

Introduction: World Affairs — An Analytical Overview

How should world affairs be analyzed in its entirety? What constitutes the study and practice of international relations when looked at as a whole?

World affairs are typically analyzed in terms of current events. Every day we scan the internet or the newspapers or we turn on the television for answers to questions such as: Is there a way to win the “war on terrorism”? Why fight in this country or that? Is globalization good or bad? Are multinational companies more powerful than small states? What are “rogue” states? Is the world running out of oil? Is it running out of water? Can democracy be exported? Is foreign aid a waste of money? Are religions a threat to world peace? How serious is the global debt problem? Or, what does the rise of new powers involve?

Regardless of how objective analyses of current affairs might seem, they typically provide highly opinionated accounts of the subject. Descriptions and explanations of current affairs are as much about the perspective of those providing the descriptions and explanations as they are about the affairs themselves. The same applies to academic versions of this sort of study. Accounts of the contemporary history of current affairs are made in terms of what analysts think of as worth including. They may appear objective but they are still highly

subjective in terms of what they consider worth including and excluding (McWilliams and Piotrowski, 2005).

World affairs can also be read in terms of particular issue areas. These include such subjects as conflict and security, diplomatic affairs, international law, international organizations, the global political economy, world development, human rights, national and global social movements, global gendering practices, and the international environment (Snarr and Snarr, 2005).

The problem with this approach is that it does not do justice to the competing perspectives that can be brought to bear on any and every issue area. To adequately account not only for the issue areas themselves but also for the different ways in which they can be described and explained, a more radical approach is required.

This suggests that world affairs should be considered first and foremost in terms of how analysts and policymakers talk about them (Weber, 2004; Sterling-Folker, 2005). It suggests that this is the most fundamental approach to the discipline.

This conclusion is reinforced by the fact that it is not possible to talk about world affairs or to practice policy globally without articulating a particular way of doing so. Someone with god-like detachment could see the subject in an objective way and talk about it or practice it accordingly. However, most analysts and practitioners, most of the time, are not detached. As a consequence, they are not able to talk about the world or practice policy in the world in terms that are universally acceptable, eternally valid, and absolutely true. They might want to do so but the Grail of such an aspiration must remain forever beyond their grasp, at least, as long as they remain recognizably human and do not become divine or insane.

This does not preclude analysts and practitioners from reaching in the direction of such a Grail. The fact that one cannot be completely clean does not mean that one need roll in manure heaps. The fact that one cannot be completely detached does not mean that one should eschew the attempt to be so. Social scientists consistently recommend reaching in this direction. They think that a scientific approach to human behavior, an approach that allows for hypothesis, prediction, experiment, and control, is definitely possible. As a consequence they

are only interested in predictions about human behavior and in assessing how valid these predictions might be. They are not interested in the assumptions people make and the way they read the world because of these assumptions. For them, an analysis of human behavior in terms of the analytical languages or dialects they use provides nothing more than “a set of tautologies. Its function is to serve as a filing system ... and the criteria by which it is to be judged are those appropriate to a filing system. Are the categories clearly ... defined? Are they exhaustive? Do we know where to file each individual item, or is there considerable ambiguity? Is the system ... so designed that we can quickly find an item we want, or must we hunt from place to place?” (Friedman, 1987, p. 156).

The debate between those who think a scientific approach is possible or mandatory and those who think otherwise is on-going. It provides a counterpoint to this whole work. It is reflected in the distinction between the “classical” and “neo-” or hyper-versions of every analytical language discussed below.

There is no conclusion in this regard. Rather, the debate is subsumed by a more radical discussion of the modernist project that informs scientific thinking, and a more radical discussion of the Enlightenment culture that underpins modernist rationalism.

There is much to be done first in summarizing comprehensively and coherently the ways analytical languages are used to articulate a modernist/rationalist understanding of world affairs. There are many lists of analytical languages that are used to explain and practice international relations. Lists such as these typically include those analytical languages that are deemed most relevant to those who compile them. However, what such lists typically fail to do is to provide any indication of how comprehensive they are, how the doctrines they include relate to each other, what the logic might be to the pattern they present, and how individual doctrines stand in relation to that logic and to that pattern (Weber, 2004; Dunne *et al.*, 2007).

As to comprehensiveness: making a list of what are seen to be the main ways of talking about world affairs is not the same as mapping all the ways in which analysts and policymakers talk about them. Lists reflect the understanding of those who make them. They can and

usually do prevent those who use them from seeing what a comprehensive account of international relations perspectives might look like.

