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ABSTRACT

Although the problem of relativism has been a perennial one in human studies, it has only recently become a central issue for international politics. On the one hand, scientific realists have charged post-positivists with espousing a doctrine which amounts to little more than an intellectual free for all. In return, post-positivists argue that to avoid relativism, these scientific realists appeal to a methodological procedure which can only be described as a fiction.

This thesis argues that the scientific realist approach both international political theory and to the problem of relativism is severely and unredeemably flawed. And although I make no claim to solve the problem of relativism, I do argue that a different reading of international theory relativism is possible which allows us to make sense of the current relativism. In other words, I argue that to simply denounce relativism as a bad in-and-for-itself is short-sighted and overlooks the fact that relativism does make a knowledge claim upon the discipline of international politics. This claim is that as a form of theoretical alienation it forces us to look for its source. I argue that this is to be found in the marginalization of values and history from international theory in favour of a value-free science. What this tells us is that to avoid relativism we need to bring values and history back into theory.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract. iii

Table of Contents. i

Acknowledgements. iv

Quotation. v

**Introduction.** 1

**Chapter One**
From Classical Realism to "Crisis": International Political Theory Confronts Post Positivism. 9

**Chapter Two**
Positivism, Post-Positivism, and the Problem of Relativism. 24

**Chapter Three**
Two Forms of Post-Positivist Relativism. 41

**Chapter Four**
The Structural Realism Response to Relativism: How Not to Deal With the Problem. 53

**Chapter Five**
Post-Positivism in International Theory: Relativist or Revivalist? 75

**Conclusion.** 87

**Bibliography.** 91
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I also want to thank the Burgess Family for their help over the past years. That I have made it this far is testament to their affection and continuing belief in the importance of what I am doing.

Finally, I would like to dedicate this thesis to the memory of W.A.B. (1905-1992)
You were not made to live as beasts,
but to pursue virtue and knowledge.

Dante Alighieri, L'inferno
INTRODUCTION
There is a new form of scientism evident in international political theory.1 Taking its lead from Kenneth Waltz (1979), it argues, among other things, that an understanding of realism is possible which not only overcomes the theoretical weaknesses of Classical Realism, but has a degree of "scientific" rigour approaching the natural sciences.

By appealing to a structuralist logic and utilizing the tenets of Scientific-Empiricism, it is considered by its proponents to be "an impressive intellectual achievement: an elegant, parsimonious, deductively rigorous instrument for scientific discovery."2 I use the term "Scientific Realism" to designate a theoretical position which is broadly committed to this sort of project.3 It is, for example, to be found in the writings of Robert Keohane (1986), Robert Gilpin (1981), Barry Buzan (1989), J. David Singer (1986), and George Modelski (1982).

It is certainly true that there are differences between these scholars. The issue of change within the structure of the system is the most obvious point of difference among them.4 However, as this thesis is concerned only with epistemological questions, it is valid to consider the work of these scholars as a relatively homogeneous body of literature.5 Each one acknowledge that positivism provides a powerful methodology for Political Realism. Each one holds to an

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1. The best discussion of this intellectual shift within the discipline is to be found in Ashley (1981).


3. This version of Realism has also been termed Neorealism, Structural Realism, Hyper-realism, Technical Realism, and Modern Realism.


5. Wendt (1987, 1991) has criticised this form of realism on its structuralist logic.
instrumental conception of rationality and to a utilitarian understanding of morality. Finally, each one appeals to a structural explanation of international politics.6

Without doubt, Scientific Realism has made an enormous impact on international political theory. Buzan (1989:3) has even argued that Waltz’s theory may well establish the "identity of international Relations as a field of study distinct from Political Science." But Scientific Realism has also been the subject of intense criticism. Indeed, it has probably done more to divide the discipline of international politics than any other theoretical framework to date. For it has precipitated an intense epistemological debate unlike any other in the discipline's rather short history. As James Der Derian (1988:189) puts it:

> International relations is undergoing an epistemological critique which calls into question the very language, concepts, methods, and history (that is, the dominant discourse) which constitutes and governs a tradition of thought in the field.

> Post-positivism is an expression of this epistemological critique. It rejects the claim that a "science" of international politics is the most appropriate means of understanding international phenomena. Richard Ashley (1986:258), for example, argues that Scientific Realism:

> is a positivist structuralism that treats the given order as a natural order, limits rather than expands political discourse, negates or trivializes the significance of variety across time and space, subordinates all practice to an interest in control, bows to the ideal of a social power beyond responsibility, and thereby deprives political interaction of those practical capacities which make social learning and creative change possible."

For all the power of this sort of critique however, it is undermined by a counter claim that Post-positivism is itself a form of relativism.

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6. Even though their individual understanding of what a structure is may be at odds with each other. Compare, for example, Waltz (1979) and Modelski (1978).
It is, perhaps, somewhat ironic that the strongest articulation of the charge of relativism is to be found within the logic of Scientific Realism. Yet they do not necessarily make this claim. Rather, it is implied in their scientism. Any view which denies the universality of scientific method, which posits a multiplicity of interpretations, which does not keep fact and values, theory and practice, subject and object separate, must succumb to some form of relativism. In other words, once we give up our epistemological foundations, or give up on the project of grounding knowledge, we are then left with what Kratochwil and Ruggie (1986:768) call "explanatory anarchy. Richard Bernstein (1983:2-3) captures the spirit of this debate when he writes:

From a manifest perspective, many contemporary debates are still structured within tradition extremes. There is still an underlying belief that in the final analysis the only viable alternatives open to us are either some form of objectivism, foundationalism, ultimate grounding of knowledge, science, philosophy, and language or we are ineluctably led to relativism, scepticism, historicism, and nihilism.

In essence, then, I am making two claims. The first is that the intellectual differences between Scientific Realism and Post-positivism hinge, to some extent, on the problem of relativism. Second, that Bernstein's characterization of the debate in terms of objectivism and relativism is eminantly applicable to the issue as it has manifested itself in international politics.

We can, then, put this issue in the following way. If it is true that Post-positivism leads to a state of explanatory anarchy, the argument is that the discipline of international politics will be unable to make any authoritative statements about its subject matter. One interpretation will be as good as another. In this case, Scientific Realism surely will be vindicated. If, however, the charge of relativism is mistaken, or something of a red herring, then the post-positivist critique

will strike at the very heart of Scientific Realism, depriving it of much of its forcefulness.

At this point, at least three questions need to be asked. First, is Post-positivism relativist? Why has the problem of relativism arisen at this time in the discipline's history? And finally, if the charge of relativism is well-founded, is the only logical alternative the kind of foundationalist and scientific enterprise offered by some strong formulation of Scientific Realism?

The argument I seek to establish is that first and foremost, Scientific Realism is vindicated to the extent that some formulations of Post-positivism are relativist. Having said this, however, this thesis argues that its significance has been largely misunderstood by scientific realists. Post-positivist relativism is not without intrinsic intellectual value. Nor is it simply a "rage" against knowledge, reason, and truth. On the contrary, this relativism is a valuable event if the history of the field. It is so, because it highlights the degree of theoretical alienation in the discipline.

This alienation is the result of three factors. First, because international theory has too long considered values and historicity as marginal to the business of theorizing international politics. Second, because scientific realists have attempted to hijack the study of international theory by turning it into a positivist structuralist science; thus, reinforcing the marginalization of values and history. Third, Scientific Realism is itself a species of idealism. It idealizes the value of scientific method.

8. Although this thesis is concerned with the work of scientific realists with regard to the problem of relativism. It should be noted that most traditionalists are in close agreement with the general methodological claims of Scientific Realism. By this I mean that relativism is simply intellectually bad, containing no redeemable qualities whatsoever.

9. It will become clear that by "values" I have in mind those formative assumptions which give substance to, and motivate all theoretical viewpoints. In this sense, "values" are intimately linked to ethical issues. This thesis, however, will not attempt to deal with this issue due to considerations of space. With regard to the concept of history, I do not mean the re-telling of past events, but rather "history" defined philosophically as something which is determinate of what we are as human beings.
Post-positivism relativism, then, is a crude and understandable response to a distorted view of international theory.

In the final analysis, post-positivist relativism is a consequence of a discipline which has too long considered science and scientific method (that is, positivism) the most desirable road to knowledge. Scientific Realism is the apex of this type of theorizing. Ironically, though, Scientific Realism must also be considered an acute form of alienation because it cannot account for historicity and values in its conceptual scheme. Thus, Post-positivist relativism and Scientific Realism are dialectically linked. Unlike Bernstein, however, who wants to look at the new intellectual conversation which is emerging among scholars, I take up a prior issue. Within the field of international political theory, we will not be in a position to see what is emerging unless we understanding something about the causes behind the current crisis. Ultimately, the aim of this thesis is to uncover a dimension of international theoretical activity hitherto unthematized.

Post-positivist relativism, then, actually tells us a great deal about the state of international theory, and about the sort of theory Scientific Realism is. Indeed, I argue post-positivist relativism turns out to be a crude form of realism. Let us be clear here. I am not saying it is "realist" in the sense of a new doctrine of international politics. Rather, it is realist in the sense that it attempts to restore a balance to a field which has become so obsessed with being "scientific," that it is unwilling to acknowledge other more hermeneutical forms of knowledge. *Somewhat paradoxically, then, this thesis argues that post-positivist relativism makes a knowledge claim upon us which cannot be ignored.*

In order to demonstrate this argument, I divide this thesis into five chapters. In the first chapter I look at the developments which have led to the current state of intellectual turbulence in international theory. I look at the shifts which have taken place during the seventies from Classical Realism to Scientific Realism.
Furthermore, I interpret the "crisis" which has arisen in recent years as a confrontation between scientism and relativism. The second chapter takes a detailed look at both positivism and post-positivism, as well as the problem of relativism.

In the third chapter I look at two forms of relativism in contemporary post-positivism. I argue that the recent work of Mansbach and Ferguson provides an example of a submissive form of relativism, while the post-structuralist theory of Richard Ashley is a strong example. In the fourth chapter I proceed to show how scientific realists deal with the issue of relativism. In other words, I show how it utilizes scientific method against relativism. In the final section of that chapter I argue Scientific Realism is a failure and cannot withstand the logic of post-positivism. Upon close inspection, it proves to be a historically rooted theory with its own conception of the good life. In chapter five I argue that we need to listen to what relativists tell us, not because they are correct, but because they represent an alienated view of reality; an alienation brought about by the excessive idealism of Scientific Realism. Ultimately, then, post-positivism proves to be a form of Political Realism.

In conclusion, international theory must realize that its "worshipful relationship with the natural sciences" has deprived it of new ways of seeing, of creating, and of doing theory.10 Certainly, science plays a significant role in ways of understanding international politics. But theory by scientific method is limited. As one commentator puts it: "strictly speaking, method is incapable of revealing new truth; it renders explicit the kind of truth already implicit in the method."11 Just as there is no Marxist or liberal chemical experiment, so too we cannot understand human beings and their relationship to the world solely by scientific means.


I think the lasting value of Post-positivism will be the realization that to talk of values and ethics in international theories are not necessarily expressions of idealism, nor a marginal enterprise of the discipline, but its greatest strength. Thus, we need no longer hide behind the dishonest mask of a value-neutral social science. As Hilary Putnam (1978) argues: "A view of knowledge that acknowledges that the sphere of knowledge is wider than the sphere of "science" seems to me to be a cultural necessity if we are to arrive at a sane and human view of ourselves or of science." It is this insight which gives Post-positivism "revivalist" potential.
CHAPTER ONE

FROM CLASSICAL REALISM TO "CRISIS"

INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL THEORY CONFRONTS POST-POSITIVISM
The aim of this chapter is to place Scientific Realism and Post-positivism in both a global and intellectual-historical context. This is best achieved by seeing Scientific Realism is an attempt to recover and revitalize Political Realism in the wake of criticism from behaviouralists and globalists. Furthermore, I argue Post-positivism is an intellectual reaction to the extreme positivism of the new realism.

In the 1970's, Puchala and Fagan (1974:252) argued that "we may presently be taking at least a small step away from the anarchy of the traditional state system." According to them, the crude power politics which characterised the Cold War was giving way to a more cooperative and interdependent world.

Some of the factors which led them to this conclusion were increases in transnational capital flows and technology transfers, the growth of multinational corporations, the thawing of relations between the superpowers, the importance of domestic politics in foreign policy decision-making, the Vietnam War, and the realization that all states, no matter how big or small, were becoming increasingly dependent on scarce commodities. Moreover, international organizations such as the United Nations, Amnesty International and the Club of Rome, began to play a more prominent and necessary role in the well-being of nations and their citizens.

To many, the realist understanding of international politics had been overtaken by world events. Not surprisingly, trenchant critiques of Political Realism followed with the aim of developing more suitable theoretical explanations of these emerging global phenomena. Behaviouralists argued that Realism lacked the theoretical rigour necessary to meet "scientific" standards of

1. This is especially true of oil.

2. For a fuller statement of these issues see Rosencrance (1971) and Barry Jones & Willetts (1984).
inquiry. The state as actor assumption was challenged; as was the view that the international sphere was autonomous from domestic politics. The rationality assumption came under fire from those who highlighted the irrational aspects of crisis decision-making. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, it was argued that Political Realism was just too narrow a theory to account for the complexity of the international sphere. War, security, and power were not the only problems facing states. Other concerns such as the economy, the environment, human rights, underdevelopment and poverty, ethnic issues, and freedom were at least as important to states. Richard Rothstein (1972:358) even warned that we should not hang on to this dying paradigm because its "irrelevance" was becoming a danger to the emergence of a new international system. Without doubt, Political Realism was under siege for the first time since E.H. Carr's (1964) powerful and uncompromising defence of its central principles.

Realism no longer provided the organizing and harmonizing framework which had been foundational to the discipline of international politics since the post-war period. As Mansbach and Ferguson (1986:19) put it: "Realism was no longer a disciplinary matrix." This state of affairs forced dedicated realists to re-

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3. For a critique of Behaviouralism see Vasquez (1983). Vasquez argues that Behaviouralism was itself a form of Political Realism.

4. See Halliday (1988); Gourevitch (1978); Fitzpatrick (1988:172) has argued that realism has become extinct as a viable theory of geopolitics precisely because of its "state as actor" focus. "The state as actor perspective cannot be reformed from within or adjusted in its detail, while leaving the axiomatic base intact. The only solution is to jettison the lot and to start again on new foundations."

5. See Holsti (1981). A number of scholars, for example, argued that in a crisis situation, actors have a reduced capacity to make the "right" or optimal tactical decisions.

6. Even Hans Morgenthau began to express doubts about the applicability of realism to contemporary international politics. See Campbell (1986). So thorough have these criticisms been that Michael Banks (1985:222) has recently talked of "Realism Devastated."
articulate their understanding of international politics in a way which would make Political Realism impervious to the sorts of criticism outlined above.7

The best way to understand the rise of Scientific Realism is to see it in this light. To do this, means going back to the Classical Realism of Hans Morgenthau.8 Not only was his conception of realism the target of most of the early anti-Realist critiques, but it was also the benchmark against which Scientific Realism developed as a new and powerful paradigmatic alternative.

FROM CLASSICAL REALISM TO STRUCTURAL REALISM: PARADIGM REGAINED?

The Classical Realism of Hans Morgenthau commenced with an assumption about the nature of human beings, and, consequently, of human action. Because human nature was imperfect, human actions always fell short of humanity's desired goals. According to Morgenthau, this unfortunate fact mitigated against the possibility of there being a time now, or in the future, in which the potential for war and conflict would not exist. It is morally reckless and politically naive to overestimate the ability of humans to alter their world in a radical way, and according to the image of some pre-ordained moral vision. As Morgenthau (1967:4) tell us:

...believes that the world, imperfect as it is from a rational point of view, is the result of forces inherent in human nature. To improve the world one must work with those forces, not against them. This being inherently a world of opposing interests and of conflict among them, moral principles can never be fully realized.

