liberal normative and institutional hegemony, accompanied by increasingly potent challenges to international structures that have sustained it since the end of the Second World War. Yet the main counter-hegemonic challenge to liberal modernity and its post-political ideological assumptions has not come from the left but disparate forces of the New Right, which have – with some irony – appropriated critical theory’s intellectual and strategic resources and deployed them more effectively. Radical conservative thinkers and reactionary political movements have offered global and sociological frames for economic and social dislocations that have been created by bourgeois globalisation, capitalising on widespread resentment and instabilities caused by ‘liberal’ states and their wars and institutions to engage in a Gramscian war of position to advance his project of a (post)modern Prince in deeply troubling ways.<sup>168</sup> The neo-Nietzschean normative bases of their metapolitical frameworks often rest on pessimistic, zero-sum, interpretations of politics and inegalitarian neo-aristocratic (sometimes neofascistic) geopolitical utopias that valorise hierarchy, patriarchy, militarism, and order, commonly ‘devoid of obstructive humanistic reservations.’<sup>169</sup> A radical conservative bloc has been disconcertingly effective at

<sup>166</sup>Following Strydom 2011, 126–7, 129; Celikates 2018, 162–3; and Oliveira 2018, 22.

<sup>167</sup>Jahn 2022.

<sup>168</sup>Abrahamsen et al. 2024; cf. Thomas 2024, 219–28.

<sup>169</sup>Drolet and Williams 2025, 14.

connecting diverse social forces to forge counter power based on tactical and ideological alliances of popular majorities, new media, political parties, electoral victories, and reactionary autocratic/nativist/national-populist forces traversing Europe, North America, Russia, China, and the Global South. Engaged in a 'long march through the institutions' of the bourgeois state and its international appendages, they are in the ascendant in a defining struggle over the emerging world order.<sup>170</sup>

This underlines the world-historical importance of reinvigorating a progressive, hopeful, egalitarian, and universalist non-liberal emancipatory approach to the international that emphasises our common humanity and the work required to realise it. We must be sensible about our ability as scholars to effect significant change. Nevertheless, it remains incumbent on those of us identifying with and drawing on the critical tradition to uphold and expand it in response to the so-called 'Dark Enlightenment.' At a bare minimum, this requires that we go beyond micro-political engagements, negativistic modes of critique, better engage with audiences and movements beyond the academy, and offer progressive counter-hegemonic frames to the global public.

To this end, I have proposed a creative problem shift in critical international theory so that it takes as a first principle what Linklater calls the necessarily tripartite structure of critical theory. Although his neo-Kantian normative foundationalism meant that his historical sociology and empirical philosophy of history were not historical, sociological, empirical, or universal enough, Linklater remains a path-breaking and inspiring scholar. He counts among the 'great' international theorists, whose synoptic, anticipatory-utopian, critical-reconstructive approach is conspicuously absent from the field today.<sup>171</sup> As Linklater himself acknowledged, citing Hegel, 'all theory is, to some extent, its "own time apprehended in thought," and all perspectives require constant renewal.'<sup>172</sup> Seen in a historicist light, his project's methodological and theoretical shortcomings are mitigated by the historical and intellectual climate that it was developed within; meanwhile, reflecting on our own might embolden us to return to his overture to a discipline that was also preoccupied with fragmentation and introspection and consider a reprise.

The radical realist approach outlined herein offers one such way to renew and propel our discipline forward. Critical IR would develop as a pluralist, theoretically driven research programme prioritising holistic analysis of the central issues of world politics from the perspective of human liberation. This would render the perennial quest for a new purpose or object(s) of study superfluous, reviving theory development in a way that redresses shortcomings of first-generation and contemporary approaches to critical IR.

Drawing on different theoretical perspectives, scholarly approaches, and real-life experiences, it would address the big questions – war and peace, security and insecurity, revolution and counter-revolution, development and underdevelopment, and inter-societal and planetary politics – through a more methodologically rigorous reflexive approach than can be found in first-generation Frankfurt School critical IR. Less normatively doctrinaire, better grounded in empirical sociological research,

<sup>170</sup>Drolet and Williams 2018; Michelsen et al. 2023.

<sup>171</sup>But see Levine 2012.