As to coherence: a mere list of analytical and policy perspectives is radically unstructured and as such, confuses more than it enlightens. Without an approach that can discern the underlying pattern to the concepts and conclusions that any particular list provides, that is, without a meta-account of the structure that underpins the way analysts and practitioners talk about world affairs *as a whole*, there is no way of knowing how any particular approach relates to other approaches, or how it relates to that pattern *as a whole*.

An Overview of World Affairs

Given the importance attached above to a comprehensive and coherent meta-account of ways of talking about world affairs, what is such an overview? What overview of the entire discipline would make it possible to locate any specific articulation of world affairs in relation to any other articulation of the discipline? What mental map, because of its exhaustiveness and its systematic structure, would make it possible to see where any analyst or any policy-practitioner stands?

Before answering this question, it is important to note that what follows does no more than hold up a mirror to what analysts and practitioners of world affairs assume and say. They are the ones who articulate the analytical languages and dialects summarized below. It is their assumptions that allow a coherent and comprehensive meta-account to be given of their diverse articulations.

It is also important to note that there is no way of talking about world affairs that is particular to every individual on the planet. If there was, then everybody would be talking past each other and there would be analytical and policy chaos.

As it is people constitute analytic and policymaking camps that articulate the assumptions about human nature and nurturing practices that they make. Analysts are not supposed to make assumptions since they are mostly modernist/rationalists. As such, they are committed to prioritizing the use of reason as an end in itself *en masse*. However, as already noted, only someone divine would have the

detachment required to make no assumptions at all, which means that assumptions are always made, and analytical languages and dialects follow from them like the air that people breathe and the water they drink. Often they do not realize they are making these assumptions and articulating them. Recognizing that they are doing so is the key to a meta-account of world affairs.

What, then, are these assumptions? What are the various analytical camps that they predispose? In addition, how do these analytical camps stand in relation to each other and to the modernist project that they help to articulate?

Human Naturist Accounts

It was Martin Wight who initially noted the way analysts and practitioners of politico-strategic (diplomatic and military) affairs tend to fall into three different camps because of the different assumptions they make about human nature. He called these camps *realism*, *rationalism*, and *revolutionism*. They follow, he said, from the assumption that human beings are either bad, calculating (“rational”), or good. Because of these assumptions, human behavior can be described in pessimistic, opportunistic, or optimistic terms (Wight, 1991, pp. 25–29). Because of these assumptions people confront each other in world affairs as potential enemies, potential rivals, or potential friends (Wendt, 1999).

The choice of realism as the label for any account of world affairs that is primarily pessimistic about human nature and primarily concerned with the politico-strategic dimension to these affairs, remains a key feature of the discipline. “Realism” makes all other doctrines look unrealistic or idealistic and therefore utopian. It is an outstanding example of what could be called “concept capture”. Statism would be a less loaded label for realism, but the capture by statist of the concept of what is “real” for their pessimistic/politico-strategic perspective remains a notable aspect of world affairs.

Since realists see human nature as basically aggressive and adversarial and the state system as ungoverned, they see world affairs as highly hazardous. They see it as a competitive place where violence is

always about to take place, if it is not actually taking place, and where cooperation can only be of the win-or-lose kind. To realists, the “other” is always a potential enemy, peace is only a lull between wars, and it is might that makes right. This is a dog-eat-dog world, where the only rational response on the part of state-makers is deemed to be constant vigilance and eternal suspicion and the defense of state concerns. This may involve constructing strategic alliances that promote these concerns but the balances of power that result are typically only temporary (Morgenthau, 1973 [1948]).

Wight’s realism is what could be called “classical realism” since it stands in marked contrast to later versions of this doctrine, though there is a more abstract version of realism, which is usually called “neo-realism”. The best-known protagonist of this approach is Kenneth Waltz (Waltz, 1979). Like Morgenthau, Waltz highlights the ungoverned nature of the international system and how, under conditions such as these, self-help is the only option, though this does raise the question whether self-help is the only option. Why do those who live in an ungoverned world have to opt for self-help? Why do they not opt for mutual help instead? The assumption that they do not tells us more about the pessimistic view Waltz has of human nature than about human nature *per se*. Although his analysis is more abstract than Morgenthau’s, Waltz’s hyperrealism is no less rooted in a negative conception of what people are like.

Neo-realism is a good example of the distinction between the concrete and the abstract versions of every analytical language. Attention will be drawn throughout the body of this work to the “neo-” or “hyper-” as well as the “classical” accounts of the perspectives involved. In this introductory chapter I shall not document all these different dialects, though they are featured throughout the rest of the text.