In response to idealists of whatever ilk, Morgenthau put forward a counter-manifesto made up of six fundamental principles. First, international politics is about the discovery of "objective laws", and international political

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7.I shall henceforth call this "Classical Realism" to distinguish it from other versions of realism.

8.Morgenthau (1967:7). Keohane (1986:11) summarizes it well when he writes that states are rational in the sense that "they have consistent, ordered preferences, and that they calculate the costs and benefits of all alternative policies in order to maximize their utility in light of both those preferences and of their perceptions of the nature of reality."
theory "consists in ascertaining facts and giving them meaning through reason".(p.4) Second, in international politics "interests defined in terms of power" is the basic conceptual category which motivates and orients statespersons. Third, these interests are the essence of politics and not effected by the vagaries of time and place. Fourth, questions of universal morality lie outside the realm of state action. Because states act in their own interests and because the world of states is anarchic, questions of morality are continually subject to prudential constraints. If morality comes into play in the actions of states, it does so because it serves the immediate needs of that state. Fifth, by viewing the actions of all states through the lens of "interests defined in terms of power," realism posits an initial equality among states in terms of how they will act. In this way, political realism provides a good benchmark from which to evaluate the actions of states, including one's own. That states are considered equal on these terms means that theorist's can avoid the twin pitfalls of ideology and nationalism. Finally, Classical Realism defends the autonomy of the political sphere in terms of the sort of interpretation it brings to the study of international life. International politics is not about economics, morality or law. This also implies the international sphere is, itself, an area of concern separate from domestic concerns where these sorts of factors find their valid expression.

Although Morgenthau summarizes his conception of realism in six principles, we can, with some justification, consider a seventh. The the international system can be understood rationally. But the rationality principle is not simply one principle among many. On the contrary, the rationality principle is the epistemic base upon which the principles of Political Realism are erected. Realism, then:

shares with all social theory the need, for the sake of theoretical understanding, to stress the rational elements of political reality; for it is these rational elements that make reality intelligible for theory.(p.8)
His basic premise, then, states that reality is rational and capable of being explained by the social scientist. Hegel's dictum: to those who look at the world rationally, the world looks rationally back, conveys Morgenthau's meaning nicely. International politics becomes intelligible by attempting to discern universal rational principles or objective laws about its functioning which approximate reality as near as possible.

Realism, believing as it does in the objectivity of the laws of politics, must also believe in the possibility of developing a rational theory that reflects, however imperfectly and one-sidedly, these objective laws.(p.4)

It is clear that by a theory of politics based on reason, Morgenthau has something specific in mind. Because states are calculators of interests, the concept of rationality operative in international politics, is most accurately represented in utilitarian terms. He writes: "a rational foreign policy minimizes risk and maximizes benefits, and hence complies both with the moral precept of prudence and the political requirement of success."9

But understanding the utilitarian nature of international politics was not simply a descriptive insight, it is one which had practical value for statesmen and decision-makers. It would allow states, including the United States, to know the limitation of their actions. As the well-know phrase goes, it would allow them, "to know when to hold and to know when to fold." Policy makers and state leaders could, according to Morgenthau, make accurate predictions about the behaviour of others which was not coloured and distorted by the foibles of ideology, morality, psychological motives, and the like. Global progress came, not through rapid change, as revolutionaries and idealists claimed, rather: "The realist is persuaded that this transformation can be achieved only through the

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9. Morgenthau (1967:9). Whether the classical realist conception of reason has any genuine practical moral potential seems to me a moot point. While it is true classical realists like Morgenthau, Kennan, and Lippman were highly critical of aspects of post-war U.S. foreign policy (something modern realists seem to have forgotten in their concern with descriptions of the international system), it is arguable whether classical realism is not simply a form of moral scepticism. On this see Cohen (1984).
workmanlike manipulation of the perennial forces that have shaped the past as they will the future."

But for all the elegance of Morgenthau's conception of realism, it suffered from a lack of terminological and theoretical precision. Central concepts were inadequately defined; the concept of "power" chief amongst them.10 Stanley Hoffmann (1981:654) questioned its evaluative power and whether it was an adequate framework for analysis. Moreover, and as I noted above, the growing importance of economic matters meant that Morgenthau's view that politics and economics were somehow separate fields became increasingly hard to defend. This was also the case with his state-centric assumption.

Modern Scientific Realism, then, comes on the scene as a response to these sorts of problems. On the one hand, it is a trenchant critique of Classical Realism and, on the other, it considers itself its intellectual fulfilment. As Kenneth Waltz (1979:1), the most systematic exponent of this form of realism argues, his purpose is "to construct a theory of international politics which remedies the defects of present theories." If Political Realism was to regain its status as the dominant paradigm in international politics, it had to become a "super-paradigm" capable of demonstrating that the state-centric model had an a priori and superior claim upon students of international politics. In addition, its exponents had to show that the criticisms emanating from the interdependence school were not well-founded theoretically. The eventual success of this project would lead Richard Little (1987:74) to comment that: "far from falling into oblivion...[realism]...shows every sign of recovering its former position of pre-eminence." Or, as Richard Ashley (1981:25) expresses it, Waltz's realism is, "a progressive scientific redemption of Classical Realism."

10.Raymond Aron (1967:190) for example, called Morgenthau's use of power conceptually confusing. See also Aron (1973:322) Similarly, Inis J. Claude (1962:25-26) argued that the concept of "balance of power" was open to numerous interpretations.
The work of Kenneth Waltz is the most systematic form of this viewpoint. It is, therefore, worth exploring his "science" of realism to get an idea of the direction Political Realism took after the apparent demise of Classical Realism.

Essentially, Waltz argues that Political Realism is not flawed, as its many critics believed. Rather, the project has been inadequately thought through. Indeed, he goes to great lengths to preserve the "hard core" of Classical Realism. This hard core, as Robert Keohane argues, retains the state-centric assumption, the rationality assumption (although Waltz denies this), the power assumption, the centrality of anarchy, and a balance of power theory.11

Waltz's main criticism of Classical Realism is that there is no need to infer the anarchical nature of international politics from the inherent imperfection of human nature.12 According to him, this is both unscientific and reductionist. It is unscientific because it is based upon a dubious metaphysic, and reductionist because it failed to take systemic causes of state behaviour into account. Morgenthau's reductionism is a consequence of overlooking the degree to which the structure of the system itself conditioned state action. Morgenthau wrongly attributes to the system that which rightly belongs at the unit level. Instead, what is needed is a systemic theory which focuses attention on both the structure of the system and the interaction which takes place between both the units of the system, and between the units as a consequence of the system. The structure of the international system is, primarily, responsible for the outcomes perceived at the systems level. It rewards some behaviour and punishes others. More importantly, it constrains the behaviour of the units, and can frustrate their objectives because others possess similar powers.

The structure of the international system is defined by two factors. First, the way in which it is ordered, in this case anarchically. Second, structure defines

the distribution of the capabilities of the units. The international system is, therefore, defined by the major players. By abstracting out all the particular attributes of states from the structure, Waltz argues one can determine the kinds of behaviour which the structure of the system exerts on the states, as well as account for the external behaviour of states more accurately. In this way, he overcomes the "human nature" problem which plagued Classical Realism, and gave international politics only a veneer of "science."

Waltz believes that a systems theory of international politics has what he calls a "positive payoff." By this he means that his theory is superior to others because of its explanatory and its predictive power. A "theory," for Waltz, explains recurrence, regularity and continuity. As he (1979:69) puts it:

> Within a system, theory explains continuities. It tells us what to expect, and why to expect it. Within a system, a theory explains recurrences and repetitions, not change.

The positive payoff, then, is that we are able to understanding the anarchic nature of international politics, why wars occur and reoccur, the narrow limits of actor movement within the system, and why substantial changes at the unit level do not produce change at the systems level.

Along with its perceived explanatory and predictive power, what scholars like Buzan (1989), Keohane (1986), and Gilpin (1983, 1986) find most attractive about this formulation of Political Realism is both its simplicity and its systematic nature. As Buzan (1989:4) argues: "Waltz's accomplishment is to identify important durable elements in a field where development of scientific analysis is everywhere hampered by the apparent universality of change."

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13. Previously, Waltz (1964) had argued bipolarity was the most stable form of international system.

14. Although it is curious that these scholars celebrate Waltz's theory for its simplicity, then proceed on a neat course of complicating it. That this is the case, calls into question the view that a good theory is a simple one. Indeed, it may well be that the opposite is true.
To *discover* these so-called durable elements, Waltz employs a structuralist understanding of international reality, and utilizes the tenets of scientific-empiricism. Waltz's structuralism is nothing new, of course. Not only does it have articulations in psychology (Piaget), anthropology (Levi-Strauss), linguistics (Chomsky), history (The Annales School), and Marxism (Althusser, Poulantzas), it has also been a long-standing approach in international politics. The two most important precursors to Waltz here is the Structural-Functionalism of the likes of Ernst Haas (1964) and the neo-Marxist development theory of Immanuel Wallerstein (1979).

It is not necessary to say too much about structural approaches themselves.\(^{15}\) Its basic assumptions are evident from the previous discussion of Waltz's realism. In the interests of theoretical clarity, however, it might be worth pointing out the distinctive features of all structuralist approaches. First, there is a prioritizing of the whole over the parts. Second, the parts themselves comprise sets of relations. Thus, in a structuralist anthropology a kinship system can only be understood by looking at the relations and the sets of relations between brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, etc. Third, these interactions are considered to be regular, systematic, and orderly, and have an enduring character.\(^{16}\) Fourth, these sets of relations form a structure or a system. Fifth, we are unable to understand the properties of the system under investigation unless we take account of all the sets of relations. Thus, we will not be able to understand a kinship system unless we consider all the familial relations. Finally, the structure or system is not an observable phenomena. It is inferred by the totality of relations.

Perhaps the most important short-coming of all forms of structuralism is their static nature. They do not account for human agency very satisfactorily, or

\(^{15}\)On this see Runciman (1969:253-265); Keat and Urry (1982:121-140).

\(^{16}\)Keat and Urry (1982:120).
for change in the system. Thus, Waltz’s explanation of the enduring aspects of the international system is bought at the cost of an adequate explanation of change. As Keohane puts it: "Waltz’s theory does not explain change well." 17

Because a structure is by nature fixed, the ability of human agents to alter the structure of the system, or their place within it, is negligible or non-existent. Individuals are impotent against the power of the structure. It has, therefore, a tendency toward being conservative. Following on from this, is the anomaly pointed out by Alexander Wendt (1987) of how the structure came about in the first place. The only answer to this question can be agents.

The other essential aspect of Waltz’s theory, and of Scientific Realism generally, is adherence to Scientific-Empiricism. We shall investigate this question in the next chapter. It is enough at this point to note that international political phenomena are comparable to natural phenomena. The study of international politics is, and can be, scientific.

Essentially, this meant a number of things. First, positivism is adopted as the most appropriate methodological framework. Second, Waltz’s understanding of morality is purely utilitarian. Third, international politics is modelled on microeconomics. 18

The Structuralism and the Scientific-Empiricism, then, provided Political Realism with a powerful intellectual framework. It had the merit (real or apparent) of basking in the glory of neo-classical economic theory, and gave the study of international politics a research paradigm which promised cumulative knowledge of the field. 19 With such intellectual power, then, it is no wonder that


18. Keohane (1986:15) also writes that the significance of his theory is in his attempt to "systematize political realism into a rigorous, deductive systemic theory of international politics."

it is considered by its devotees to be a revolutionary intellectual achievement, and a worthy heir to Classical Realism.

The contribution of Scientific Realism to contemporary international theory is a double edged sword however. On the one hand, it sees itself as the culmination (or fulfilment) of international theory. On the other, its scientism has been a principal factor in the "crisis" which now confronts the discipline, and has prompted the move by many theorists into a "post-positivist" mode of theorising.20

Essentially, post-positivism rejects the claims of Scientific Realism outright. Drawing its inspiration from recent debates in the philosophy and history of science and in social and political theory, it attempts to take history seriously, is concerned with the unstated assumptions in a theoretical discourse, and is radical to the extent that it believes an adequate theory should be emancipatory and practical-critical in its outlook rather than a problem-solving theory.21 Moreover, because it is historically grounded, it challenges the possibility of a single explanation of reality, international or otherwise. Post-positivism, therefore, celebrates theoretical and methodological pluralism. There is no one "truth" about international politics, nor a single way in which we can arrive at new knowledge. There are simply "ways" of knowing. As Holsti (1989:256) expresses it: "Theoretical pluralism is the only possible response to the multiple realities of a complex world."

This may seem a rather obvious statement to make. However, it challenges much of the conventional "scientific" wisdom of the discipline. If pluralism is true, there can be no "science of international politics." For the latter

20. See, for example, Ashley (1981, 1983, 1986); Cox (1986); Campbell (1988); George & Campbell (1990).

21. See Kuhn (1970); Lakatos (1970); Adorno (1976); MacIntyre (1976); Rorty (1979); Ricoeur (1981); Habermas (1987); Gadamer (1988); Taylor (1989). For a general overview of these debates see Bernstein (1976, 1983).
is premised upon a universalism which conceives of itself above and beyond multiplicity.

There is, however, more going on here than simply making a choice between universalism and pluralism. Attempts to explain the world solely in universalist terms invariably smack of ethnocentrism, while pluralism is considered to lead us down the path of relativism and "explanatory anarchy." This problem has plunged the study of international politics into a state of "crisis."

The term "crisis" has great evocative power. Yet it is not used lightly. Never before has international political theory been so polarized on such an important issue. Part of the reason for this lies in the fact that the discipline, perhaps more than any other field of study, has striven for recognition as an independent area of study. The kind of questions thrown up by Post-positivism have undercut this possibility in a fundamental way. Ultimately, the study of international politics is in the midst a crisis of both legitimacy and identity.

We can, perhaps, clarify the foregoing by considering two questions. Both seem to me to be crucial to understanding the recent disciplinary turmoil. What are the appropriate means by which we can understand international politics? And, what are the ends for which this study is, and should be, undertaken? The major problem, however, is that the current pluralism gives more than one answer to these problems. How are we to choose? How are we to decide between competing viewpoints?

THEORETICAL PLURALISM AS A "CRISIS" OF REASON

We live in an age which is becoming increasingly cognizant of the inability of human reason to solve problems which reason itself has unleashed upon the globe. Theoretical pluralism is a complex response to the perceived impotence of a universalist and totalizing conception of reason. Richard Bernstein's (1983:2)

comment, then, seems eminently applicable to the current situation in international theory:

While at first glance the debates may appear to have very different emphases, all of them, in essence, have a single concern and focus: to determine the nature and scope of human rationality.

Theories which aspire to the status of "science" believe this to be a settled question—reason is universal. Epistemology is about demonstrating the possibility of a universal conception of reason which all individuals have the capacity for, and engage in. Any attempt to understand human beings and their world, must begin here, or risk irrationalism. At another level, a universal conception of reason is also a theory of standards of agreement—a universal language if you like. On this view, there is no reason why perfect agreement cannot be attained providing we adhere to the methodological procedures which ensure reason's purity.

Theoretical pluralism in the study of international politics challenges the possibility of this sort of universalism. That a multitude of interpretations are possible means reason may well be pluralistic in nature. It also means we may have to live with the possibility that incommensurability between competing approaches is an integral part of human being. Ultimately, pluralism calls into question any single project that sets itself up to be the arbiter of what is right and true beyond a historical and social context.