<sup>172</sup>Linklater 1992, 83.

and more concerned with contributing to emancipatory praxis, it would explicitly integrate empirical, normative, and praxeological analysis to provide critical socio-logical insights into relations of power. This would strengthen the programme's explanatory power, allowing it to grow in significance, generate new facts, techniques, and theories consistent with its hard core: a commitment to scholarly inquiry that combines normative commitments and empirically informed social and political analysis of social conflicts, contradictions, and tendencies within and across the international for purposes of social transformation.

Emphasising the necessity of scientific-public validation, it encourages us to go beyond explanatory critique and better mediate between diagnostic and prognostic analysis: between what *is* and *what could be*, and better engage with extra-academic audiences who might be more effective at pushing emancipatory political transformations through.<sup>173</sup> An auxiliary hypothesis offered herein is an understanding of emancipation as an ongoing, open-ended, inherently contested struggle to collectively realise and defend the universality of humanistic values of freedom, equality, and solidarity: more Hegel and Marx than Kant or Nietzsche; more internationalist than cosmopolitan, 'globalist,' or cultural-civilisational. Of course, this too is indicative rather than programmatic and remains subject to validation. This avoids Linklater's prime mistake and keeps space open in the critical project for other normative commitments, including alternative conceptions of emancipation: what it might mean and how it might be pursued.

This progressive problem shift would chime with recent developments in critical theory, critical sociology, and political theory, wherein calls have been made to redress the overwhelmingly normative focus of critical theory since its reconstructive turn with more empirically engaged sociological research attuned to emancipatory praxis,<sup>174</sup> recentring capitalism and social relations of power,<sup>175</sup> and engaging more closely with real politics, amid frustration about a tendency to produce theory that is abstract, idealist, introspective, and narcissistic.<sup>176</sup> Although I have directly addressed IR scholars within left-Hegelian epistemological frameworks, my proposal may resonate with other social sciences and alternative critical theoretical traditions. Whether it comes to fruition or ends up as another ultimately barren programmatic statement of purpose will depend on how inspiring it proves to be.

**Acknowledgements.** I thank the editors of *International Theory* and three anonymous reviewers for constructive feedback during peer review. The argument has benefited from extensive conversations with Hidemi Suganami and his comments on an earlier draft, as well as feedback from Philippe Martini and other participants at the ISA in San Francisco in 2024. I must also credit Andrew Linklater for his scholarship and contributions to an exceptional intellectual environment in the Department of International Politics at Aberystwyth University, formative influences on myself and many others. *Vale*.

**Funding statement.** This research was supported by funding from Thammasat University to facilitate the presentation of academic work internationally.

**Competing interests.** The author has no competing interests to declare.

<sup>173</sup>Oliveira 2018, 19; Strydom 2011, 155–8.

<sup>174</sup>E.g., Celikates 2018; Strydom 2011.

<sup>175</sup>E.g., Azmanova 2014; Kim 2014; O'Kane 2018.

<sup>176</sup>Brown and Eckersley 2018, 4–5; Mohorčič 2024; Sabl and Sagar 2017, 269.