Like his use of the word realism, Wight’s use of the word rationalism is also somewhat confusing, since the approach he is really referring to at this point is inter-statism or internationalism. A clearer account of the way analysts and practitioners talk about global politics would reserve “rationalism” to refer to the politico-cultural context that underpins all the ways that modernists articulate how world affairs work. The problem here is that Wight is not seemingly aware

of the politico-cultural context in which he is doing his thinking. He is interested in how diplomatic and military affairs are discussed, but he is not interested in the meta-discourse that informs every such discussion. He does not highlight how rationalism is the key feature of the modernist project, or the Enlightenment project as it is better known, and how “rationalism” as such refers to the whole cultural attempt to prioritize human reason as an end in itself, not simply one way of talking about the world, namely, the internationalist way.

Internationalists see the nature of human nature as basically opportunistic and calculating. As a consequence, they tend to be liberals and they tend to talk of the state-makers who constitute the system of states as capable of working interdependently, obeying international laws and creating international organizations. The members of the so-called English School highlight how this system is a proto-society (Bull, 1977; Little, 2000).

All internationalists envisage a less competitive and a more cooperative world. They envisage tit-for-tat, win-win relations, where the “other” is a potential ally, international reciprocity prevails, and a live-and-let-live chance to achieve the greatest happiness for the greatest number seems a distinct possibility. A more abstract version of this doctrine envisages international regimes, i.e., international arrangements, where state-makers deal with issues of mutual concern in a way that realism would never deem possible or actively precludes (Keohane and Nye, 1972, 1989 [1977]). The most extreme internationalists envisage a world society of interacting individuals, where states hardly feature at all (Burton, 1968).

Wight’s use of the label revolutionism is also problematic since it confuses what is better called globalism with a doctrine that really is revolutionary, such as marxism. Marxists and meta-marxists clearly merit this label but those who Wight calls revolutionists clearly do not. They are globalists rather than revolutionists (Wight, 1991, pp. 7–24).

Globalists see human nature as being basically good, therefore, they see global governance or even global government as entirely conceivable. They highlight the cosmopolitan aspects of world affairs, i.e., they see world affairs as collaborative rather than merely

cooperative or competitive. They portray the “other” as a potential friend and they see war as an aberration. Their world is a hail-fellow-well-met one where state-makers do not respond to each other in a self-help way, or with international laws and organizations, but with attempts to create institutions of global governance instead (Kant, 1963 [1795]; Hobson, 1916).

So, if we are considering the politico-strategic (diplomatic and military) dimension to world affairs, we find analysts and practitioners in three main camps. They are most commonly called realism (“statism”), internationalism (“inter-statism”), and globalism (“cosmopolitanism”). They are the consequence of assuming that human nature is either bad, calculating, or good.

Robert Gilpin identified the same three assumptions about our essential human nature as Martin Wight did, but in his case, he applied them not to the politico-strategic dimension to world affairs but to the politico-economic one (Gilpin, 1987). He called the resulting perspectives mercantilism, liberalism, and marxism, though here they are called *economic nationalism*, *economic liberalism*, and *socialism*.

Economic nationalism comes from the belief that human beings are basically grasping and power-hungry (Gilpin, 1987, p. 34). This is manifest especially at the group level. Here the moral options that individuals have can be relatively limited (Niebuhr, 2001 [1932]). Given such an assumption about what we are like, Gilpin says, economic protection is the logical choice when it comes to promoting a state’s wealth and material well-being.

Economic nationalism prescribes self-sufficiency in the form of trade tariffs, industrial subsidies, and fixed currencies (List, 1856 [1850]; Weiss, 1998). The most radical of its proponents talk of autarky, a policy outcome that other states sometimes impose in the form of economic sanctions. The more moderate of its proponents talk of import duties, tax incentives, domestic subsidies, exclusionary regulations, and the vertical integration of production facilities located abroad.

Economic liberalism, by contrast, articulates the belief that human beings are essentially opportunistic and calculating in that they try

and get what they want “at the lowest possible cost to themselves” (Gilpin, 1987, p. 28). As a doctrine, it results in a move toward an account of the world centered on producing and consuming individuals and monetized markets and away from nation-states.

Economic liberalism promotes the opposite approach to that of economic nationalism in that it promotes the free movement of goods, labor, capital, and ideas across state borders (Smith, 1993 [1776]). The most radical economic liberals include market universalists, anarcho-capitalists, and libertarians (Godwin, 1971 [1793]; Rothbard, 1973), all of whom seek to maximize market freedom by minimizing the role of the state. The more moderate economic liberals include the neo-Keynesians, who seek to smooth out the highs and lows of the business cycle using state power, not only locally but on a global scale. With regard to the latter, they call for hegemonic states to use their politico-economic power to protect the global market from predatory profit-maximizers (Keynes, 1926).