It is the tension generated between these two poles which has brought the discipline into a state of "crisis." For many, this is a burdensome question because if one is willing to admit against Scientific Realism, that "theoretical pluralism is the only possible response to the multiple realities of a complex world", one is immediately confronted with the problem of relativism.23 And scientifically-minded realists have not been slow to point this out.

The issue, then, is we either take Post-positivism and theoretical pluralism seriously, possibly ending up with no independent standards with which to judge competing theories, or we take the positivist road and deny legitimacy to all other modes of discourse, and ways of understanding reality. Thus, the key to understanding the disagreement between scientific realists and post-positivists turns on the problem of disciplinary relativism.

Thus far, I have briefly considered some of the main changes within international political theory since the early seventies. I have argued the discipline is in crisis because of an unresolved tension between Scientific Realism and Post-positivism. We need now to focus on the key concepts of "positivism" and "post-positivism" and show why the problem of relativism is central to an understanding of the contemporary dilemma's facing international political theory.
CHAPTER TWO

POSITIVISM, POST-POSITIVISM AND THE PROBLEM OF RELATIVISM
Jurgen Habermas (1984a:2) has argued that all attempts at discovering ultimate foundations, in which the intentions of First Philosophy live on, have broken down. In this situation, the way is opening to a new constellation in the relationship between philosophy and the sciences.

Habermas is not alone here. Thinkers such as Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, Gadamer, Kuhn, Foucault and Rorty, have demonstrated in various ways that the epistemological enterprise-in the form of positivism-has been, in Charles Taylor's words, "a mistake".1

At the time that positivism was becoming a dubious methodology in other disciplines, Scientific Realists argued the methodological principles of positivism provided the best framework for a rigorous and scientific understanding of international politics. We need, therefore, to look more closely at the issue of positivism and how the "will to science" has become a powerful force within the discipline.

**POSITIVISM AND SCIENTIFIC REALISM**

Epistemology, as the search for a theory of knowledge, argues human reason can give us truths about the natural and social world which need not defer to experience to be validated. Its mandate was to unify both the natural and human sciences around a single methodology, the strictness of which, would provide unimpeachable criteria to distinguish truth from fiction, reality from myth. According to modern positivists, however, epistemology is dead. Modern positivism killed it off, or, at least, made it a superfluous undertaking. The problem of knowledge which Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Husserl and countless others, spent their intellectual energies trying to solve, has become a redundant problem. In other words, the problem has been solved.

The natural sciences, as the expression of "science," consider epistemology no longer necessary. Consequently, the natural science model has become the

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1. Taylor (1989:465). It should, perhaps, be noted that these thinkers are not challenging mathematical truths and forms of logic.
arbiter of where, and in what sense, we can talk of knowledge. This certitude has meant epistemology has given way to the philosophy of science in forms of positivism. In essence, epistemology has reached its zenith with positivism, and, in the process has become aufgehoben. "Positivism marks the end of the theory of knowledge".2 Certitude requires no more justification. The result, as Habermas has noted, is that "transcendental-logical inquiry into the meaning of knowledge is replaced by positivistic inquiry into the meaning of "facts" whose connection is described by theoretical propositions."(p.69) Of course, these theoretical propositions vary according to the form positivism takes, and not many seem to agree on a definitive assessment of the term.3 We can, however, outline its basic principles.

Broadly speaking, positivists share the view that their approach to knowing has a clarity, a veracity, and a finality which they deny to other approaches. Instuitionism and interpretivism being two of the most obvious cases. Second, positivist knowledge is factual knowledge unmediated by history, culture, custom, tradition, and such like. It is "knowledge" that is not dependent upon ethical or political norms. Among its savants, then, it is considered value-free knowledge. No other modes of knowing leak into their science.

The value-neutrality of positivism comes as a result of the separation of a number of theoretical categories such as theory-practice, is-ought, fact-value, subject-object, and the like. Norms and values, therefore, lie outside of its conception of what it is to be rational.

Third, and following on from the last point, the "scientist" and the object of his/her inquiry are also held apart. The scientist must be detached from the object of study in order to avoid falling into subjectivism; a subjectivism which would affect the purity of the results. In this sense, positivism objectifies reality.

3.For a General statement see Kolokowski, (1972).
Finally, to apprehend the world as it really is, is to discover lawlike
generalizations (if A, then B) about the workings of the social world, which, once
known, give the social scientist the ability to control and manipulate outcomes.
Its particular form of practice, then, consists in the technical application of
theoretical knowledge, or what Robert Cox (1986) calls "problem-solving theory."
The concern of a positivist conception of politics, or science of society, is
efficiency. It attempts, through a set of procedures, to discover the technically
optimal means of implementing decisions and achieving goals.

To the extent international theorists have attempted to apprehend their
field of study "scientifically", they have been profoundly influenced by positivist
methodological principles. Even Hans Morgenthau (1971:621), who otherwise
criticised positivism and writes that science is: "incapable of foreseeing what is to
be prevented and of guiding action by knowledge, [and] appears as the very
cause of the dangers that it pretends to be able to prevent", was himself
encapsulated in the "will to science". His belief in objective laws of politics
negates much of this critique of scientific methods.

But it is in Scientific Realism that optimism in positivism reaches its
pinnacle. In Waltz (1986:33), for example, theory becomes an undertaking which
seeks to reveal laws and regularities about the international system. The measure
of a good theory is its "usefulness" and this is gauged by a "desire to control, or at
least to know if control is possible". It is therefore concerned solely with
advancing technical rationality in international theory. His theory is value-free
(at least in his own mind) to the extent states are taken as objective units unencumbered by such factors as ideology, religion, type of government, culture, and so forth. These characteristics are banished from the structural realm under the label "process".

It is ahistorical in the sense that it posits immutable laws and an international arena that is unchanging, and unreformable. But what makes Waltz's theory particularly positivist is his celebration of microeconomic theory as a model for the social sciences.5 In defining the notion of "theory", for example, Waltz argues that: The meaning does not accord with usage in much of traditional political theory...[but]...it does correspond to the definition of the term in the natural sciences and in some of the social sciences, especially economics.(p.33)

I noted in the previous chapter that the crisis in contemporary theory between Scientific Realists and post-positivists could be seen in terms of a crisis of reason. For these realists, belief in the value of economics as a model for theory is also a commitment to a rational choice theory of human agency, and, by extension, state action. States are nothing more than homo economicus writ large.

By terming Scientific Realism's conception of international politics a version of rational choice theory, I mean an economic theory which explains state rationality in terms of a relation between preferences, actions and consequences. The sole aim of agents is to maximize the satisfaction of their preferences with the lowest possible costs. The success of an action depends on there being no other option open to that agent which could bring about a higher degree of utility.6 On this model, preferences are systematically ordered and calculable. What is considered "rational action" rests on a conception of social

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5. For a discussion of the historical connection between positivism and economics see Hollis & Nell (1975:47-53).

theory based upon three factors: (i) it is a means only analysis; As Gilpin (1981:X) puts it "rationality only applies to the endeavour, not the outcome"; (ii) it also assumes a basic egoism; (iii) finally, it posits social atomism in that all individuals act in the same way. It doesn’t matter who they are or what strata of society they come from, or what their social and cultural disposition is. The only difference might be the level of skill with which the atomistic individual tackles the problem of preference satisfaction. Taken together, rational choice theory is said to have an excellent value in predicting or illuminating significant features of social and political life.7 Thus, Gilpin (1981:X) concludes:

economics provides a highly developed theory of social behaviour, and for this reason economic theory has been applied to an ever increasing range of social and political phenomena.

In essence, then, what makes Scientific Realism a distinctive project is the marrying of a utilitarian conception of rationality (and of ethics) to a positivist methodology within the parameters of neo-classical theory.

But it is not simply a question of whether economic theory has utility for the study of international politics as Gilpin believes, or, whether one can write a book that is coherent from beginning to end based upon principles of economic rationality. The issue is a great deal more profound than this. It concerns what we are as human beings, our way of being if you like. Human beings as minimizers-maximizers, "satisficers," wanters and achievers comprises only one aspect of what it is to be human, and a small one at that. The issue, then, is whether a meta-theory like Scientific Realism, which claims to be the only way of understanding international politics, can account for the whole range of state behaviour by basing politics upon categories derived from neo-classical economics.

As we shall see shortly, post-positivists argue that it cannot. Before turning to look at Post-positivism in more detail, I think it is important to inquire into the motivation for adopting a positivist approach to theorizing.

A positivist conception of theory takes as its sole end and aim epistemic certitude. If theory cannot discover, or provide a solid basis for its arguments and its empirical evidence, there is no possible way of being sure that one's knowledge is "true." According to positivists, we are left with relativism when we give up our commitment to this endeavour. Ultimately, the coherence of the positivist project lies in its belief in the existence of universal or transcendental categories. This can be considered from a number of perspectives, but ultimately it begins with a universal conception of reason which it takes as valid beyond time and place. Thus, the view that international politics in characterised by anarchy is a universal statement, as is the view that all states are self-interested entities which seek the maximization of power.

According to its proponents, once such universals are grasped, we are able to develop criteria of evaluation which we know to be true and objective. On the other hand, if we deny their existence, we also deny the possibility of knowledge. All phenomena become little more than a fleeting expression of moments in time and space. Planning becomes impossible, solutions to political problems become a hit and miss affair, and continuity of deed and action is lost. It is not too difficult, then, to understand why positivists have difficulty with modes of thinking which claim scientific knowledge to be only one form of knowledge among others. Not only does this pluralism threaten the unity of science, but more importantly, it calls into question the whole process whereby we discover knowledge. According to these positivists, it makes the word "truth" meaningless, and a mockery out of the entire intellectual enterprise. It leaves us with thoroughgoing and extreme forms relativism. E.D. Hirsch (1978:13) expresses this viewpoint neatly. And although his target is pluralistic minded literary theorists, it would no doubt find accent among Scientific Realists.
Some of my colleagues are indignant at the present decadence in literary scholarship, with its anti-rationalism, faddism, and extreme relativism. I share their feelings. Scholars are right to feel indignant toward those learned writers who deliberately exploit the institutions of scholarship—even down to the punctilious conventions like footnotes and quotations—to deny, that is, the whole point of the institutions of scholarship, to deny that is, the possibility of knowledge.

Relativism, then, must be considered the most important issue facing international theory to date. However, we must ask whether Scientific Realists are correct in their assessment of the danger relativism poses to the discipline. Does Post-positivism represent a loss of intellectual standards? Does it mean we can no longer judge between different interpretations? Answers to these sorts of questions mean taking a closer look at Post-positivism and the place of relativism within it.

**POST-POSITIVISM AND THE PROBLEM OF RELATIVISM**

As I noted at the beginning of this chapter, post-positivists argue that the positivist conception of theory, method, and of the forms of political organization which follow as a consequence, constitute a mistaken view of reality.

Generally speaking, post-positivists reject forms of epistemological foundationalism and any attempt at grounding knowledge. In doing so, they have called into question, and undermined, the validity of the natural science claim to be the arbiter of what shall and shall not pass for "true" knowledge on the grounds there are modes of experience which cannot be verified by scientific processes. By rejecting the subject/object dichotomy, and the view that we can apprehend the world of sense independently of our place within it, Post-positivism posits a new account of the interrelationship between subjects and objects. It is one in which the road to knowledge is conceived intersubjectively, and conditioned by historical, social, and cultural factors. In terms of its conception of rationality, post-positivists regard technical reason only to be a moment in the life of reason, rather than reason itself. Positivists, then, have misunderstood its nature all along. Instead, Post-positivism focuses on the
connection between reason and language, arguing we gain knowledge through communication, argument, and persuasion in a intersubjectively shared language world, rather than by deductive or inductive means. In essence, it constitutes nothing less than a re-evaluation of human subjectivity and our way of being-in-the-world. It argues that a whole host of practices essential to understanding our relations to/with the world are simply ignored and artificially constrained by technical reason.

It is with these sorts of criteria in mind that Robert Cox (1986) and Richard Ashley (1981, 1986) criticised Scientific Realism for its reduction of reason to a technical-strategic logic. They variously argued that the scientific realist understanding of international politics was ahistorical, asocial, economistic, a subtle form of ideology masquerading as value-free science, and a conservative defence of the current order. In addition, Cox (1986) and Ashley (1986) argued scientific realists fail to understand the nature of social power which lies behind states, criticized the artificiality of the state/society split, and most importantly, argued the logic of politics has been reduced to a technique, and effectively neutered. In Ashley’s words:

> the economization of international politics can only mean the purging to international politics of those reflective capacities which, however limited, make global learning and creative change possible. It can only mean the impoverishment of political imagination and the reduction of international politics to a battleground for the self-blind strategic clash of technical reason against technical reason in the service of unquestioned ends. (p.297)

Post-positivism, then, has issued a major challenge to positivist forms of international political theory. Yet the validity of its critique is cast into doubt with the charge of relativism.8

To argue Post-positivism leads to relativism is to argue it also leads to subjectivism, irrationalism, and nihilism. With this in mind, scientific realists

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argue, "how can we take these critiques seriously?" Post-positivists are engaged in a wrecking operation which seeks to tear down all that patient scholarship has built up over the centuries. This relativism must be resisted with all the intellectual force available to modern thought.

Arguing that Post-positivism leads to relativism has an unexpected benefit, however. It provides scientific realists with the justification it needs to legitimate (or re-legitimate) its own project—a task all the more necessary considering the allegedly relativistic turn in international theory. On this logic, Scientific Realism presents us with a simple either/or proposition: reason or irrationalism, truth or error, science or myth, progress or stagnation, enlightenment or a new dark age.

As far as I am aware, no contemporary text in international political theory treats the problem of relativism in any depth. This is remarkable given the degree to which scientific realists "fear" it. But what is even more remarkable is that this comes from a group of scholars whose traditional counsel to policy makers and state leaders has been "know thy enemy." In light of this omission, it is necessary to provide a brief outline of just what relativism means, and why it is considered a problem for intellectual life.

There are two ways of understanding what relativism is. The first is a philosophical disposition which specific characteristics. This is an epistemological relativism. The second, which follows on from the first, refers to our inability to make critical judgements between say a first year essay and a paper by a leading scholar in a specific field.

In the first instance, relativism is a particular way of interpreting, translating and explaining reality.9 It challenges the cherished assumptions of philosophers, theorists, and religious believers by denying the existence of any universal truth whatsoever. There is no hierarchy of peoples, no unfolding of

Geist or hidden hand directing particular cultures. In short, there is no implicit teleology, eschatology, or pre-determined world view; the notion of a steadily progressive goal for humanity is no more than a myth. Instead, relativism acknowledges the diversity of beliefs, the multiplicity of cultures, conceptual schemes, paradigms, theories and forms of life. No one viewpoint takes precedence over another, for we have no way to judge whether one is better than another. Rather, they are all unique expressions of particular historical epochs, and particular ways of seeing the world. In the final analysis, history exhibits only "difference". There is, as Richard Bernstein (1983:11) expresses it, "a nonreducible plurality of such schemes, paradigms and practices."

This form of relativism has another important dimension that is sometimes overlooked. It is a crusader against all forms of ethnocentrism. Moreover, it has a somewhat romantic appeal, in that some relativists see themselves as the purveyors of the humanitarian ideals of liberalism and open-minded tolerance. Its overriding aim is, therefore, the veneration of all societies and peoples on their own terms. Herskovitz (1966:63)) argues:

Cultural relativism is the social discipline that comes of respect for differences—of mutual respect. Emphasis on the worth of many ways of life, not one, is an affirmation of the values of each culture. Such emphasis seeks to understand and harmonise goals, not to judge and destroy those that do not dovetail with our own.

Although this thesis is not particular concerned with cultural relativism, the point made by Herskovits remains valid for all forms of relativism. For in placing the emphasis on "difference," relativism will only carry out internal interpretations. That is, a particular paradigm can only be understood in relation to itself and the social, historical, cultural and environmental realm in which it exists or has existed.