## References

- Abrahamsen, Rita, Jean-François Drolet, Alexandra Gheciu, Srdjan Vucetic, and Michael Williams. 2024. *World of the Right: Radical Conservatism and Global Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ackerley, Brooke. 2012. "Uncritical Theory." In *Critical Theory in International Relations and Security Studies: Interviews and Reflections*, edited by Shannon Brincat, Laura Lima, and João Nunes, 140–9. London: Routledge.
- Adorno, Theodor, and Max Horkheimer. 2002. *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.
- Allen, Amy. 2016. *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Amin, Samir. 2020. "Towards the Fifth International?" In *BRICS and the New American Imperialism: Global Rivalry and Resistance*, edited by Vishwas Satgar, 148–66. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- Anievas, Alexander. 2014. *Capital, the State, and War: Class Conflict and Geopolitics in the Thirty Years' Crisis, 1914–1945*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.
- Anievas, Alexander, and Kerem Nisancıoğlu. 2015. *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism*. London: Pluto Press.
- Aradau, Claudia. 2023. "Governmentality." In *Handbook on Governmentality*, edited by William Walters and Martina Tazzioli, 235–50. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Aradau, Claudia, and Jef Huysmans. 2014. "Critical Methods in International Relations: The Politics of Techniques, Devices and Acts." *European Journal of International Relations* 20 (3): 596–619.
- Aron, Raymond. 2017. *Peace & War: A Theory of International Relations*. London: Routledge.
- Arrighi, Giovanni. 2007. *Adam Smith in Beijing: Lineages of the Twenty-First Century*. London: Verso.
- Ashley, Richard K. 1981. "Political Realism and Human Interests." *International Studies Quarterly* 25 (2): 204–36.
- Ashley, Richard K., and R. B. J. Walker. 1990. "Conclusion: Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies." *International Studies Quarterly* 34 (3): 367–416.
- Austin, Jonathan Luke, and Anna Leander. 2023. "Making International Things: Designing World Politics Differently." *Global Studies Quarterly* 3 (4): 1–14.
- Austin, Jonathan L., Rocco Bellanova, and Mareile Kaufmann. 2019. "Doing and Mediating Critique: An Invitation to Practice Companionship." *Security Dialogue* 50 (1): 3–19.
- Azmanova, Albena. 2014. "Crisis? Capitalism Is Doing Very Well. How is Critical Theory?" *Constellations* 21 (3): 351–65.
- Balibar, Étienne. 2022. *Cosmopolitique: Des Frontières à l'Espèce Humaine*. Paris: La Découverte.
- Behr, Hartmut, and Giorgio Shani. 2021. "Rethinking Emancipation in a Critical IR: Normativity, Cosmology, and Pluriversal Dialogue." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 49 (2): 368–91.
- Benhabib, Seyla. 1986. *Critique, Norm, and Utopia: A Study of the Foundations of Critical Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Bernstein, Richard J. 1979. *The Restructuring of Social and Political Theory*. London: Methuen & Co.
- Bhambra, Gurminder K. 2021. "Decolonizing Critical Theory?" *Critical Times* 4 (1): 73–89.
- Bieler, Andreas. 2025. "Confronting Multiple Global Crises: A Political Economy Approach for the Twenty-First Century." *Globalizations*, 1–18 (online). Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/14747731.2025.2453300>.
- Bieler, Andreas, and Adam David Morton. 2003. "Globalisation, the State and Class Struggle: A 'Critical Economy' Engagement with Open Marxism." *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 5 (4): 467–99.
- Bieler, Andreas, and Adam David Morton. 2018. *Global Capitalism, Global War, Global Crisis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Blühdorn, Ingolfur, Felix Butzlaff, and Margaret Haderer. 2022. "Emancipatory Politics at Its Limits? An Introduction." *European Journal of Social Theory* 25 (1): 3–25.
- Booth, Ken. 1991. "Security in Anarchy: Utopian Realism in Theory and Practice." *International Affairs* 67 (3): 527–45.
- Booth, Ken. 2007. *Theory of World Security*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Brincat, Shannon. 2009. "Hegel's Gesture Towards Radical Cosmopolitanism." *Journal of Critical Globalisation Studies* 1 (1): 47–65.
- Brincat, Shannon. 2011. "Towards an Emancipatory Cosmopolitanism." PhD diss., University of Queensland.
- Brincat, Shannon. 2012. "On the Methods of Critical Theory: Advancing the Project of Emancipation Beyond the Early Frankfurt School." *International Relations* 26 (2): 218–45.
- Brincat, Shannon. 2016. "Traditional, Problem-Solving and Critical Theory: An Analysis of Horkheimer and Cox's Setting of the 'Critical' Divide." *Globalizations* 13 (5): 563–77.
- Brincat, Shannon. 2018. "Critical International Relations Theory." In *The Sage Handbook of Frankfurt Critical Theory*, edited by Beverley Best, Werner Bonefeld, and Chris O'Kane, 1436–49. London: Sage.
- Bromberg, Svenja. 2016. "Thinking 'Emancipation' After Marx." PhD diss., Goldsmiths, University of London.
- Brown, Wendy. 2006. "Feminist Theory and the Frankfurt School: Introduction." *Differences* 17 (1): 1–5.
- Brown, Chris. 2013. "The Poverty of Grand Theory." *European Journal of International Relations* 19 (3): 483–97.
- Brown, Chris, and Robyn Eckersley. 2018. "International Political Theory and the Real World." In *The Oxford Handbook of International Political Theory*, edited by Chris Brown and Robyn Eckersley, 2–18. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Buck-Morss, Susan. 2009. *Hegel, Haiti, and Universal History*. Pittsburgh, PA: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- Budd, Adrian. 2013. *Class, States and International Relations*. London: Routledge.
- Bull, Hedley. 2012. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 4th ed. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Butzlaff, Felix. 2022. "Emancipatory Struggles and Their Political Organisation: How Political Parties and Social Movements Respond to Changing Notions of Emancipation." *European Journal of Social Theory* 25 (1): 94–117.
- Buzan, Barry, and George Lawson. 2015. *The Global Transformation: History, Modernity and the Making of International Relations*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Campbell, David, and Michael J. Shapiro, eds. 1999. *Moral Spaces: Rethinking Ethics and World Politics*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Cano, Albert C., Eva Leth Sørensen, and Shreya Bhattacharya. 2024. "Remapping the Critical: Imagining Anti-Hierarchical Futures in International Studies." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 52 (3): 533–39.
- Carr, E. H. 2016. *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919–1939*, edited by Michael Cox. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Celikates, Robin. 2018. *Critique as Social Practice: Critical Theory and Social Self-Understanding*. Translated by Naomi Van Steenberg. London: Rowman & Littlefield International.
- Celikates, Robin, and Jeffrey Flynn. 2023. "Critical Theory (Frankfurt School)." In *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Winter 2023 Edition, edited by Edward N. Zalta and Uri Nodelman. Available at <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2023/entries/critical-theory/>. Accessed 1 February 2025.
- Chatterjee, Partha. 2016. "Nationalism, Internationalism, and Cosmopolitanism." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 36 (2): 320–34.
- Conway, Philip R. 2021. "Critical International Politics at an Impasse: Reflexivist, Reformist, Reactionary, and Restitutive Post-Critique." *International Politics Reviews* 9 (1): 213–38.
- Cox, Robert W. 1981. "Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 10 (2): 126–55.
- Cox, Robert W. 1987. *Production, Power, and World Order*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cox, Robert W. 1999. "Civil Society at the Turn of the Millennium: Prospects for an Alternative World Order." *Review of International Studies* 25 (1): 3–28.
- Cox, Robert W. 2012. "For Someone, and for Some Purpose." In *Critical Theory in International Relations and Security Studies: Interviews and Reflections*, edited by Shannon Brincat, Laura Lima, and João Nunes, 150–9. London: Routledge.
- Cox, Laurence, and Alf Gunvald Nilsen. 2014. *We Make Our Own History*. London: Pluto Press.
- Cox, Robert W., and Timothy J. Sinclair. 1996. *Approaches to World Order*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Çubukçu, Ayça. 2024. "On Left Internationalism." *South Atlantic Quarterly* 123 (3): 569–86.