Gilpin’s third perspective is marxism. However, this is a problematic label since marxism does not articulate an assumption about our essential human nature. It articulates an assumption about the essential nature of human nurturing practices.

What Gilpin is really referring to is socialism. This is the politico-economic equivalent to the politico-strategic discourse of globalism and the one that most naturally falls in this part of the larger picture.

It is important to note that this is socialism of the reformist kind in that it is the socialism that articulates the assumption that human beings are basically good. Socialists of this kind, confronted with human need and the human capacity to meet that need, advocate the distribution of the global product to provide for the nutritional, educational, medical, and other requirements that people manifest worldwide. This distribution could be done by a global government or it could be done in a more decentralized, anarcho-socialist way, though the former would make more sense in terms of contemporary world affairs.

Revolutionary socialism, by contrast, refers to the dictatorship of the proletariat. In marxist parlance, it is that stage of history when the workers, having risen up, use their power to deconstruct the state so that they can construct communist communes in its stead.

So, if we are considering the politico-economic (marketeeing) dimension to world affairs, we find analysts and practitioners articulating three main perspectives. They are called economic nationalism, economic liberalism, and socialism. In each case, analysts and practitioners make the same or similar assumptions about human nature, namely, that we are bad (aggressive), calculating (canny), or good (empathetic). Then, they apply these assumptions to the global political economy. The result is three very different accounts of how the global political economy works and why.

Beyond the politico-strategic and the politico-economic dimensions to world affairs, there is a third dimension, namely, the politico-social one. This is where we find the global civil society being discussed. It lies behind those dimensions where state-making and marketeeing issues are raised and it provides us with what in effect is a sociology of world affairs. (It is worth noting here that all three dimensions to world affairs are political, since politics is ubiquitous. Politics is the species-specific propensity to get one's own way, whether individually, collectively, or communally. "Politicking" is manifest in formalized systems of government or it can remain relatively informal. Either way, it occurs at every level of human society, be it the family, the small group, the tribe, the institution, the state, or the world at large. As a consequence, politics is used here with a hyphen throughout, as in politico-strategic, -economic, and -social.)

Analysts and practitioners who articulate politico-social issues fall into the same three camps that their politico-strategic and -economic colleagues do. As a consequence, they too talk in three analytical languages. These are called *nationalism*, *individualism*, or *collectivism*.

Nationalism is the belief that while as a people we might claim to have a shared history, language, cultural mores, and outlook, "we" are not the same as "them". In other words, other people are not like "us". Therefore, we should be suspicious of them (Anderson, 1991), whether they live inside our state or outside it. In moderate terms, nationalism allows peoples to define their identity in terms of each other. In its extreme form, nationalism becomes fascism. Regardless of the analytic dialect, however, nationalism evokes a traditionalist sense of communalism and solidarism. Where a new

state is made and there is not one, nation state leaders are obliged to create it. They have to create a common language, as well as a shared historical narrative and common cultural attributes.

It is estimated that there are currently at least 7000 nations in the world. These “ethnies” can be relatively self-contained or they can consist of vast diasporas. However, there are only 200 states. The doctrine of self-determination says that nations can in principle claim sovereign autonomy. In practice, this is the cause of many of the conflicts in the world since 7000 nations do not go into 200 states without a good deal of political pushing and shoving.

Individualism articulates the assumption that human beings are opportunistic and calculating (Taylor, 1989). Individualists tend to promote liberalist ideas, such as that of human rights, and particular rights claims, such as the one that promotes representative democracy. They depict human beings as autonomous entities, whose moral entitlements are more important than those of the society or the state they live within. In its more moderate form, individualism seeks to protect the sanctity of the individual in world affairs. Consider the International Criminal Court: this is an independent organization that holds individuals accountable for crimes against humanity regardless of their societal context. In its extreme form, individualism promotes doctrines such as that of the Universal Doctrine of Human Rights. At the heart of this doctrine is an abstract sense of the self that has no secondary qualities. It is a sense of the self, that is, that has no race, ethnicity, gender, sexual identity, clan or tribal identity, disability, or faith. It is a hyper-self, as it were, that can make strong moral claims, defined in rationalistic terms, wherever in the world that self may live. Included in these claims is the right to hire and fire the government, which is what democracy entails. The fact that no such self exists does not prevent this being one of the most powerful of contemporary doctrines and one of the most effective when it comes to benchmarking desirable human behavior worldwide.

Collectivism is an account of world affairs that highlights human goodness. It describes how people find each other regardless of their state location or their national identity and how they seem prepared to work within global collectives to promote common political

interests and political causes. It describes the growth in the number of such global social movements and how this has helped create a global civil society different from the nationalist and individualist ones (McDonald, 2006). In addition, it describes such phenomena in terms of our capacity for empathy, a capacity that includes a very wide range of contemporary concerns.