Second, those who argue relativism will lead to intellectual incoherence, do so because they argue that once the possibility of knowledge is acknowledged as problematic, then all scholarship becomes simply a matter of subjective interpretation. Ultimately, one view becomes as good as the next and we have no
means of adjudicating between contending interpretations. As Lapid (1989:249) writes:

> If adopted uncritically or taken to its logical conclusion, methodological pluralism may deteriorate into a condition of epistemological anarchy under which almost any position can legitimately claim equal hearing.

If we finally succumb to the relativity of all standards, then, nothing will have binding validity upon us. All that will be left will be either subjective truths which we place upon ourselves, or those arbitrary truths which are placed upon us by our social and physical environment. For some, this will result in nothing less than the decay of society. We shall inevitably fall victim to scepticism, irrationalism, and, finally, nihilism.10 As Gordon Kaufmann (1960:4) argues: "when men no longer bring themselves to take a position on issues of truth and value, human culture cannot long survive."

I think we can now begin to see why relativism poses such a problem for international theory. At one level, our ability to distinguish between the validity of differing viewpoints becomes impossible. As Thomas Biersteker (1989:265) notes, relativism:

> does not offer us any clear criteria for choosing among the multiple and competing explanations it produces. Once liberal toleration yields to the production of alternative interpretations and understandings, how are we to choose from the abundance of alternative explanations?

The very real possibility exists, then, that students of international politics will no longer be sure of anything. The concept of "truth" vanishes as the goal of theorizing, and the study of politics becomes a wholly subjectivist process. Thus,

10.Historical relativism is a form of scepticism. Scepticism is, in general, a mode of thinking that doubts the ability of the senses to be able to discover how things really are. Sceptics doubts our ability to have any true knowledge. But historical relativism believes in the conditioned and finite nature of all historical knowledge. Thus, while it may be a form of scepticism, the fact that it is historical alters its focus. Philosophical irrationalism is the fundamental doubt of the ability of reason to adjudicate between competing claims. Nihilism is an extremist mode of thought which denies all values whatsoever, even down to belief in human existence itself. Needless to say all forms of communication are ruled out,
one often hears the criticism that Post-positivism is simply a form of "political advocacy".11

Yet, it hard not to draw the conclusion that there is something odd in making the claim that Post-positivism is a form of "political advocacy." One might, for example, simply turn the charge on its head, arguing that "positivists" themselves are no less advocative when it comes to their own preferred doctrine. To claim a priority for the scientific viewpoint does not save them either. For one can still be a dogmatic social scientist.

In addition, it is surprising that those who champion scientific approaches to scholarship on the grounds that results attained by this means are precise and accurate, suffer from a high degree of imprecision and inaccuracy when it comes to scrutinizing and understanding Post-positivism.12

The identification of Post-positivism with relativism comes about because of this imprecision. Ultimately, it leads to a misunderstanding of the place and function of relativism in contemporary international theory. Post-positivists are not exempted from this charge either. If we are to correct such misunderstandings, then, it is necessary to look at the various strands of thought which have been labelled "post-positivist."

UNTYPING POST-POSITIVISM

Arguably, a more nuanced reading of Post-positivism is required, than has been given by both scientific realists (and traditionalists) and those who believe themselves to be post-positivist of one form or another. Most international theorists have conflated a number of different theoretical positions under the banner of "post-positivism", without attempting to distinguish between "Post-positivism", "Post-structuralism", "modernist critical theory", and "Post-

12.It should be noted that some scholars who believe themselves to be "post-positivist" seem to have also misunderstood it. I have especially in mind Lapid (1988).
modernism". These are all different intellectual projects and deserve to be treated as such. Failure to be rigorous in this regard has been a major cause of the conflation of Post-positivism with relativism.

If we are to appreciate the diversity of philosophical positions which have been characterized as post-positivist, it is important to distinguish between "modernist" forms of Post-positivism, between different "Post-modernist" forms of Post-positivism, and finally, between "modernist" and "post-modernist" forms of Post-positivism.13

With regard to modernist forms of Post-positivism, for example, we need only compare Mark Hoffman and Andrew Linklater. Hoffman (1988:244) locates himself squarely within the tradition of critical theory as it has come down to us from Marx, the Frankfurt School, and Habermas. Taking his cue from Marx's statement in the eleventh thesis on Feuerbach, he argued international theory "is not simply to alter the way we look at the world, but to alter the world." On the other hand, Andrew Linklater (1986, 1990) has recently argued a more synthetic case for Post-positivism by seeking a form of Post-positivism that is a synthesis between Realism, Marxism, and Wightean Rationalism. We might also mention the kind of "modernist" Post-positivism espoused by Robert Cox (1986) and Alexander Wendt (1987) to begin to see the kinds of problems that a lack of discrimination brings with it.

Moreover, it is clear that the major philosophical proponents of Post-modernism, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, are in fundamental disagreement over the philosophical and political articulation of Post-structuralism", rather than the term "Post-structuralism." In my view, the latter term refers to a social, cultural, and political condition which has rebelled against the enlightenment project. I take "Post-structuralism" to be a philosophical articulation of this. Moreover, Richard Ashley (1989), a leading post-modernist in international theory, refers to his international theory as a "post-structuralist.

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13 See Lyotard (1984). In what follows, I use the term "Post-structuralism", rather than the term "Post-modernism." In my view, the latter term refers to a social, cultural, and political condition which has rebelled against the enlightenment project. I take "Post-structuralism" to be a philosophical articulation of this. Moreover, Richard Ashley (1989), a leading post-modernist in international theory, refers to his international theory as a "post-structuralist."
modernism. So too, the 1987 exchange between Robert Walker and Richard Ashley show that neither are completely allied in their views.

The clearest example of the confusion which has surrounded the use of the term "Post-positivism" comes from Yosef Lapid (1989). Although, he has stimulated debate, the confusions in this paper have exacted a high price.

While it is true that he acknowledges Post-positivism is not a "unitary philosophical platform", and that "it presents itself as a rather loosely patched up umbrella for a confusing array of only remotely related philosophical articulations", his tripartite division into "paradigmatism," "perspectivism," and "the drift toward relativism," only serves to increase the confusion.(p.239) Indeed, the latter two classifications are especially problematic. The "drift toward relativism" is so vague and imprecise a category as to be analytically useless, unless we know precisely whose work it is that has "drifted" into relativism. Indeed, Lapid's whole discussion of relativism uncovers his own positivist pretensions, and, in my view, effectively undermines his contribution to post-positivist discourse. In fine objectivist manner, he argues relativism is bad in-and-for-itself. But without sufficient attention to the issue, or some minimal definition of just what relativism is, when the "drift" towards it begins, why it is undesirable, and whether one can acknowledge historical relativity without necessarily succumbing to relativism, the whole thing is simply an exercise in obfuscation. If he is to defend his use of the term "Post-positivism", the whole question of relativism needs to be cast differently, and in terms of a post-positivist discourse not a positivist one.

Like his understanding of relativism, Lapid's categorization of "perspectivism" also abounds with difficulties; not least because the term itself


15. Ashley's reply does, however, term Walker's critique "genial." Recently, they have collaborated in a number of pieces which suggests their differences are becoming negligible. See Ashley and Walker (1990).
has, among some interpretivists, always been associated with contextual relativism. But we do not need to go beyond asking where does "critical theory" fit within Lapid's framework to begin to see how hopelessly compromised his understanding of things are. He never defines critical theory formally, nor attempts to make a distinction between "modernist" and "post-modernist" variants. Indeed, Habermasian critical theory could effectively be placed in all three of Lapid's criteria. He is concerned with developing a paradigm, employs a historical-hermeneutic perspectivism, which has at one time or another been charged with relativism. Lapid's understanding of the move into Post-positivism, then, is seriously confused. First, his failure to evaluate post-positivist theoretical and philosophical positions in their context and in their individuality, has been a primary cause of the conflating of different forms of Post-positivism. As I noted above, the result of this has been that Post-positivism has now become synonymous with relativism. Second, and more importantly, he has misunderstood the nature of the problem completely. For example, he has warned that if the discipline becomes overly relativist it "may result in a backlash of some new dogmatic version of methodological monism."(p.249) To overcome disciplinary relativism we must seek its cause, and not simply threaten post-positivists with a return to scientific "monism". If he had done this, he might have

16. Hirsch (1978:45) for example, writes: "I have argued that perspectivism, the theory that interpretation varies with the standpoint of the interpreter, is a root form of critical scepticism. Implicitly it rejects the possibility of a interpretation that is independent of the interpreter's own values and pre-conceptions." See also Seung (1982:202).

17. See McCarthy (1982). At this point, we should note that Lapid is not alone. Both Hoffman and Campbell also failed to distinguish between variants of critical theory. See also Hoffman (1988) and Campbell (1988).

18. Hoffman (1991) has recently pointed to the distinction between the two forms. "The former is characterised by a "minimal foundationalism" which accepts a contingent universalism is possible and may be necessary in ethical and explicatory fields. In the latter approach, even the possibility or desirability of a minimal or contingent foundationalism is abandoned in favour of the deconstruction of texts and intertexts in world politics. See also George & Campbell (1990).
understood just how positivist is his attitude to the issue of relativism. Thus, his view is not too far removed from that of the scientific realists. Relativism is simply "bad" in-and-for-itself. It is simply a term which signals the dividing line across which no self-respecting intellectual should cross. This is altogether too simplistic.

Post-positivist relativism is the effect of a prior cause. It is a warning sign that something has gone wrong with the way we understand our world, and the way we theorize about it. To take the council of both Lapid and the scientific realists in this regard, is to remain in ignorance as to this cause.

Relativism exists and threatens because of the way international theory has been studied over the last thirty years or so. It is not simply a question of "monism" versus "pluralism." In essence, post-positivist relativism is the end result of a discipline which has marginalized values. Scientific realists, therefore, are implicated in the problem of relativism in an intimate way.

The remainder of this thesis offers a very different reading of the problem of relativism than Lapid's. This reading helps place Post-positivism into perspective, and demonstrates its "revivalist" potential within the study of international politics, even though elements within it can be said to be relativist.
CHAPTER THREE

POST-POSITIVIST RELATIVISM AND THE PROBLEM OF VALUES
The aim of this chapter is twofold. I begin by looking at two manifestations of post-positivist relativism. The first is a submissive form of relativism, implicit in much of the work of Mansbach and Ferguson (1986), but especially in the essay "Values and Paradigm Change: The Elusive Quest for International Relations Theory." The other is a celebratory relativism, characteristic of the Post-structuralism of Richard Ashley.

Second, I shall argue that both are forms of alienated consciousness. By framing the problem of relativism in terms of theoretical alienation, it allows us to ask what is its cause, and how we might deal with it. Of course, these sorts of questions cannot be asked by scientific realists. By positing a timeless theoretical framework, they argue these questions are unnecessary and superfluous. But it is precisely these questions we need to ask if we are to plot a direction beyond the field's prevailing crisis. What is also significant here, is that concepts relativists have problematized, and which they do not articulate adequately, are precisely those which scientific realists (and traditionalists generally) omit from their theories: values and historicity. As we shall see in the following chapter this omission proves to be a major flaw of Scientific Realism. On the one hand, its positivist/structuralism framework denies values and historicity, while on the other, it proves to be both a historically conditioned theory, as well as normative. This contradiction, more than any other, brings out the hopelessness of the scientific realist project.

1. This, of course, does not mean that all post-positivist theories are relativist. One can, for example, follow Andrew Linklater (1990:7), appealing to an "empirical philosophy of history" which is essentially dialectical in nature. Following Habermas, he argues an international theory should "recognize the significance of moral development and [seek] to explain the main advances in the evolution of universal moral norms." The appeal to universal norms mitigates against the threat of relativism.

2. The most explicit statement of this is in Ashley (1989).
THE SUBMISSIVE RELATIVISM OF MANSBACH AND FERGUSON

Mansbach and Ferguson argue that contemporary international theory has overlooked significant areas of reality, namely historicity and values. For them, as for all post-positivists, these are two essential and unavoidable components of human experience. But once they are made central, Mansbach and Ferguson argue we must recognize there can no longer be progressive or objective knowledge of international politics. This realization results in an argument which is a species of both historical and value relativism.3

The argument put forward by Mansbach and Ferguson has three interrelated theses. The first is that the "source" of all normative values is society itself. They argue all normative values are socially constructed and value-laden. Paradigms and conceptual schemes are all part of the Zeitgeist, and adherence to the possibility to value-freedom is simply misplaced. Scientists believe in the value of the advancement of science, economists in the free market, and realists, in the importance of the values of security and order. There is no privileged position outside of reality that is objective absolutely; all becomes a function of ideology. Second, debates in international theory are cyclical, not progressive. As I noted above, intellectual progress is "illusory".

What is striking about these debates and what distinguishes them from debates in the nature sciences is that essentially the same arguments and emphases tend to recur over and over again through time, despite superficial changes in concepts and language...because they revolve around enduring normative themes. The key assertions of realism and idealism, for example, have been present...at least since Thucydides.(p.14)4

3. Of course, whether making historicity and values central necessarily leads to relativism is, I would argue, highly debatable, especially in light of Habermas-inspired critical theory and contemporary forms of neo-Aristotelianism. However, we need not concern ourselves with that issue here.

4. This thesis is, to my mind, entirely problematic. Especially in the light of the advent of Post-modernism.
Third, because they see an eternal recurrence of issues, paradigm change in international theory is of a different kind to that Thomas Kuhn (1970) articulated in his celebrated book. For Kuhn, change in paradigms occur when anomalies in the dominant paradigm become so pronounced that they lead to an intellectual "crisis" in order to resolve them. This ultimately brings about the ascendency of the paradigm most able to resolve the anomalies of its predecessor. Mansbach and Ferguson, on the other hand, argue that in the study of international political theory, paradigm change is related to "issue salience", which, in turn, always concern changes in the status of normative values.

Changes in issue salience redirect attention toward values that underlie the newly important issues and away from values that are associated with declining issues. (p.21)

Whatever the merits of their argument, it never gets beyond showing what issues contributed to the demise of the old dominant paradigm. In this case, the decline of Classical Realism is the result of such events as the backlash to the Vietnam war, the OPEC oil crisis, and the growing importance of nonmilitary concerns, problems of nuclear war, and so forth. (p.20) But if one is going to talk of a shift in our perception of normative values, it is not enough simply to demonstrate empirically why one set of normative values declined. To be convincing, one must also show what the new values are that are on the ascent, and what it is that makes the new values the particular values which happen to arise after a period of intellectual "crisis". Instead of teasing out these sorts of issues, they simply posit vague and unhelpful generalizations to explain a new emergent paradigm. Thus, we read of a new "ethos of society", changes in the "normative temper of an era", and "new opportunities for value satisfaction" as opposed to "value deprivation".

It is probably because of their inability to deepen the discussion to the appropriate level of abstraction, and in the direction needed to make their argument
convincing, that they shift the focus of the paper midstream. They proceed to outline some of the "several dimensions" along which normative value change may or may not occur. We are never told, for example, what the "enduring normative themes" they speak of are in concreto: only that normative values exist in eternal recurrence. They argue the source of all normative values is society. But they never define what it is they mean by society, or ask the next logical question: what is it about society that conjures forth normative values? The question of normative values, and its relation to society, only makes sense in the context of a concern with reason. Yet, they never mention reason at all. It is difficult to see how one can consider the issue of values without simultaneously asking what conception of rationality underpins changing attitudes to rules, norms, and values. Moreover, there is no attempt to pose the question of whether some normative values are more enduring than others. Is freedom more important than power? Is justice more important than freedom? Are all normative values the same?