- Cunliffe, Philip. 2020. *The New Twenty Years' Crisis: A Critique of International Relations, 1999–2019*. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press.
- Denning, Michael. 2021. "Everyone a Legislator." *New Left Review* 129 (May–June): 29–44.
- Devetak, Richard. 2018. *Critical International Theory: An Intellectual History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Drolet, Jean-François, and Michael C. Williams. 2018. "Radical Conservatism and Global Order: International Theory and the New Right." *International Theory* 10 (3): 285–313.
- Drolet, Jean-François, and Michael C. Williams. 2025. "International Relations and the Revolutionary Geopolitics of the European New Right." *European Journal of International Relations* 31(2): 311–35.
- Dunayevskaya, Raya. 1982. *Philosophy and Revolution: From Hegel to Sartre, and from Marx to Mao*. Sussex: Harvester Press.
- Dunne, Tim, Lene Hansen, and Colin Wight. 2013. "The End of International Relations Theory?" *European Journal of International Relations* 19 (3): 405–25.
- Eroukmanoff, Clara, and Matt Harker, eds. 2017. *Reflections on the Posthuman in International Relations: The Anthropocene, Security and Ecology*. Bristol: E-International Relations.
- Fluck, Matthew. 2014. "The Best There Is? Communication, Objectivity and the Future of Critical International Relations Theory." *European Journal of International Relations* 20 (1): 56–79.
- Fraser, Nancy. 1985. "What's Critical About Critical Theory? The Case of Habermas and Gender." *New German Critique* 35 (97): 97–131.
- Geuss, Raymond. 2008. *Philosophy and Real Politics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Go, Julian. 2017. "'Civilization' and Its Subalterns." *Review of International Studies* 43 (4): 612–20.
- Go, Julian, and George Lawson, eds. 2017. *Global Historical Sociology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Godfrey-Smith, Peter. 2021. *Theory and Reality*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Habermas, Juergen. 1979. *Communication and the Evolution of Society*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Hägglund, Martin, and Lea Ypi. 2023. "What Is Hegelian Marxism? and 'Socialism and Freedom': Martin Hägglund and Lea Ypi in Conversation." *The Philosopher*. Available at <https://www.thephilosopher1923.org/post/hegel-marx-socialism-freedom>. Accessed 31 September 2024.
- Halliday, Fred. 1988. "Three Concepts of Internationalism." *International Affairs* 64 (2): 187–98.
- Hamati-Ataya, Inanna. 2013. "Reflectivity, Reflexivity, Reflexivism: IR's 'Reflexive Turn' – and Beyond." *European Journal of International Relations* 19 (4): 669–94.
- Hardt, Michael, and Antonio Negri. 2017. *Assembly*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hegel, George Wilhelm Friedrich. 1995. *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–26: Volume III: Medieval and Modern Philosophy*. Translated by Robert F. Brown. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Heine, Christian, and Benno Teschke. 1996. "Sleeping Beauty and the Dialectical Awakening: On the Potential of Dialectic for International Relations." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 25 (2): 399–423.
- Heiskanen, Jaakko, and Paul Beaumont. 2023. "Reflex to Turn: The Rise of Turn-Talk in International Relations." *European Journal of International Relations* 30 (1): 2–26.
- Hill, Christopher. 2025. "Linklater, Andrew, 1949–2023." *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the British Academy* 22.
- Hobson, John M. 2017. "A Critical-Sympathetic Introduction to Linklater's Odyssey: Bridge over Troubled (Eurocentric?) Water." *Review of International Studies* 43 (4): 581–601.
- Horkheimer, Max. [1937] 2002. *Critical Theory: Selected Essays*. New York: Continuum.
- Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus. 2011. *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations*. London: Routledge.
- Jackson, Patrick Thaddeus, and Daniel H. Nexon. 1999. "Relations Before States: Substance, Process and the Study of World Politics." *European Journal of International Relations* 5 (3): 291–332.
- Jahn, Beate. 1998. "One Step Forward, Two Steps Back: Critical Theory as the Latest Edition of Liberal Idealism." *Millennium* 27 (3): 613–41.
- Jahn, Beate. 2021. "Critical Theory in Crisis? A Reconsideration." *European Journal of International Relations* 27 (4): 1274–99.
- Jahn, Beate. 2022. "Neoliberal Takeover? The Dangers of Post-Critique." *International Politics Reviews* 10 (1–2): 76–82.
- Kim, Amy. 2014. "The Vicissitudes of Critique: The Decline and Reemergence of the Problem of Capitalism." *Constellations* 21 (3): 366–81.