Therefore, if we are considering the politico-social dimension to world affairs, we find analysts and practitioners in three key camps that are called nationalism, individualism, and collectivism. Each camp is a consequence of the same assumptions about human nature made above, namely, bad, calculating, or good.

The matrix of discourses identified so far covers many of the ways in which world affairs analysts and practitioners talk. Many of the debates about world affairs take place between the proponents of one or the other of these analytical languages. This includes the perennial debate between the realists and the internationalists. Debates about world affairs also take place between those who speak different dialects of a particular analytical language, such as classical realists and abstract realists, or neo-realists, or between classical internationalists and more abstract internationalists, i.e., neo-internationalists.

If we pause to reflect on the matrix in Fig. 1, it is worth noting that the connections across the three different dimensions, for example, the connection between realism, economic nationalism, and nationalism, can be very close. These discourses all articulate the same assumption

		Politico-strategic	Politico-economic	Politico-social
Human nature	Bad	Realism	Economic nationalism	Nationalism
	Calculating	Internationalism	Economic liberalism	Individualism
	Good	Globalism	Socialism	Collectivism

Figure 1. World affairs dimensions.

about human nature. They are all relatively pessimistic. As such, they have a good deal in common, even though they articulate different world affairs dimensions. Likewise, we find three kinds of liberalist calculation, that is, a politico-strategic, -economic, and -social kind, and three kinds of optimism, namely, a globalist, socialist, and collectivist kind. It is also worth noting that being calculating is not the middle point of a continuum from bad to good. That point would be indifference. Highlighting the human capacity for calculation means highlighting a different assumption altogether. Nor does this matrix include those analysts and practitioners who do not see human beings as essentially anything either. Analysts and practitioners like these come to their conclusions not from assumptions about our essential human nature, which they tend to see as something we are born without, but from assumptions about the essential nature of human nurturing practices. They are more concerned with what we learn to be, in other words, and with the essential nature of the learning environment.

Human Nurturist Accounts

Human nurturists are interested in the various environments in which we are raised and how they impinge upon us. As such, they tend not to refer to the distinction between the politico-strategic, -economic, and -social dimensions to world affairs that were highlighted above. They talk in ways that cut across these dimensions or ignore them altogether. Hence, they are sometimes referred to as “critical theorists” (with a lowercase “c” and “t”).

Human nurturists make competing assumptions about the core character of our human nurturing practices. They see these practices as being essentially characterized by *materialism*, *mentalism*, or a *mixed* version of the two. Each of the approaches these practices provide is seen by human nurturists as articulating a different underlying assumption.

Materialism highlights the material nature of people’s nurturing environment. One form of materialism is the approach provided by political geographers. According to them, land-locked states seem to act differently from island states, a difference they see as being

geographically determined. Resource-poor states seem to act differently from resource-rich states, a difference they may also see in material terms. In a similar fashion, materialists highlight technological developments, such as the advent of the World Wide Web, without which the world's finances could no longer function, or container shipping, without which global trade would come to a standstill in a matter of weeks.

However, in terms of its effect upon world affairs, marxism is arguably the most significant of all the materialist doctrines. German marxism is not the same as Russian Leninism or Chinese Maoism, but Lenin and Mao were both inspired by German marxism, like other revolutionaries worldwide.

Classical marxists highlight changes in the means of production and changes in the commensurate class relationships. For example, the change from feudalism to capitalism was for them a change from agriculture to industry and a concomitant change from a class structure dominated by nobles versus serfs, to one dominated by owners and managers (the bourgeoisie) versus wage workers (the proletariat) (Marx and Engels, 1975 [1848]).

Neo-marxists provide a more abstract form of marxism. They do this by describing more abstract forms of class struggle. One of the best known of these descriptions is that of *dependencia*, or dependency. This highlights how leaders in poor countries become comprador elites, selling state assets for their own gain and not that of their citizens (Prebisch, 1971; Cardoso and Faletto, 1979). Another account is that of world-systems analysis. This looks at global capitalism in structural terms. It talks of a core, a semi-periphery, and a periphery and of states moving between the three (Wallerstein, 1979).

Both classical and neo-marxists see world politics as determined by capitalism since that is the contemporary mode of production. They see realist notions of *realpolitik*, liberalist notions of the "hidden hand", and individualist notions of human rights, as all part of a capitalist attempt to disguise the realities of global exploitation.