If we take these difficulties together, we are led to the conclusion their perception of intellectual history, and of the fall and rise of normative values, is

5. The lack of specificity with regard to the whole issue of newly emergent values reflects their own ambivalence over the future direction of the study of geopolitics. It is Mansbach and Ferguson who coined the term "conceptual chaos", and it would seem they are the victims of their own lack of conceptual vision. It is perhaps interesting that in a more recent publication about the problematic nature of contemporary state theory the same problem arises. They seem to have no clear direction beyond realising the current state of the field is chaotic. See their more recent (1989).

6. They call these mutability-immutability; optimism-pessimism; competitiveness-community; elitism-nonelitism.

7. The only supporting evidence they draw upon is that Political Realism and Idealism existed in Ancient Greece.

8. That the concept of "reason" figures nowhere in their argument reflects the highly subjectivist nature of their viewpoint. It is precisely this sort of argument that traditionalists like Gabriel Almond and Thomas Biersteker have voiced concern over.
nothing less than an unquestioning and highly conservative form of historical and value relativism.

International relations will therefore continue to be characterized by a welter of competing theories which reflect significant political, subjective, and normative differences until the global system enters a new period of rapid and stressful change. At that point, a dominant theory, resembling a Kuhnian paradigm, may emerge for some period of time, after which the cycle will resume.9

What this amounts to is that the dominant values of an age are the right ones because they are the ones which have supplanted the previously dominant paradigm. As I see it, their thesis is a version of "might is right", except in the current post-positivist climate "might" is no longer defined in realist terms as "power", but as "values"

Two points need to be made here. First, this is a form of relativism which can, I think, best be described as both soft and submissive. It is willing to acknowledge that universal values exist in time, although it accords no intrinsic significance to them except as ideology. In addition, there is a sense of resignation (or perhaps even desperation) in their relativism. It is as if they have been forced into historical and value relativism as the only possible solution to the intractable problem of reconciling paradigm change with the need to take history and values seriously. As they express it:

...political science will continue to develop more like one of the arts than one of the sciences unless or until political scientists can isolate themselves from the milieu whose problems they seek to address. This, we believe, is an impossible task and probably not one worth undertaking.(p.14-15) (My italics)

The use of the word "probably" here is instructive for its ambivalence. It shows them, like Lapid, not to be completely free of positivism. The positivist promise of cumulative knowledge remains a kind of unobtainable holy grail. In

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9.Mansbach and Ferguson (1986:30) In the final footnote they write that the study of geopolitics is simply be characterized by "diversity".
short, to be "resigned" to our inability to have progressive knowledge is still to be held by its power, giving the positivist conception of knowledge a kind of unwarranted mythical primacy. Moreover, the use of the term "political science" seems particularly out of place in an argument against the possibility of a "science" of international politics.

Actually, this resignation leads to the loss of the political dimension of international political theory. Future international theory must become little more than an exercise in pure description. There is no basis left upon which to deal with, or even criticize, the various paradigms which arise. The result is a complete submission to that paradigm which is able to gain dominance at a particular time and place in history. As we shall see shortly, this is not the case with post-structural relativism. It is profoundly political in the sense that it is unwilling to acquiesce to the dominant paradigm. In essence, it wants to say that this soft submissive relativism will not do because it gives up in the face of the reality of power. The only answer lies in resistance. According to post-structuralists like Richard Ashley, this means the only adequate form relativism can take is a defiant relativism which calls all paradigms into question, and privileges none of them. But I am getting a little ahead here.

Mansbach and Ferguson's argument has merit on at least two counts, however. For good or bad, it is an attempt to deal with the thorny issues of the place and role of normative values. So too, it seeks to take history seriously as something intimately connected to what we are as human beings, and not simply as a sterile recounting of past events. In addition, and equally important, their attempt to incorporate these elements into a conception of international politics suggests a high degree of frustration and ultimately a loss of faith in traditional approaches to the subject: approaches which have systematically shunned questions of historicity and values in the name of the "will to science."
THE CELEBRATORY RELATIVISM OF RICHARD ASHLEY

The second form of relativism comes from Richard Ashley. Without doubt, he is the most well-known post-structuralist writing in the field of international politics today. Although others such as James Der Derian (1987, 1989, 1990), Robert Walker, (1989) Michael Shapiro, (1989) and Bradley Klein (1988, 1990), have also made significant contributions.

Philosophically speaking, Post-structuralism has two divergent expressions. The first emanates from the work of Jacques Derrida, in which science and philosophy are simply different modes of writing-literary genres if you like. The second strand of Post-structuralism takes as its point of departure the power/knowledge grid of Michel Foucault. Foucault (1980) is concerned to unmask the power structures inherent in different modes of discourse and, which control, order, and dominate our lives. He uses the term "dispositif" to characterize these disparate sites of power. They are:

a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble of discourses, institutions, architectural forms, regulatory decisions, laws, administrative measures, scientific statements, philosophical, moral, and philanthropic propositions-in short, the said and the unsaid.(p.191)

Richard Ashley's most recent work draws its inspiration from both these two philosophical positions, although not solely. One also finds references to such post-modern thinkers as Julia Kristeva with her concept of the "dissident" scholar in contemporary discourse. Nowhere does Ashley attempt to give a systematic reading of these thinkers, nor take into consideration the inherent philosophical differences between Foucault and Derrida. Ashley utilizes post-structuralist modes of thought on a purely ad hoc basis.

Post-structuralists argue that the world is characterized only by contingency, diversity, and finitude. Or, as Ashley terms it-historicity. The drive toward unity of interpretation which is characteristic of Scientific Realism, as it is of all meta-
theories, is misconceived and illusory. Moreover, such claims always turn out to be discourses which impose a particular conception of reality on the world. Unity becomes synonymous with power and, therefore, has totalitarian implications. Post-structuralists think that by denying validity to all truth claims it liberates us from the seductive appeal such claims have. It celebrates relativism as the only possible course of action in a world which continually tells us what to think, what to do, and how we should, and should not, organize ourselves.10

The essence of Ashley’s post-structural relativism arises out of what he terms the "radical undecidability of history." According to him, a good example of this "undecidability" can be seen by looking at two equally truthful propositions which are at the centre of contemporary international theory debate. The first is the dependence of historical practices on institutionalized structures, conventions, or background understandings. What is suggested here is that agents, events, and human practices are formed by, and the result of, pre-determined structures. As Giddens (1976:19) puts it: this antecedent structure is "the very ontological condition of human life in society as such." Alternatively, historical practices generate social structures. Such structures arise only because they are the product of knowledgeable human practices. Thus, rather than structures having a priority above and beyond human agency, it is this agency which is the pre-condition of its existence and continual reaffirmation. Yet for Ashley this issue can never be decided finally because to support one view is necessarily to exclude the insights of the other. In essence, it results in a theoretical paradox. As Ashley (1989:274) expresses it:

10.I think it can be convincingly argued that poststructural relativism is a form of absolutism. By not privileging any particular theoretical project it ends up privileging them all, hence making the concept of diversity and plurality an absolute category.
But what comes of this paradoxical opposition, as poststructuralism understands it, is not a stable synthesis, an absolute ground, or a new sovereign center for the monological interpretation of history. What emerges instead is a respect for this paradox as an opposition in which it is never possible to choose one proposition over another. It is an undecidable opposition that destabilizes all pretense to secure grounds at the end of history, but it is also an opposition that must be respected as an inescapable feature of the ways in which one may think about history.11

By refusing to decide in favour of any particular viewpoint, by celebrating this paradox of theory, Post-structuralism is relativist. Like the relativism of Mansbach and Ferguson, post-structural relativism, then, is unwilling to make a judgement as to the truth value of any theory. There is no single overarching truth to be discerned. There is only a myriad of different theories, interpretations, conceptual schemes, and paradigms. But unlike the relativism of Mansbach and Ferguson, which can do no more than shrug its shoulders in the face of a dominant paradigm, Post-structuralism wants continually to cast doubt as to the validity of such a program. By taking all paradigms in their historicity (even his own), Ashley wants to challenge what he takes to be a central motif of all theories: that is, they exist, and gain their meaning, as a relation of power. This, not just in relation to other theories, but in the relationship of theories to the world at large. Ashley concludes that:

In contrast to modern social theory, poststructuralism eschews grand designs, transcendental grounds, or universal projects of humankind. The critical task, instead, is to expose the historicity—the arbitrariness, the political content, and the dependence upon practice—of the limits that are imposed in history, and inscribed in paradigms of the sovereignty of man.(p.284)

11. This is a very different reading of the agent-structure problem than that recently put forward by the so-called structurationists. They argue the solution to this problem lies, not by privileging structure over agency, or agency over structure, but by positing them as ontologically concurrent, or ontologically equal. For Ashley this is simply another attempt at a solution to that which is insoluble. On the structurationist perspective see Giddens (1984) and Wendt (1987).
While it is true that there are significant differences between these two forms of relativism, they are similar in at least one important way. Both acknowledge historicity and values as defining characteristics of all conceptual schemes and theories. The distinction between relativist and non-relativist forms of Post-positivism revolves around how we interpret this insight. Relativists like Mansbach and Ferguson cede to the dominant theoretical framework and the values which attend it, while waiting for another to rise up to take its place. But for Ashley this is defeatist. We should "resist" them all and grant none special or privileged status. On this view, they all threaten to enslave us.

But whether we "submit" to the dominant values, or "resist" them all, the end result is the same—we lose our ability to decide whether one theory is better than another, and thus, whether one set of values is more worthy than another. We are deprived of our ability to make critical judgements. On the other hand, non-relativist forms of Post-positivism argue we can make universal value judgements. Some values are inherently better than others. According to them, any theory which cannot theoretically and practically distinguish between values ultimately has little value.

Even more importantly, relativism of this sort makes Fascism no better or worse than Liberalism or Pacifism; Hitler and Stalin no different from Wilson or Ghandi: South Africa and China no more unpalatable than say New Zealand, Switzerland, or Canada. In the final analysis, human beings, places, and theories, are either all equally bad or equally good.

That theoretical reflection in international theory has come to this, is itself instructive. To have lost "faith" in political theories to have positive and beneficial merit is, I would argue, a sign of acute alienation. And, as with the alienation of the worker from the product of his or her labour, or of alienation from one's

12. It is interesting Lapid (1988) seems to overlook this in his discussion of Post-
family and friends, this intellectual alienation has arisen due to the particular environment in which it has its origin. If we wish to answer the question why relativism has arisen now, and why these relativists have relativized the concepts of historicity and values, we must do two things. First, unlike the majority of scholars in the field, treat their views as worthy of serious investigation. And, second, look for the source of this alienation. In the following chapter I argue that this is to be found in the project I have termed Scientific Realism.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE SCIENTIFIC REALIST RESPONSE TO RELATIVISM

HOW NOT TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM
Modern scientific realists are staunchly anti-relativist. To them, Post-positivism represents a manifestation of the failure of intellectual life; an abrogation of our duty to the furtherance of knowledge and truth. Moreover, its relativism places us on the slippery slope to nihilism. In order to avoid this possibility, scientific realists counsel us to apply a positivist, structuralist logic to the problem of relativism. Only in this way can we be assured of the "truth" of our research findings.

The aim of this chapter is to examine the cogency of this way of understanding relativism. To do this, I demonstrate first how scientific realists utilize a positivist/structuralist methodology to banish relativism. The second part of this chapter challenges this approach. My argument draws on insights from the Philosophical Hermeneutics of Hans-Georg Gadamer and the Critical Theory of Jurgen Habermas. I argue that Scientific Realism cannot withstand the logic of these insights. It avoids relativism by what can only be described as a philosophical fiction. And, more importantly, Scientific Realism is not value-free but surreptitiously smuggles a conception of the "good" into its theoretical matrix. Its approach to the problem of relativism must, therefore, be rejected.

The rejection of Scientific Realism as an adequate solution to the problem of relativism, however, means taking a partisan position with regard to Post-positivism. The question that must be asked, then, is whether the failure of Scientific Realism necessarily entails a relativistic world-view? This seems to be what Ruggie and Kratochwil' (1986:768) imply when they write somewhat nervously: "Let it be understood that we are not advocating a coup whereby the reign of positivist explanation is replaced by explanatory anarchy."

This thesis rejects this either/or way of framing the problem of relativism. It is based upon a misunderstanding of the place of relativism in intellectual life. Because relativism is a manifestation of alienated consciousness, it is neither devoid of insights, nor simply a pernicious strand of nihilism. Somewhat paradoxically, it makes a knowledge claim upon the study of international
politics. It tells us something about the state of the discipline and provides us with clues as to the direction we might seek answers.

The importance of this chapter in regard to the overall aims of this thesis will be to unmask the extent to which Scientific Realism is also an alienated conceptualization of theory. Simply put, it believes itself to be transcendentally "true", and value-neutral, when it proves to be both historically conditioned and value non-neutral. It denies essential aspects of its own theoretical formulation. Herein lies its alienation.

Let us be clear here. I am arguing that Scientific Realism claims to be value-neutral and objectively true. But to claim that one's philosophical position is value-neutral and objectively true, does not make it so. Close inspection of the basic premises of Scientific Realism leads to the conclusion that this claim is bogus. That it believes its position to be such is an expression of false consciousness.

For all realists, international politics has a remarkable constancy about it. What took place between the Athenians and the Lacedaemons is replayed again and again. The contest (power and wealth) remains the same, as do the players (states). As Waltz (1979:66) expresses it: "The texture of international politics remains highly constant, patterns recur, and events repeat themselves endlessly."1. It is this perception of continuity and permanence which gives realists confidence in the existence of objective and knowable "natural" laws of international politics. As Morgenthau (1967:4) puts it:

Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature. In order to improve society it is first necessary to understand the laws by which society lives. The operation of these laws being impervious to our preferences, men will challenge them only at the risk of failure.

1.Similarly, Gilpin (1981:7) writes: "the fundamental nature of international relations has not changed over the millenia."
That realists believe the social and political world functions according to natural laws explains its long-term interest in science. Without doubt, the belief in "a science of international politics" has been the hallmark of post-war Realism. Indeed, some have argued Political Realism is, and has always been, a science. Robert Gilpin (1986:306), for example, argues Thucydides was the first scientific student of international politics, Machiavelli the first political scientist, and interprets E.H. Carr as presenting us with a "science" of international politics.2 What the term "science" means to each of these thinkers is so profoundly different from the meaning Gilpin gives the term, that it renders the historical connection highly dubious. And, as Daniel Garst argues, a scientific account of The Peloponnesian Wars is "suspect" because of the historicity of the speeches and the fact their reconstruction from Thucydides' memory must be "incomplete and biased".3

Whatever truth claims can be attached to Scientific Realism, one thing is certain: relativism threatens it. Where scientific realists strive for "truths" about international politics, post-positivist relativism puts the whole project in doubt. From the perspective of these social scientists, the choices are simple: a science of international politics offers knowledge, relativism only ignorance; science offers release from dogmatism and superstition, relativism threatens to plunge us into a new dark age; science offers hope in the future, relativism only hopelessness. It is a simple either/or question, and the premise upon which scientific realists base both their implicit critique of relativism, and their celebration of scientific method. In short, science will save us, relativism will sink us.

The scientific realist fascination with science comes as a consequence of its desire to ground knowledge claims. The first principle of the philosophy of

2.Gilpin is referring to Carr (1946).
science is that there is a permanent, fixed, ahistorical framework or archimedean point which allows us to ground knowledge, determine our standards of rightness, and, ultimately, give us the security of knowing that we know something, instead of nothing. Similarly, for scientific realists the concept of "structure" acts as its foundation. The structure of the international system is fixed, naturally given, and not open to doubt. As Buzan (1984:4) writes: "It exposes an area of theoretical bed-rock which can serve as a solid foundation for further development of international system theory."