- Koddenbrock, Kai Jonas. 2015. "Strategies of Critique in International Relations: From Foucault and Latour towards Marx." *European Journal of International Relations* 21 (2): 243–66.
- Kurki, Milja. 2011. "The Limitations of the Critical Edge: Reflections on Critical and Philosophical IR Scholarship Today." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 40 (1): 129–46.
- Lacatus, Cora, Daniel Schade, and Yuan (Joanne) Yao. 2015. "Quo Vadis IR: Method, Methodology and Innovation." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 43 (3): 767–78.
- Lai, Daniela, and Roberto Roccu. 2019. "Case Study Research and Critical IR: The Case for the Extended Case Methodology." *International Relations* 33 (1): 67–87.
- Lakatos, Imre. 1970. "Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes." In *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge*, edited by Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave, 91–196. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Lang, Anthony F. 2011. Review of the Problem of Harm in World Politics: Theoretical Investigations, by Andrew Linklater. *International Affairs* 87 (6): 1508–10.
- Lawson, George. 2017. "The Untimely Historical Sociologist." *Review of International Studies* 43 (4): 671–85.
- Lawson, George. 2019. *Anatomies of Revolution*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Levine, Daniel. 2012. *Recovering International Relations: The Promise of Sustainable Critique*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ling, Lily H. M. 2017. "The Missing Other: A Review of Linklater's Violence and Civilization in the Western States-System." *Review of International Studies* 43 (4): 621–36.
- Linklater, Andrew. 1978. "Obligations Beyond the State: The Individual, the State and Humanity in International Theory." PhD diss., London School of Economics.
- Linklater, Andrew. 1990a. *Beyond Realism and Marxism: Critical Theory and International Relations*. New York: St. Martin's Press.
- Linklater, Andrew. 1990b. *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Linklater, Andrew. 1990c. "The Problem of Community in International Relations." *Alternatives* 14 (2): 135–53.
- Linklater, Andrew. 1992. "The Question of the Next Stage in International Relations Theory: A Critical-Theoretical Point of View." *Millennium* 21 (1): 77–98.
- Linklater, Andrew. 1996. "The Achievements of Critical Theory." In *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, edited by Steve Smith, Ken Booth, and Marysia Zalewski, 279–300. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Linklater, Andrew. 1998. *The Transformation of Political Community: Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Linklater, Andrew. 2002. "The Problem of Harm in World Politics: Implications for the Sociology of States-Systems." *International Affairs* 78 (2): 319–38.
- Linklater, Andrew. 2007. "Distant Suffering and Cosmopolitan Obligations." *International Politics* 44 (1): 19–36.
- Linklater, Andrew. 2011a. "Citizenship, Community, and Harm in World Politics." In *Critical Theory in International Relations and Security Studies: Interviews and Reflections*, edited by Shannon Brincat, Laura Lima, and João Nunes, 160–75. London: Routledge.
- Linklater, Andrew. 2011b. *The Problem of Harm in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Linklater, Andrew. 2017. *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Linklater, Andrew. 2019. "Symbols and World Politics: Towards a Long-Term Perspective on Historical Trends and Contemporary Challenges." *European Journal of International Relations* 25 (3): 931–54.
- Linklater, Andrew. 2021. *The Idea of Civilization and the Making of the Global Order*. Bristol: Bristol University Press.
- Linklater, Andrew, and Hidemi Suganami. 2006. *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Reassessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marx, Karl. 1994a. "On the Jewish Question." In *Marx: Early Political Writings*, edited by Joseph J. O'Malley, 28–56. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Marx, Karl. 1994b. "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right." In *Marx: Early Political Writings*, edited by Joseph J. O'Malley, 57–70. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