Once capitalism is globalized, they say, revolution will ensue. For them, the next phase of world affairs is socialism, though as noted

earlier, this is socialism in its revolutionist guise. Marx saw socialism that articulates the assumption that we are by nature basically good as utopian. For him, socialism was the next stage along the revolutionary road to advanced communism. The difference between Marx's revolutionary view of socialism and the competing reformist view became a key part of European politics since it undermined the desirability of reformist socialism (which became tarred with the brush of the revolutionaries) while inhibiting the advent of revolutionary socialism (since those who might have otherwise opted for revolution, chose reform instead).

Materialism is only one way of talking about world affairs in terms of human nurturing practices, indeed, the opposite of materialism is mentalism (though world affairs analysts and practitioners call this approach "constructivism"). Whatever label it is given, constructivism refers to how and why people act in terms of the mental nature of their nurturing environment, i.e., in terms of their various ideas, values, and aspirations. For example, in constructivist terms, there are states or capitalism or human rights only because people think they have these things and because they behave as if they have them. If they think they have different things and behave as if those other things exist, then they will. To a constructivist, the world is literally constructed in terms of the ideas people have. Deconstruct those ideas and the consequence is deconstruction of the contemporary world. Reconstruct these ideas in another way and the consequence is reconstruction of the contemporary world in that other way.

Most constructivists remain committed to a systematic discussion of their approach (Wendt, 1999); however, there are constructivists who talk in terms of rules so abstract that world affairs would disappear as a separate discipline (Onuf, 1989). Other constructivists try and understand how world affairs look from a more popular perspective. They suggest first adopting an objectifying perspective, then making an attempt to compensate for the limits of objectivity by standing close to listen, then making an attempt to compensate for the limits of standing close to listen by taking part, and finally making an attempt to

compensate for the limits of taking part by objectifying again. This sets up a cycle of knowing that over time becomes a spiral and helps analysts and practitioners deal with the distortions that modernist perspectives entail. This will be briefly discussed in the conclusion to this work as the preferred way to pursue social science (Pettman, 2000).

There are marxists who think of the mental dimension to world affairs as one that is as important as the material dimension. Marxists such as these tend to see mental issues such as alienation, or the legitimation strategies of the bourgeoisie, as being on a par with such material issues as changes in technology.

Marxists such as these attempt to articulate a mixed approach to an account of human-nurturing practices; hence, they are depicted as marxists/constructivists. As such they include the so-called Frankfurt School and analysts like Antonio Gramsci. The proponents of the Frankfurt School see world affairs as a product not only of the capitalist mode of production; not only of the class struggle between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat; but also of the bourgeois attempt to control the world's media and global educational curricula (Horkheimer, 1972; Adorno, 1973). Marx himself was well aware that capitalism's material substructure had superstructural significance in that the ruling ideas of the day were always those of the ruling class. Gramsci highlighted the hegemony of the bourgeoisie. This hegemony is mentalist as well as materialist and can only be countered by those prepared to mount the appropriate challenge (Gramsci, 1972; Cox, 1987; Gill, 1993).

In the mainstream literature on world affairs, hybrid analysts such as these are called neo-marxists; however, this lumps together the more abstract materialists with those who are both materialists and constructivists. In the current world affairs literature, neo-marxists are seen as being both "new" marxists and those who promote the mixed marxist/constructivist approach. Here they are not. Here neo-marxism is seen as an abstract version of classical marxism. Neo-marxism/constructivism is seen as an abstract version of classical marxism/constructivism.

The matrix of analytical languages that articulate the assumptions that analysts and practitioners make about the essential nature of

human-nurturing practices provides a systematic account of much of the rest of the discipline. It can be displayed as follows:

Human nurture	Material	Marxism
	Mixed	Marxism/constructivism
	Mental	Constructivism

Figure 2.

Though the two matrices outlined so far, and the analytical languages they articulate, include most of the ways in which mainstream analysts and practitioners describe, explain, and prescribe for world affairs, there are other ways. More particularly, there are the accounts that describe and explain the analytical consequences of having a politico-cultural context that prioritizes the use of reason *en masse*. The analytic languages summarized so far do not discuss the cultural context they help articulate, a context called here — in line with contemporary conceptual practice — *modernism*, or the Enlightenment project. The key characteristic of modernism is the way it places a priority upon the use of reason as an end in itself *en masse*.

If we are to account for the other ways analysts and practitioners talk about world affairs, we need to account for modernism as the politico-cultural context that global strategics, economics, and civil society articulate. This means accounting, firstly, for modernity itself, secondly, for how modernists critique their own project, and thirdly, for how modernists marginalize those they consider insufficiently rationalistic and how those stigmatized in this way attempt to establish their core disciplinary credentials. This is “Critical Theorizing” (with a capital “C” and “T”).