The nature of international politics can be deduced from the way "structure" impinges on and conditions the behaviour of states. As Gilpin (1981:226) argues: "Realism...seeks to understand how states have always behaved and presumably always will behave. It does not believe that the condition of anarchy can be transcended." Thus, the structure of the international system is given prior to the historical outcomes of state interaction. In this way structure functions like a unifying concept tying past, present, and future together into a single interpretive whole conditioned by the "fact" of anarchy.

According to scientific realists, it also provides the possibility of an agreed upon starting point for the development of sub-theories, a commensurable language and frame of reference, as well as an agreed upon standard by which social scientists can judge the veracity of each other's findings. Thus, the structuralist "turn" of Scientific Realism ensures epistemological certitude. Central to realists is the belief that they have found a standard prior to, and unaffected by, history. This is not to say they lack an interest in past events. On the contrary, it is the observance of such events which allows them to ground their theories in the concept of "structure." Yet Scientific Realism is ahistorical, in the sense that history is not something constitutive of human subjectivity or consciousness.4 On this view, history does not affect human rationality, identity,

4. I shall refer to this as "historicity".
culture, and the like. As Gilpin (1981:XII) writes: "In this book we shall assume rationality is not historically or culturally bound"

Value-neutrality is also an essential aspect of the scientific realist response to relativism. Without it, structure would be little more than a figment of the theorist's own imagination and personal bias, rather than something objectively given and scientifically knowable. The central difference between Classical Realism and Scientific Realism concerns just this point. Against Classical Realism, scientific realists argue the concept of "human nature" was value-laden, and altogether too ambiguous to serve as a solid foundation for theoretical inquiry. Moreover, where Classical Realism considered the role of theory to be prescriptive in the sense of providing a set of criteria by which to guide foreign policy analysis, Scientific Realism makes no such claims. Truly scientific explanation must be a value-neutral activity. This is not to say that prescription, in the form of control or prediction, cannot follow once scientific explanation has been achieved. As Waltz (1979:6) writes, "the urge to explain is not born of idle curiosity alone. It is produced also by the desire to control, or at least to know if control is possible."

Both the structuralism and the value-neutrality of Scientific Realism provide a formidable edifice against relativism. The relativist wants to point to the historically conditioned nature of all thought, of theoretical frameworks, of experience, of culture, and of value judgements, while scientific realists argue that by appealing to timeless laws operating within a structural foundationalism, we gain an ontological priority over historical difference. In essence, relativism is overcome by positing a static concept of history which gives priority to unity over historical diversity, or, as Ollman puts it: "The absolute pre-dominance of the whole over the parts."5

THE INADEQUACY OF THE SCIENTIFIC REALIST SOLUTION TO RELATIVISM

This approach to the problem will not do. In order to avoid the threat of relativism it denies historical diversity and marginalizes values. Yet, when we scratch beneath its "scientific" veneer, we find a theory which is itself historically bounded and therefore rooted in the concerns of the late twentieth century. Furthermore, it contains a specific set of values which lie at its heart. For all its perceived parsimony, therefore, it is replete with contradictions.

To take history seriously means acknowledging our inability to escape our historicity. It means acknowledging that finitude and contingency are fundamental to any theory we might construct. It also means we can never view the world as it really is. We are not unencumbered "selves", as scientific realists presuppose. On the contrary, we bring to theory biases, presuppositions, value-judgements and so on. The German philosopher, Martin Heidegger, has demonstrated that all interpretations come about through projections of meanings that arise out of the interpreter's own concrete historical reality. All interpretation is, therefore, conducted with certain questions in mind, and with particular ways of approaching the text. The interpretation contributed to, and had bearing, upon the final result of the interpretation. No interpretation is, therefore value neutral because the interpreter is unable to escape the presuppositions of his/her own mind and his/her own historicity. As Heidegger (1986:191-192) argues:

Whenever something is interpreted as something, the interpretation will be founded essentially upon fore-having, foresight, and fore-conception. An interpretation is never a presuppositionless apprehending of something presented to us.

Heidegger's critique of positivism and ahistorical modes of thinking has recently been taken up by both Gadamer and Habermas. Of course, to fully

6. Although it must be said that Habermas's attempt to develop a minimal foundation in the concept of universal pragmatics creates a tension in his work.
explore the strengths of these critiques is beyond the scope of this thesis. We can, however, get some idea of the force of their arguments from a brief look at two concepts which are essential components in their rejection of positivism. The first, is what Gadamer calls vorurteil. This is generally translated as prejudice or pre-judgements. The second, is Habermas's concept of "committed reason."

Gadamer (1988:XVII) explains his project in the following terms:

The question I have asked seeks to discover and bring into consciousness something that methodological dispute serves only to conceal and neglect, something that does not so much confine or limit modern science as precede it and make it possible.

Gadamer shows that understanding is the result of both a historically accumulated wealth of knowledge, insights, "intuition flashes", and a basic historically operative structure. No theory proceeds in a vacuum. This is the case with a literary text, as it is of a scientific one. Indeed, even the meaning of a particular scientific experiment does not come about simply because of factors relevant to the experiment; it arises out of the tradition of interpretation about the nature, function, and purpose of scientific experiments.

The essential feature of Gadamer's work, then, is premised on our being-already-in-the-world. This means we can never free ourselves from our pre-judgements or from our historical boundedness. Hence, we are always involved in a historical tradition. As Gadamer observes: "The finitude of man's being consists in the fact that firstly he finds himself at the heart of tradition." There is no understanding of history without reference to the present. History is always the history of effect. Through the tradition in which we live our lives, history is continually acting upon us by shaping all that we do and think. As Gadamer (1988:245) writes:

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Long before we understand ourselves through the process of self-examination, we understand ourselves in a self-evident way in family, society and state in which we live.

In the section on "prejudice", Gadamer challenges what he calls the Enlightenment's "prejudice against prejudice." His aim in doing so is not from any conservative ambition, as he has been accused of, but so that we can recognise that "all understanding inevitably involves some prejudices." It is Gadamer's way of giving substance to the "background" which we all possess, and which give all theories, whether scientific or otherwise, their particular characteristics. By prejudice, Gadamer (1976:9) certainly does not mean dogmatic unchallengeable opinions born of a narrow mind. On the contrary:

Prejudices are not necessarily unjustified and erroneous, so that they inevitably distort the truth. In fact, the historicity of our existence entails that prejudices, in the literal sense of the word, constitute the original directedness of our whole ability to experience. Prejudices are biases of our openness to the world. They are simply conditions whereby we experience something-wherby what we encounter says something to us. This formulation certainly does not mean that we are enclosed within a wall of prejudices and only let through the narrow portals those things that can produce a pass saying, "Nothing new will be said here." Instead we welcome just that guest who promises something new to our curiosity.

Gadamer's radical use of the concept of prejudice points to three important aspects in what it means to take history seriously. First, prejudices come to use through tradition; second, they are made up of what we are at any moment in time; third, they have an anticipatory character in that they are always open to critical testing, and transformation.

Perhaps one of the most interesting insights to arise out of this is recognition that all reason functions within traditions. Tradition is not simply what is old hat and a millstone around our neck. On the contrary, a tradition that is alive, is one which is determinate of our very being, and always open to modification through a process of mediation.9

9.In an important passage, Gadamer (1988:250) writes: "The fact is that tradition is constantly an element of freedom and of history itself. Even the most genuine and solid tradition does not persist by nature because of the inertia of what once
Understanding itself should be thought of not so much as an action of subjectivity but as entering into the happening of tradition in which past and present are constantly mediated. It is this that must be acknowledged in hermeneutic theory, which is much too strongly dominated by the idea of a procedure, a method.(258)

Gadamer's critique of positivism is, as Bernstein has noted, "devastating".

It is a radical redefinition of philosophy which challenges positivism, not so much by saying it is in error, but by showing that there is a theoretical matrix which is ontologically prior to all positivist epistemologies. In his view, positivism has abstracted from concrete historical reality and alienated us from our "true" mode of historical consciousness by not taking into account the finitude, historicity, and intersubjective dimensions of the human person. Moreover, it demonstrates the misguided nature of any view which believes theory can be a value-neutral form of inquiry.

Intersubjectivity impinges on the study of international politics in an unexpected way. It is made possible because we have a common medium through which to be inter-subjective. Thus, the key to understanding common action is premised upon our ability as language users. There can be no intersubjectivity without a shared language through which the interlocutors can understand each other and be understood. Although this is not the place to go into the

existed. It needs to be reaffirmed, embraced, cultivated. It is, essentially, preservation, such as is active in all historical change. But preservation is an act of reason, though an inconspicuous one. For this reason, only what is new, or what is planned, appears the result of reason. But this is an illusion. Even where life changes violently, as in ages of revolution, far more of the old is preserved in the supposed transformation of everything that anyone knows, and combines with the new to create a new value."

In other words, the development of the scientific realist perspective already contains intellectual biases which cannot be expunged by labelling it "science." Our being-already-in-the-world is the ontological basis of all our theoretical judgements.

This is the overarching theme of the work of Jurgen Habermas (1979, 1989a, 1989b).

The role of language in the study of international politics is a topic which has received scant attention in the literature. I would argue this is a significant omission, and one which has enormous potential for new research.
connection between language, theory-building, and international politics, one aspect does warrant brief discussion. This is the concept of rhetoric.

Vico uses the concept in the context of a defence of the humanistic tradition against Cartesian science. He wants to demonstrate not so much that Cartesian science is wrong, but that it is limited in what it can tell us about ourselves and the world around us. For Vico, rhetoric is an important example of a mode of knowledge which cannot be encompassed within the domain of the epistemological atomism of the Cartesian cogito. Moreover, it also demonstrates how we learn and become educated in a particular life-world.

Vico understands the art of rhetoric in two related ways. First, good speech is itself an ideal. Second, rhetoric takes as its goal the saying of what is "right and true." To appeal to what is "right and true" presupposes a dimension of shared reality beyond private thoughts. By its very nature, therefore, it requires a concrete community, group, or nation, in which to articulate, defend, persuade, and argue about issues of mutual importance. At the same time, however, it must also be considered from the perspective of knowledge, for it is intimately connected with our capacity to learn. We learn from persuasive argument. As Gadamer (1986:122-123) expresses it: "Rhetoric is indissoluble from dialectics; persuasion that is really convincing is indissoluble from knowledge of the true. To the same degree, understanding has to be thought about from the vantage of knowledge. It is a capacity to learn."

If the goal of rhetoric is the "right and true", and we concede that our capacity to learn emanates at least as much from argument as experiment, then we are inexorably drawn to the conclusion that: "What is at issue for the purely dialectical rhetorician as well as for the statesman and in the leading of one's own life is the good."(p.123)

The idea of statesmen as rhetoricians defined in Vicoian terms is instructive for our understanding of the place and function of Political Realism
in the study of international politics. Not only do statesmen use language well in order to persuade and guide, but what it is they wish to teach and persuade is built upon a desire to enhance, or at least, maintain the well-being of the nation as a whole. In this way, they are concerned with the "right and true." Morgenthau (1967:5) tells us: "We assume that statesmen think and act in terms of interests defined in terms of power, and the evidence of history bears that out." Yet, from the perspective of rhetoric, "interest" may have a source other than power. Rather, it is interest defined in terms of some "good." In the case of Classical Realism, this good is the defence of the institutions of the United States and the so-called free world against the twin threats of Fascism and Communism. George Kennan (1947:582) demonstrates this when he argues:

The issue of Soviet-American relations is in essence a test of the overall worth of the United States as a nation among nations. To avoid destruction the United States need only measure up to its own best traditions and prove itself worthy of preservation as a great nation.

Kennan's appeal was persuasive simply because it was an appeal to what was intersubjectively "right and true" in North American terms. Similarly, Waltz's argument that a bipolar world is the most stable and secure, has much the same connotations. An appeal to the value of "security" only makes sense as an appeal to a language community with shared recognizable standards. What gives rhetoric its real thrust against a purely scientific world-view, therefore, is that it derives its strength out of intersubjectivity, and not out of a separation of the knowing subject from the object of his/her knowledge. In other words, it is only by appealing to some common standards (whether they be political, cultural, or social) that "security" makes sense, and is something worth striving for, maintaining, and arguing over.

Although more work would be needed to develop the concept of rhetoric into a basis for a research project, three important points are worth noting. First, ___________________________

13. The word "statesmen" here covers both diplomats and domestic leaders.
Political Realism in any theoretical formulation is, and must be, a form of rhetoric. It derives its legitimacy both as a guide for political action, and as actual policy—as with deterrence—by appealing to a particular conception of what is "right and true." Thus, Classical Realism is based upon the assumption that it has a superior understanding of international politics which diplomats and statesmen overlook at their peril, and the peril of those whom they represent as government leaders. Of course, this is much easier to discern when one has an enemy of substantial proportions. Thus, it is not difficult to see why Political Realism proved to be such a powerful force for most of the twentieth century. It was to be able to articulate "the right and true" more perceptively than its opponents. So too, it is also not difficult to see why its relevance has recently been questioned. Simply put, the focus of what is considered "good" has shifted to issues besides war and security. Second, and more radically, the concept of rhetoric calls into question the realist understanding of the connection between "interests" and "power." Indeed, from the perspective of rhetoric the definition of "interests" defined as simply the maximization (or near maximization) of "power" may well prove to be an unfortunate form of cynicism. Instead, we should seek to define "interests" in terms of shared "values." We should keep this in mind in the third section of this chapter. There I argue that Scientific Realism contains a conception of the "good life."

In similar fashion to Gadamer, Habermas's use of the concept of "commitment" presupposes many of the characteristics present in the previous discussion. One difference, however, is that where Gadamer attacks positivism by showing "what precedes it and makes it possible", Habermas focuses on the illusory nature of value-neutral theory.

14.Habermas, however, finds Gadamer's use of the term "prejudice" too conservative. In his view, it deprives individuals of the objectivity that is evident in their self-reflexive ability to social and political transformation.
All reason is committed reason. As Habermas (1972:258) puts it: "Theoretically guided action is a consequence of the fact that "commitment" is the undisputed basis of all rational endeavour" (my italics). For the Enlightenment, reason was a "critical" tool, having the power to inquire into the validity of traditional values, morals, forms of life, and ideological presuppositions; any conceptual scheme, in fact, which made a claim to truth, without sufficient rational basis. A critical self-reflective attitude based on reason was one concerned with overcoming forms of dogmatism. Dogmatism was the enemy of Enlightenment as confinement is to freedom. Failure to adopt a "critical" posture meant humanity would remain the prisoner of dogmatism and prejudice.

In the fight against dogmatism, Habermas points out critical theory and positivism are allied. Both are forms of the critique of ideology. But positivism shifts the emphasis from the original enlightenment meaning. "It is directed against dogmatism in a new guise. Any theory that relates to praxis in any way other than by strengthening and perfecting the possibilities for purposive-rational action must now appear dogmatic."(264) The basic issue facing critical theory, then, is to inquire into this shift from a conception of theory as a "critical" guide to liberating practices, to its conversion at the hands of scientific rationality into technical control over social forces. It is Habermas's belief that we can no longer distinguish between the practical and the technical, between praxis and poeisis, a distinction essential to the traditional conception of theory and practice. Questions of right action, the "good" life, and the "true" are reduced to our ability to control. On this view, a liberative practice is simply technical mastery over nature and the social world.

Emancipation by means of enlightenment is replaced by instruction in control over objective or objectified processes. Socially effective theory is no longer directed toward the consciousness of human beings who live together and discuss matters with each other, but to the behaviour of human beings who manipulate.(254-255)
Against this, Habermas attempts to reassert a conception of theory and practice that guided the early Enlightenment thinkers. This means restoring the original relationship between "reason" and "commitment." What is more, this insight is validated by positivism itself. Indeed, what makes Habermas's argument convincing is the demonstration that positivism is itself a form of committed reason. Positivism is committed via strategic reason to the value of rationalization.