- McGowan, Todd. 2019. *Emancipation After Hegel: Achieving a Contradictory Revolution*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Michelsen, Nicholas. 2021. "What Is a Minor International Theory? On the Limits of 'Critical International Relations'." *Journal of International Political Theory* 17 (3): 488–511.
- Michelsen, Nicholas, Pablo De Orellana, and Filippo Costa Buranelli. 2023. "The Reactionary Internationale: The Rise of the New Right and the Reconstruction of International Society." *International Relations* 39 (1): 3–29.
- Mohorčič, Joseph. 2024. "The External World and the Future of Political Theory." *Constellations* 32 (1): 154–68.
- Neufeld, Mark A. 1995. *The Restructuring of International Relations Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Nunes, João, Laura Lima, and Shannon Brincat. 2012. "Introduction." In *Critical Theory in International Relations and Security Studies: Interviews and Reflections*, edited by Shannon Brincat, Laura Lima, and João Nunes, 1–11. London: Routledge.
- O'Kane, Chris. 2018. "'Society Maintains Itself Despite All the Catastrophes That May Eventuate': Critical Theory, Negative Totality, and Crisis." *Constellations* 25 (2): 287–301.
- Oliveira, Gilberto Carvalho. 2018. "Reconstructive Methodology and Critical International Relations Theory." *Contexto Internacional* 40 (1): 9–32.
- O'Mahony, Patrick. 2023. "Introduction to Special Issue: The Critical Theory of Society." *European Journal of Social Theory* 26 (2): 121–35.
- Pahnke, Anthony. 2021. "Regrounding Critical Theory: Lenin on Imperialism, Nationalism, and Strategy." *International Studies Review* 23 (1): 181–203.
- Pal, Maia. 2022. "International Relations." In *The SAGE Handbook of Marxism*, edited by Beverley Best, Werner Bonefeld, and Chris O'Kane, 858–75. London: Sage.
- Rengger, Nicholas J. 2001. "Negative Dialectic? The Two Modes of Critical Theory in World Politics." In *Critical Theory and World Politics*, edited by Richard Wyn Jones, 91–110. Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner.
- Rengger, Nicholas John, and Tristram Benedict Thirkell-White. 2007. *Critical International Relations Theory after 25 Years*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Robinson, William I. 2013. "Promoting Polyarchy: 20 Years Later." *International Relations* 27 (2): 228–34.
- Rouvroy, Antoinette. 2020. "Algorithmic Governmentality and the Death of Politics." *Green European Journal*. Available at <https://pure.unamur.be/ws/portalfiles/portal/54750955/8758.pdf>. Accessed 1 September 2024.
- Sabl, Andrew, and Rahul Sagar. 2017. "Introduction." *Critical Review of International Social and Political Philosophy* 20 (3): 269–77.
- Saramago, André. 2021. "Post-Eurocentric Grand Narratives in Critical International Theory." *European Journal of International Relations* 28 (1): 6–29.
- Saramago, André. 2024. *Grand Narratives in Critical International Theory*. London: Routledge.
- Schmid, Davide. 2018. "The Poverty of Critical Theory in International Relations: Habermas, Linklater and the Failings of Cosmopolitan Critique." *European Journal of International Relations* 24 (1): 198–220.
- Schmid, Davide. 2023. *The Poverty of Critical Theory in International Relations*. Cham: Springer International.
- Seth, Sanjay. 2011. "Postcolonial Theory and the Critique of International Relations." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 40 (1): 167–83.
- Shapcott, Richard. 2008. "Critical Theory." In *The Oxford Handbook of International Relations*, edited by Christian Reus-Smit and Duncan Snidal, 327–45. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Strydom, Piet. 2011. *Contemporary Critical Theory and Methodology*. London: Taylor & Francis.
- Sylvester, Christine. 2007. "Whither the International at the End of IR?" *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 35 (3): 551–73.
- Tatum, Dillon Stone. 2021. "Toward a Radical IR: Transformation, Praxis, and Critique in a (Neo)Liberal World Order." *International Studies Review* 23 (4): 1751–70.
- Thame, Charlie. 2013. "Love, Ethics, and Emancipation: The Implications of Conceptions of Human Being and Freedom in Heidegger and Hegel for Critical International Theory." PhD diss., Aberystwyth University.
- Thame, Charlie. 2024. "Myanmar's Redemptive Revolution: Constituent Power and the Struggle for Sovereignty in the Nwe Oo (Spring) Revolution." *European Journal of International Relations* 31 (1): 152–77.