Modernism and Modernist Auto-Critiques

As already noted, modernism is characterized by contemporary rationalism. It is the pursuit of truth using human reason. This suggests that reason is a means to an end (“the truth”) rather than an end in itself. However, since modernists see the truth as only knowable in

rationalistic terms, they see prioritizing reason as an end in itself as the same as the pursuit of truth.

Rationalism is evident in every civilization, but with the advent of the European Renaissance and ultimately the European Enlightenment, it became a whole cultural project of unique historical significance (Stout, 1981). Members of all cultures, in every age, have eschewed traditional authority in order to think for themselves. Euro-Americans were the first to make rationalism into the philosophic context for a whole society, though. In the process, they saw themselves making a cultural contribution of global significance since rationalism was uniquely productive. Its great intellectual strength was modernist science, which led to new and reliable knowledge in amounts never dreamed possible before, modernist technologies, and an industrial revolution that was like no other in written human history.

Rationalism, as a specific way to know, has at its heart a specific way to be, namely, an objectifying way. It begins with individuals learning to detach themselves from their social context and from the cultural conditioning that that context involves. Having learned to live at a mental distance, they then learn to talk across to others similarly individuated, thereby creating a meta-society of the mind. It is in this meta-society that they learn to do science, whether natural or social.

Because rationalism is an objectifying discourse, modernism tends to see the world in terms of reified things rather than in terms of on-going processes. It tends to look at reality with the eye of the mind as something exterior to the mind that the mind can then model in abstract terms. It does not comprehend what is real as a creation of the mind and, therefore, as only knowable if we understand how minds create reality.

States, capitalist markets, and civic selves are all reifications. Modernist analysts and practitioners who look at the world tend to see things rather than emergent outcomes or patterns of human practice. They see “America” intervening in “Iraq”. They see “Rio Tinto” selling resources to “China”. They see “price signals” governing “markets”. They tend not to see the on-going processes that all of this entails, or if they do, they see them in an objectified form.

Modernism also reifies the concept of time. For example, it turns the passage of time into a process that has discrete dimensions, namely, a past, a present, and a future. The past is objectified and artifacts from the past are put in museums. Non-modernist cultures, by contrast, see the past in terms of a living present. They see cultures that turn the past into “another country” as doing violence to the dynamic character of human experience.

In a similar way, modernism reifies the concept of space. It provides quantified coordinates that make it possible to map locations in physical terms even though space is known now to be contingent upon time and dependent upon velocity. Non-modernist cultures have completely different cosmologies that involve very different conceptions of space. Like their conceptions of time, these can be even more dynamic.

Modernism also reduces complexity to dichotomy. The most basic of these dichotomies is that of mind and body, or reason and emotion. However, there are many others, such as those of power and morality, realism and idealism, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, the male and the female, or the sustainable and the unsustainable.

In addition, while it is not clear whether an objectifying perspective preceded the individuated sense of self, or whether individuation preceded the historic capacity to objectify, the assumptions that result in modernism are now taught in modernist cultures from birth. Since these selves are not completely detached from their original social contexts, rationalists carry over into the meta-societies they inhabit the assumptions they make. These assumptions result in the particular analytical languages mapped above. They also result in the predictions that are fed back into the world as policy prescriptions. These prescriptions help construct the reality that is “seen” to be the case, in a self-fulfilling cycle that constitutes much of the world affairs that analysts and practitioners consequently seek to describe and explain.

The most obvious global effect of the advent of modernism has been the industrial revolution. Those who initiated this revolution used the military might that the new sciences made possible to create a world-spanning set of European empires, as well as world-spanning

forms of capitalism and civic identity. After two large wars, these empires collapsed leaving behind their administrative domains as nation-states, as well as a global market, global ideas about what should constitute the strongest moral claims, a global class struggle, and the modernist project itself.

However, the more reason gets promoted as an end in itself, the more apparent it becomes that this promotion requires basic assumptions that predispose diverse conclusions that get the world, if not wrong, then only partly right. These shortcomings were apparent from the beginning. The very success of modernism has helped make its limits more apparent and its distortions more clear, though.

Because the discipline of world affairs is modernist and rationalist, attempts to highlight these shortcomings and to compensate for them impinge directly upon every aspect of the discipline. The result is modernism turned back upon itself in a self-reflexive fashion and is one that applies to every analytical language identified so far.