No matter how much it insists on a separation of theory and commitment in its opposition to dogmatism, positivism's critique of ideology itself remains a form of committed reason: *nolens volens*, it takes a partisan position in favour of progressive rationalization.(268)

If Habermas is correct, it immediately pushes us beyond the positivist conception of what should and should not count for reason, and, therefore, what should and should not count for theory. Indeed, a conception of reason that is wholly technical, while not wrong itself, proves only to be a moment of reason and not reason itself.

Habermas, like Gadamer, challenges us to rethink the way we view the world. Ignoring the effects of history, culture, and our national environment means we banish relativism. What we lose, however, is significant dimensions of reality. Arguably, this is as intolerable as the relativism it fears. We end up killing the patient to cure the disease. But more importantly, this positivism turns out to be a historically, culturally, and nationally specific theory. *Relativism, then, is overcome solely in the mind of the theorist, and not in actuality.*

In the rest of this chapter I explore this insight. I focus on the fact that Scientific Realism is a value non-neutral theory. It cannot escape its own historical boundedness. This has important implications for the problem of relativism. No theory can begin from some archimedean point, but must be historically grounded, even if relativism proves to be a danger. Moreover, once we admit values into the centre of theory we can begin to move away from the
issue of relativism. This, then, also means we must move beyond Scientific Realism as an ahistorical and value-free pursuit.

I think we can glean two very different insights from Gadamer and Habermas which show the failure of this articulation of Scientific Realism. First, Gadamer's argument makes it difficult for us to take scientific realists seriously when they talk of "a tradition of Political Realism." Indeed, it is precisely because of the richness and openness of tradition that scientific realists are able to make the claims they do about it, and are able to reaffirm its continued relevance. But this also points to the contradictory and hopeless nature of their undertaking, and is an important reason why its answer to relativism will not do. By invoking tradition, they demonstrate they are involved in an on-going and open-ended historical process, yet the static nature of their various for projects deprives their tradition of its very essence-its vitality. In effect, Scientific Realism does not take its own tradition seriously: it chops it off at the knees and says "Nothing new will pass here." What this means is that it takes its tradition as only one moment in history rather than an open-ended and on-going process. They deny the very thing that gives their argument its validity. We can, I think, see what I mean a little better by turning to the recent work of Robert Keohane.

Keohane (1986) wants to acknowledge that something new has happened in international politics, and that Scientific Realism needs further work to explain regimes and a greater degree of international cooperation. Scientific Realism, Keohane tells us, "does not explain change well." At the same time, he, like Waltz and Gilpin, believes in the value of positive science for the study of international politics. Thus, he writes:

A good structuralist theory generates testable implications about the behaviour on an a priori basis, and, therefore, comes closer

15. It is not my intention to discuss the copious amounts of literature on the problem of international change, except to say that I view change as a historically grounded phenomenon. As will become clear, I do not believe we can account for change solely in scientific terms. On the issue of change see Buzan, & Barry Jones (1981), Czempiel & Rosenau (1989).
than interpretive description to meeting the requirements for scientific knowledge of neopositivist philosophers of science such as Lakatos. (p. 193)

One of the ways Keohane believes change can more adequately be theorized within the scientific realist framework is with a loosening up of the rationality assumption. Keohane defines the "strict" version of the rationality assumption in the following manner.

To say governments act rationally in this sense means that they have consistent, ordered preferences, and that they calculate the costs and benefits of all alternative policies in order to maximize their utility in light both of those preferences and of their perceptions of the nature of reality. (11)

He argues this conception can be found in the work of all realists since Thucydides. But he criticizes this view on the grounds that it fails to note that the maximization of utility may not always occur. States may be forced, due to structural impediments, to accept less than the optimal maximization of their utility. Thus, he introduces the concept of bounded rationality. Moreover, in *After Hegemony*, the notion of "empathy" enters the rationality assumption "in order to see how cooperation in world politics may be affected if actors take into account others' welfare as part of their own sense of well-being."16 This reorientation of the rationality assumption, then, is meant to account for the growing importance of international institutions and issue-based politics. It is "to attain closer correspondence with reality." 17

But on what "scientific" grounds can Keohane claim to alter the substantive characteristics of the rationality assumption? It is not enough to say that all realists from Thucydides through to Morgenthau and Waltz have not got it quite right. The perceived constancy of rationality over the millennia is part of the reason why a scientific explanation of international politics has been considered possible in the first place. If rationality exhibits changed characteristics, it means we can no longer predict continuity to the degree

necessary to maintain scientific status. Unlike Waltz, who maintains that an absolutely fixed structure is evident in the international arena and therefore pushes "a vast array of causes down to the unit level", Keohane wants to make structure less rigid in order to be able to account for change at the structural level. But if this is the case, it seems to me that there is a tension between the demands of positivism and the demands of a changing reality. Thus, instead of a greater fit between the two it becomes doubtful whether Keohane does either justice. First, a science of international politics rests on the assumption that universal laws about international politics can be known objectively, yet with the modification of the rationality assumption a strict "science" becomes impossible. This is because we have no way of determining what further modifications of rationality might, or might not, be possible and what the consequences with regard to future outcomes might be. It is conceivable, for example, that bounded rationality could metamorphosize into some other form of rationality, which in turn could affect the way states behave considerably. Anarchy could become hierarchy if empathetic relations persisted. Of course, Keohane could probably argue that he is the only one in the last two millennia that has discovered that the essence of international rationality is bounded. But this is a little hard to believe. The essential point is that if Keohane is correct, then rationality has changed. To admit this is tantamount to admitting a scientific explanation of international politics cannot be sustained. A positivist explanation is built upon the assumption that rationality exhibits transcendental qualities. Keohane cannot have it both ways. He cannot maintain a commitment to scientific explanation derived from a tradition which has maintained rationality is constant, while at the same time countenance the possibility of a conception of rationality which reflects the particular social and political world of the late twentieth century and its concern for regimes and issue-politics. To alter the rationality assumption substantively,

18. See also Buzan (1989:5).
in my view, casts doubt on the possibility of a scientific explanation in the positivist sense. It introduces the very thing scientific explanation works so hard to dispel-uncertainty.

Moreover, his use of the concept of "empathy" is also instructive. Not only does it violate the basic canon of Political Realism—a canon he takes as true since time immemorial—that states are only interested in expanding and/or maintaining their own power, but as an analytical category it conflicts with the value-neutral claims of Positivism. Indeed, if we separate Keohane's actual work from his pledge to Scientific Realism, we can draw no other conclusion than he has entered the world of Post-positivism, or at least validates its claims in a spectacular way. Ultimately, he lends support to Ashley's claim that rationality is historically bounded. He is more post-structuralist that he realizes!

The other important point to arise from the discussion shows the difficulty in sustaining value-neutrality. Scientific Realism has its own set of prior commitments, biases, and prejudices which it smuggles into the framework of its theoretical propositions under the guise of value-neutrality. The question we should ask, then, is what is the source of Scientific Realism's defence of foundationalism against relativism? In one sentence, the source of its defence against relativism is a vision of the "good life". Before concluding this chapter I want to say a few words about this. It seems to me to demonstrate admirably why it cannot claim to be a value-free science.

First, and foremost, scientific realists argue the best theory of international politics is one which marries the principles of Realism with an instrumentalist conception of theory. This presupposes a conception of what a "good theory" is. A "good" theory is a scientific one. So too, the commitment to technical rationality (as opposed to some other form of rationality) demonstrates the best means of understanding and controlling international processes, insures the progress and sanctity of knowledge, and leads to the conclusion that a "science of international politics" is a good in-and-for-itself, and relativism is bad-
in-and-for itself. Thus, Gilpin (1981:226) can talk in terms of a "faith that a "science of international politics" will ultimately save mankind." This amounts to saying that in the absence of such a theoretical framework, we shall be severely debilitated in our ability to solve international problems, perhaps increasing the chances of war. Again, as Gilpin puts it: "A scholar of international relations has a responsibility to be true to this faith that the advancement of knowledge will enable us to create a more just and peaceful world." (p.226-227) In light of this view, it is not too difficult to see why relativism seems such an enormous threat to the discipline. It brings this noble project into doubt. Arguably, what this all boils down to is that Scientific Realism is a political theory which defends a particular way of life and of doing politics. It is, therefore, as value non-neutral and ideologically motivated as any form of Marxism. More precisely, it is an ideology and an ideology of science.

As I said earlier one need not get involved in the issue of whether this is a worthy or unworthy project. Yet it becomes worrisome in the sense that this sort of explanation deprives theory of the capacity for critical self-reflection. It is precisely here that it becomes a form of closed idealism.

If the foregoing has any cogency, it seems rather bizarre to talk of "science" as the handmaiden of the search for "a more just and peaceful world" and to believe this is a value-free undertaking. scientific realists want to have their cake and eat it too. On the one hand, they want to avoid relativism by an appeal to a value-free foundationalism, and, on the other, they have their own particular set of values which they wish to enshrine as universally valid.19

This has three important consequences. First, it makes problematic the scientific realist claim that a purely objective apprehension of international

19.It is interesting here to reflect on Aron's view (1967:204) that what a theory of international politics should offer "...is an understanding of various ideologies...The theory of practice, or praxiology, differs from these ideologies insofar as it considered them all and determines the full implications of each one.
reality is possible. Second, if all theories are value-laden they must in some way or other reflect characteristics of the social and political milieu in which they have their genesis. Finally, all theories contain a vision of the "good life." They must, therefore, be historical in a more fundamental sense than the superficial observation of past events. We need only ask scientific realists, how long has it been since the study of international politics has deemed it necessary to "solve" international problems with methodological procedures, to get some idea of the hopelessness of trying to step outside of history. It is not surprising, then, that Scientific Realism proves not to be scientific in the sense of the term used by the natural sciences.

In my view, the excessive scientism of the scientific realist project, its unwarranted ahistoricism, and its self-delusion with regard to the way values impinge upon political theories, leads us to the conclusion that it, like post-positivist relativism, is an alienated form of theory. We cannot, therefore, deal with the problem of relativism by this method. To attempt to do so, is to be involved in what Seyla Benhabib calls, "a methodological illusion." Thus, we are led to the inescapable conclusion that values are central to any theoretical framework. But rather than treating this as a flaw of theory it should be openly acknowledged as its greatest strength and celebrated as a virtue of human conduct. Moreover, the problem of relativism is the result of a discipline which has historically marginalized questions of ethics and values through an excessive concern with scientific method. We can now see why it was important to distinguish between forms of relativism. The kind of relativism evidenced in the work of Mansbach and Ferguson conveys this loss in a profound way. This is what makes their relativism pertinent and is precisely why it needs to be evaluated in a more nuanced way that the dominant orthodox approach.

In the final chapter of this thesis I argue the kind of relativism we see in Post-positivism is, in the final analysis, a realistic response to the one-sided viewpoint of Scientific Realism. In addition, I shift the focus slightly, and defend
Post-positivism generally, by pointing to what gives it "revivalist" potential within the study of international politics. Looking at relativism as a natural and understandable response to the direction that an inappropriate scientism has taken the discipline, it provides us with clues which allow us to move beyond both relativism and the kind of project which Scientific Realism compels us to accept.
CHAPTER FIVE

POST-POSITIVISM IN INTERNATIONAL THEORY RELATIVIST OR REVIVALIST?
We are now in a position to draw the threads of this work together. The argument thus far can now be re-stated briefly.

First, the study of international politics has recently been said to be in a state of intellectual crisis. This "crisis" is a consequence of the debate between scientific realists and post-positivists over the most appropriate way of studying international politics.

Second, the central overriding issue between scientific realists and post-positivists is that the latter have plunged the discipline into the abyss of relativism.

Third, scientific realists are correct in their assessment that elements within Post-positivism are relativist. They are incorrect, however, to tag all post-positivist theories as relativist. Moreover, and more fundamentally, they have mis-understood the problem of relativism altogether.

Fourth, post-positivist relativism has arisen, and is the result of, the "will to science," the marginalization of values, a significant misunderstanding of the nature of history, and finally, the discipline's self-imposed estrangement from political theory proper.

Fifth, relativism is a form of alienated consciousness brought on by the above factors. In this way, scientific realists are implicated in the relativism of Post-positivism.

Sixth, the scientific realist solution to relativism is fundamentally and irretrievably flawed. To push international political theory in the direction of an extreme scientism can only perpetuate the relativism of Post-positivism. Also, Scientific Realism cannot withstand the logic of Post-positivism. Its foundationalism is a methodological illusion and although it claims to be value-neutral, upon close inspection it proves to be anything but value neutral.

Finally, Scientific Realism is normative. It is a theory which proves to be historically conditioned by the political events and theoretical concerns of the
late twentieth century, and contains a concept of the "good" which underpins its theoretical outlook.

In what follows, I establish a different reading of the problem of relativism than that offered by scientific realists and traditionalists. We can gain a greater understanding of the issues involved here by seeing post-positivist relativism as symptomatic of a general malaise of international political theory: a malaise brought on by a misplaced faith in the value of scientific method. My argument will be that post-positivist relativism is a form of Political Realism.

But if Scientific Realism is an alienated theory of theory of international politics, and we acknowledge the need to take values and historicity as central to theory-building, how can we accomplish this task without succumbing to the fate of Mansbach and Ferguson? In other words, are we left with no transcendental standards which will enable us to determine the value of one theoretical position over another? As if to confirm this, David Campbell (1988:43) has recently written:

We have to realize that "giving up" recourse to ultimate foundations will not debilitate us, because we have never had those foundations in the first place.

Even if Campbell is correct, does the problem of relativism remain? This is made all the more pertinent given that Campbell does not show fruitful lines of research capable of incorporating the insights of post-positivism, which, at the same time, prove not to be relativist. Although I will not be able to deal with this problem in any detail, I explore some ways in which we can think of values and historicity without lapsing into relativism, and without drawing post-structuralist conclusions.

Relativism, as it has manifested itself in recent international theory, cannot be dismissed as the musing of nihilistic writers. Nor is it simply irrelevant. Such responses fails to explain why:
Relativism, a stream in the philosophy of the last two hundred years that began as a trickle, has now swelled in recent times into a raging torrent.1

Undoubtedly, we live in a unique period of history. We have at our disposal unsurpassed productive powers, command sophisticated scientific, communications, and medical technology, and enjoy greater global organizational capabilities than ever before. "Innovation," "modernization," "progress," "advancement," "knowledge," "science," "quality of life," "order," "freedom," "justice," "human rights," are the watchwords of our generation. These are the concepts and ideals of what is generally referred to as the Enlightenment Project: the ideals of modernity, if you like. The Enlightenment Project is based upon a belief that human reason and critical intelligence have the power to overcome dogmatism and superstition, that human beings are progressing toward moral perfectibility, and that science was the appropriate vehicle by which this end could be reached. The work of Henri Saint-Simon is central in this regard. As Alex Callinicos (1990:62) tells us: "Saint-Simon...saw progress taking concrete shape in industrial society, where scientific knowledge would become the basis of social power and class antagonisms disappear." The belief in the liberating power of science engendered a high degree of optimism; what Peter Gay (1977:3) calls "a recovery of nerve."2 As we shall see, it is an optimism which Scientific Realism still maintains.

But the Enlightenment Project also had a pessimistic side. The inability to understand and deal with the reality of war dampened this optimism somewhat.