- Thomas, Peter D. 2024. *Radical Politics: On the Causes of Contemporary Emancipation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tomba, Massimiliano. 2019. *Insurgent Universality: An Alternative Legacy of Modernity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Touraine, Alain. 1981. *The Voice and the Eye: An Analysis of Social Movements*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walker, R. B. J. 1999. "The Hierarchicalization of Political Community." *Review of International Studies* 25 (1): 151–6.
- Wight, Martin. 1977. *Systems of States*. Leicester: Leicester University Press.
- Wight, Martin. 1991. *International Theory: The Three Traditions*. London: Leicester University Press.
- Wilder, Gary. 2022. *Concrete Utopianism: The Politics of Temporality and Solidarity*. New York: Fordham University Press.
- Williams, Bernard. 2008. *In the Beginning Was the Deed: Realism and Moralism in Political Argument*, 3rd ed., edited by Geoffrey Hawthorn. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Wilson, Japhy. 2022. "The Insurgent Universal: Between Eurocentric Universalism and the Pluriverse." *Nordia Geographical Publications* 51 (2): 153–62.
- Zevnik, Andreja, and Moran M. Mandelbaum. 2023. "Introduction to Special Issue: Interrogating the Void: Lacanian Psychoanalysis in International Relations." *International Studies Quarterly* 67 (3): 1–12.