2.Gay writes: "The recovery of nerve was the product of many forces; the spectacular career of the natural sciences, advances in medicine, the improvement of manners and growth of humanitarian sentiment, the slow crumbling of traditional social hierarchies, and revolutionary changes in the production of food, the organization of industry, the patterns of population—all pointing in the same direction. It was a time in which philosophers—most of them philosophes—invented new sciences, all of them in the service of man's power over his environment."(5) See also Cassirer (1951).
As Peter Gay notes: "many of them preached peace in the candid expectation that their preachments would go unheard." (p.404) The problem of war represented everything the eighteenth century philosophers despised. It was instigated by the despotic and arbitrary wills of kings and princes, supported by corrupt clergies, financed by oppressive and unfair taxes, and worst of all, fought by individuals who either knew no better, or had no alternative. Moreover, it was the barrier to a better world; a world of perpetual peace, to use Kant's evocative phrase. Savigear (1978:44), for example, argues:

The dissatisfaction of the philosophers derived from the contradiction which appeared to exist between the actual fact of the power of the state and its disposition to war, and the necessity felt by them to create a better world.

This ambiguity is evident in full measure in Scientific Realism. On the one hand, it is pessimistic, even sceptical, about the possibility of moral and political progress in international politics. As Gilpin (1986:321) puts it: "I am not even sure that progress exists in the moral and international spheres." On the other, its belief in the power of reason, the value of problem-solving theory, and its undeniable "faith" in modern scientific methods is as optimistic as the visions of Condorcet, Comte, or Saint Simon. Nowhere is this better expressed that in Gilpin's (1981:226) statement that Scientific Realism is motivated by a faith that "a "science of international politics" will ultimately save mankind."

In my judgement, the tension between its "moral" pessimism and its "moral" optimism in science creates real difficulties for the cogency of the scientific realist project. However, I focus particularly on its scientific optimism. For it is here that post-positivist relativism gains its relevance.

According to post-positivists, the optimism of Scientific Realism in science is misplaced, or, at the very least, grossly overstated. Internationally, we live in an age in which scientific rationality has become the handmaiden of political and military barbarism on a scale never before dreamt of in human history. Death camps, two world wars, Hiroshima, Nagasaki, rising poverty and
underdevelopment, human rights abuse, state terror, nuclear proliferation and the continued threat of annihilation, ecological disasters, and the problem of shrinking global resources, have cast a shadow over the ability of science to live up to its lofty claims. The possibility that the very project which promised liberation could lead to new forms of institutional oppression prompted Theodor Adorno (1973:321) to write late in his career that there was no universal history which led from savagery to humanitarianism, but there was one from the slingshot to the megaton bomb.3

However, none of this is to suggest the scientific world-view is value-less, or solely responsible for these sorts of problems. Nor is it to suggest that Scientific Realism is implicated in these sorts of barbarisms. This would be silly. It is, however, to suggest that we should not reify science or its methods as our only possible theoretical possibility, or consider it our only legitimate and authoritative intellectual voice.

It is hard not to draw the conclusion that Scientific Realism is a form of scientific idealism. In this sense, it is as excessive and as utopian a theory as those idealists whom E.H. Carr so soundly criticized in the inter-war years.

The idealism of science inherent in Scientific Realism has important consequences for its political theory. For it also serves to enshrine and idealize the role and function of the United States in global politics. We need not say a great deal about this, except to say that it contains its own set of normative commitments; commitments which are highly idealized. Thus, the political idealism of Scientific Realism is tied to its conception of the good life as the American way of life.

Recently, this idealism has been termed a complacent idealism.4 Yet, it is difficult to see what is complacent about it. Indeed, its staunch anti-relativism,

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3.Horkheimer and Adorno (1972) argued that the Enlightenment Project, of which Scientific Realism is heir, had a logic, not of liberation, but of oppression.
its commitment to positivist methods, the desire to transcend international theory by making Scientific Realism synonymous both with "science" and international theory, and its black and white view of the world, make it a far more politically active theory than is indicated by the term "complacency."

I think it is important to understand that Scientific Realism is not a complacent form of idealism. If one wishes to call it anything it must be considered a vigilant idealism. This is not simply a question of semantics either. First, the term complacency is altogether too passive. It sanitizes the powerfully political nature of Scientific Realism. And second, it cannot account for those aspects in its idealism which the post-positivists and relativists have rebelled against.

Scientific Realism is a theory of international politics whose idealized understanding of reality deprives the study of international politics of its capacity for critical evaluation. This also means we have no basis for questioning the political and moral practices of countries their politics, and their actions.

The post-positivist response to this kind of theoretical cocktail is, in the final analysis, a form of Political Realism. By pointing to the inherent flaws, as well as the inherent dangers to a field dominated by such an outlook, it aims at restoring a sense of intellectual balance to the study of international politics. Ironically, Post-positivism as a realist critique of Scientific Realism has points in common with E.H. Carr's (1946) famous critique of idealism.5

Carr tells us Political Realism enters the field far behind [idealism] and by way of reaction from it."(p.63) So too, Post-positivism enters the field behind the idealism of Scientific Realism. The realism of Post-positivism is nothing more than the bringing back to consciousness of aspects of thought lost as a consequence of an excessive concern with scientific method. But perhaps the

5.Carr writes: "Thought is not merely relative to the circumstances and interests of the thinker: it is also pragmatic in the sense that it is directed to the fulfillment of his purpose."(p.71)
most interesting thing about thinking about Post-positivism as a form of Political Realism is the diversity of the expressions of Realism it brings forth. Realism should not be the distinct property of a single school. It is far too much a part of the human psyche for such a narrowing. But at the same time, the human condition is richer than forms of Realism generally allow. The marginalization of values is a case in point.

How are we to understand post-positivist relativism in all this? Arguably, it should also be seen in this light. Its value lies in the fact that it is an extreme demonstration against Scientific Realism: a demonstration as excessive as Scientific Realism. Extreme forms of thought engender equally extreme forms of thought in response. What we can learn from relativism is that, as a form of alienated consciousness, it becomes a sort of intellectual tribunal. Moreover, as an intellectual tribunal, its probing critique of Scientific Realism's theoretical weaknesses provides us with an opportunity to reconsider what it is that constitutes a sufficient theory of international politics. Thus, while it may be true we cannot follow the prescriptive aspects of the relativism of Post-positivism, its critique demonstrates that we should not take any theory for granted, no matter how grandiose its intellectual credentials, without a thorough examination of its assumptions and principles. This I take to be the hallmark of intellectual life, and is why relativism must be understood differently.

So too, it seems particularly difficult to accept the charge of faddism with regard to the post-positivist movement as a whole. As I have argued above, no theory exists or is created in a vacuum. It is influenced, formed, and developed through a continual process of modification and interaction with other theories and with reality itself. Thus, "Poststructuralism" exists as an extension of structuralism and Marxism. To label something a fad is to dismiss it as lacking in serious content; that it is somehow illegitimate. But it is to do more. It is to

dictate what is acceptable and what is unacceptable as theory. One is reminded of the Paris Academy's original attitude to impressionist art, or perhaps, the Catholic Church's attitude to Galileo's discovery of Jupiter's eighth moon. New theories are generally a response to changing reality. Even if they fail to capture that reality positively, they may well capture it negatively, as something that shakes us out of our theoretical arrogance. If we too quickly dismiss an idea or perspective as a fad, we run the risk of not listening to what it has to tell us.

It may well be that post-structural theories, for example, cannot stand the test of time, but only time will tell. And as Pauline Rosenau (1990:103) puts it: "The international relations of tomorrow, already manifest today, may not be postmodernist, but it will surely bear traces of the post-modernist perspective." Thus, even if it fails it may inspire a more adequate theory. Theories cannot be judged or derided simply on the basis of newness. It is only on the basis of open dialogue, and by taking them seriously, that theories can be judged acceptable or unacceptable, insightful or vacuous.

Thus, far, I have argued for a somewhat different reading of Post-positivism. But the "cartesian anxiety" over the loss of foundations will still be felt, no matter what the credibility of this reading. The question for many will still be: how are we to overcome relativism without foundations? Or, perhaps, more importantly, how do we overcome relativism without sacrificing values and historicity?

This is, of course, a major project in itself, and certainly one beyond the scope of this thesis. I want to conclude this chapter by showing how we might look beyond both scientism and relativism while, at the same time, considering values and historicity as central to theory-building and to our understanding of our world.

In the last chapter I argued that scientific realists conceived of the problem of relativism in either/or terms. According to them, we must take the scientific realist path, or the danger exists that we will fall into relativism.
Relativism has always been equated with a form of thought which is anti-intellectual and anti-knowledge. Of course, if one pushes relativism to its extreme it becomes self-referentially incoherent. As Hilary Putnam (1981:120) argues: "if all is relative then the relative is relative too." In other words, the concept cannot be stated without immediately undermining it. Thus, if the relative is itself relative, it can either be true or false. This inconsistency has led Richard Rorty (1982:166) to argue there are no true relativists, and, therefore, relativism does not really exist. Similarly, Paul Feyerabend (1978:79) cynically tells us relativism is a "frightful monster" and that when we discuss relativism "appeals to emotion count as arguments" and "arguments are of a touching simple-mindedness."

While it is doubtful whether Rorty is completely correct, the argument of this thesis does support Feyeraband's conclusion. The scientific realist understanding of the problem of relativism is extremely crude. Like its division of facts and values, theory and practice, the objectivism/relativism split proves to be intellectually one-sided, bearing little relation to the reality which it purports to understand. Reality is far more complex than can be encompassed and understood with such simple intellectual formulae.

Post-positivist relativism does make an intellectual claim upon us. Indeed, as I argued above, it can be considered a form of Political Realism. Ultimately, post-positivist relativism is motivated by an ethical concern for the well-being of the individual and community. Granted, it cannot articulate this commitment adequately. But failure in this regard should not be considered evidence of its lack of relevance to contemporary issues. On the contrary, as an alienated form of consciousness, it speaks to international politics in a dramatic and important way. In essence, once we move beyond the either/or dichotomy evident in all foundationalist projects, relativism can be seen in a different light. First, it loses its reputation as a "taboo term," and can take its place as a valuable, if negative voice, in an on-going and open-ended historical process.
But what of the problem identified by Biersteker (1989:265). How are we to choose from a multitude of alternative explanations?" The answer to this can be stated simply: by the strength of the superior argument. The model of rhetoric, then, would prove to be an important source of insight into a more dialogical conception of political theory and practice. That we do not have any methodological standard which is completely value-neutral and objectivist, does not mean we are deprived of our capacity for argument and for objectivity.7 Thus, the concept of "critique" is essential to post-positivist thought. By approaching intellectual problems critically, and through a logic of question and answer, we appeal to "the right and true." Yet, this is not universal or foundationalist "truth," but one grounded in the historical traditions and problems of its own age. It is a conception of "truth" which is in need of continual re-affirmation and correction in light of changing historical conditions and situations.

In the last section, I noted that E.H. Carr's critique of idealism provided an important insight when looked at in regard to Scientific Realism. Yet, Carr's importance goes beyond the relevance of his critique of idealism to Scientific Realism. One of the most important insights that Post-positivism provides is the need to take historical diversity seriously. When we take diversity seriously, we must also understand history:

as an open-ended indeterminate eventuation—but not for that reason devoid of rational logic or of determining pressures—in which categories are defined in particular contexts but are continuously undergoing historical redefinition and whose structure is not pre-given, but protean, continually changing in form and in articulation.8

Such an approach allows us to think of concepts and ideas in a fuller and more flexible manner. Indeed, it is here that rhetoric and the Political Realism of

7.To be sure, just because Post-positivism denies objectivism, does not mean it denies objectivity. Conversely, to take the relativity of thought seriously does not necessarily mean that one is a relativist.

E.H. Carr share something in common. The importance of Political Realism for Carr resided in the fact that it understood that history is continually changing and never static. But he too is aware that "we cannot ultimately find a resting place in pure realism" because the relativity of thought "does not provide us with the springs of action which are necessary even to the pursuit of thought." We must, then, also seek the universal. But the important thing is the recognition that all universals are, in the final analysis, contingent. They are dependent upon time, space, place, culture, and tradition. It is precisely here that Carr's understanding of Political Realism connects up with Post-positivism generally. But, perhaps, even more importantly, the model of rhetoric proves to be the model upon which Carr based his understanding of Political Realism. Not only does Carr argue that the cogency of Political Realism is gained because it appeals to what is "right and true," but also because it has the power to be self-critical and responsive to change. The essential ingredient for Carr is intellectual openness, and this can only be gained by a willingness to learn, to discover and to persuade. To cut off this process is intellectually totalitarian. An open-ended realism is an essential ingredient in this process. Post-positivism does no more than simply remind study of international relations of its own contingency, and the value of flexibility.
CONCLUSION
One of the primary aims of this thesis has been to present a more insightful reading of post-positivist relativism, and of post-positivism generally. I have argued relativism should be seen as intellectually valuable from two main perspectives. First, it is the result of a discipline which has marginalized value and ethical questions. Furthermore, it has value because of the drastic nature of its response to the idealism of the structural realists. The crux of my argument has been that post-positivism is actually a form of political realism. By attacking the idealism inherent in structural realism it proves to be a more realistic interpretation of how we can go about the business of understanding international politics.

As to the question of whether Post-positivism is relativist or revivalist, then, I think it is clear that it is both. In other words, the revivalist potential of Post-positivism is partly a consequence of its relativism. Yet, the fact of relativism immediately pushes us to theorize beyond it. It is in moving beyond relativism and Scientific Realism that we encounter a different mode of theorizing which places values at the core of theory. This realization is the most important innovation to arise from Post-positivism.

The study of international politics has always utilized ideals from other fields of study. Both the Positivism and Structuralism, and Post-positivism have their roots outside of international theory. So too, the conception of rationality which underpins all of those whom I have called scientific realists has been transplanted directly from Neoclassical economic theory. As Fred Halliday (1985:408) has noted, the field of international theory has always been "an absorber and importer, not a producer in its own right." What he fails to note is that international theory has also been highly selective in what it absorbs and imports. It is inadequate, however to respond to this by arguing that the concerns of international theorists are limited to relations between states, or to say as Martin Wight (1969:33) does, that there is "a kind of recalcitrance of
international politics to being theorised about."1 This is a patent *non sequitur*. Questions of peace and war, security, national existence, democratic and despotic regimes, poverty, international justice, life and death, cannot adequately be understood except in relation to the human beings these concepts effect and are about. The problem with international theory is that it has detached itself from theoretical concerns (political philosophy) proper, and lost sight of the ultimate goal of theory.

This thesis began by asking whether the study of international politics had a future. The future of the field does not lie in the direction structural realists would take the discipline. This can only lead to more alienated forms of relativism, and narrower and more useless forms of theory. If our goal is to develop truly "global" theories of international politics, we need to close the gap between international theory and political theory.

Here we can take our lead from thinkers such as Kant and Hegel. Both realized the importance of the "international" to political theory. For Kant, no adequate and purposeful political theory could be attained without an understanding of international politics. Ultimately, the international arena threatened a politics of "right." Similarly, for Hegel the issue of war and foreign relations appeared at the end of his theorizing about the "political," and was integral to it. International theorists and political theorists alike have forgotten this insight. Both are essential aspects to the study of politics and cannot be separated. Yet political theorists seem largely uninterested in international matters. So too, many international theorists seem less than comfortable with issues of the human condition, preferring the abstracted air of data sets, statistics, equations, and the like. While quantitative studies have their place, it should not be forgotten that the human condition is the reason why we theorize the "political" in the first place. International theory's self-imposed isolationism and its "will to science" have been purchased at the expense of qualitative

1. For a good critique of this view see Jackson (1990).
political concerns. The artificial intellectual dichotomy between forms of theory and types of theory is an absurdity which should not prevail if our aim is to theorize the political dimensions of existence fully.
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