Hyper-modernism

One such critique asks for more rationalism not less. Excited by what rationalism has achieved these hyper-modernists would have it achieve more. They want more objectivity and more individuation. They want people who are detached enough to do the abstract analysis required. They want another meta-social domain, one even further away from the ordinary world, where modernists can talk in hypothetico-deductive terms and can do game theorizing and “rational actor” analyses (such as studies of “prisoners’ dilemmas”) and the like. They envisage even more abstract notions of state strategics, market mechanics, global identity, and class struggle.

The various dialects of the analytical languages discussed in the body of this work are hyper-rationalist ones. Thus, realism is contrasted with neo- or hyper-realism, which is a more abstract version of realism. Realism itself looks at the world at the first order of modernist abstraction. It is systematic, but it is not scientific in the formal sense. Neo-realism, by contrast, seeks to lift the analysis to a second order of modernist abstraction. It seeks to provide a more scientific

approach to those who are pessimistic about human nature but think that the disciplinary emphasis should continue to fall upon the state. The same applies to economic liberalism and neo-liberalism, and so on through the rest of the analytical languages outlined.

Post-modernism

A second auto-critique of rationalism began as an attack on hyper-modernist abstraction. It began when Australian/British “traditionalists” took issue with US/American “behavioralists” by arguing that the level of scientific rigor the latter required was misplaced. It was only likely to have trivial results (Bull, 1966; Kaplan, 1966). Later this critique became much more reflexive (Foucault, 1994 [1966], pp. xxiii, xiv) and became the basis for post-modernism.

Post-modernism involves turning reason back upon itself to ask why it is that modernists prioritize the use of reason. Such reflexivity ultimately leads to an infinite regress. At this point, it becomes self-negating. However, short of this point, post-modernism allows modernists to confront directly the contingent nature of all modernist thinking and how this thinking is articulated. Awareness of such contingency makes for greater modesty with regard to the analytic stories modernist languages tell while helping to create thinking and speaking spaces for those whom modernists marginalize (George, 1994). This is Critical Theorizing *par excellence*.

Post-structuralism

Post-structuralism is similar to the post-modernist critique; however, it is not the same. Post-structuralists highlight how it is not possible to talk about world affairs without using a language and that any and every language is a coded set of assumptions and meanings. These predispose conclusions thereby showing, as with post-modernism, that the modernist use of reason is not as unimpeded as its proponents like to think it might be. Language itself can be the cause of what we subsequently conclude, since there is no objective language, post-structuralists say, even that of number. Therefore, to know world

affairs is to deconstruct the language with which it is described and explained. For example, it is to acknowledge the ubiquity of conceptual dichotomies and the way such dichotomies involve dominant and subordinate terms. It is also to appreciate the extent to which knowledge is power (Edkins, 1999). This, too, is Critical Theorizing *par excellence*. It comes to the same sort of conclusions that post-modernists do but for very different reasons.

Psychopathology

A fourth auto-critique of the modernist project is provided by psychopathology (Volkan *et al.*, 1990). According to psycho-pathologists, there are unconscious dimensions to the mind whose workings make rationalism much less rationalistic than its proponents like to think. The mental mechanisms manifest here might be to do with sex or aggression (Freud, 1971), the will to power or meaning (Adler, 1928; Frankl, 1964), or the collective unconscious (Jung, 1953). They might have to do with narcissism or nihilism, hysteria or sadism, phallo-centrism or trauma. Whatever the cause, the consequence is one that compromises the exercise of reason as an end in itself. This is a less familiar form of Critical Theorizing, but a key form nonetheless.

Romanticism

The fifth auto-critique of the shortcomings of modernism is the romantic one. Romantics would rather not abstract themselves any more. They want to re-engage with society again and prioritize emotion rather than reason. They want to eschew the rationalistic perspective so that they can know the world in emotivist terms. This leads them to embrace diverse art forms to describe and explain world affairs. They consider the truths they articulate in this way to be the same if not better than what modernists provide (Bleiker, 2001). Compare, for example, the Correlates of War project with Eric Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*. This is a less familiar form of Critical Theorizing, too. It is a key one nonetheless.

Phenomenology

Romantics are not the only ones to back off from modernist detachment. Like the romantics, phenomenologists bracket off rationalism so that they are better able to re-embed themselves in society again and ascertain world affairs as things-in-themselves. More radically, they use “gut-thinking” to intuit the primal activities of their own minds in order to understand how they intend the world they otherwise think they are attending to. Having intuited activities such as deferring, ordering, clumping, conflicting, taking, caring, hoping, playing, and dreaming, phenomenologists see the resultant truths as more basic than those they arrive at rationalistically (Husserl, 1917). Phenomenological accounts of world affairs are still uncommon (Odysseos, 2002; Pettman, 2008). It is the least familiar form of Critical Theorizing, but it is the sixth auto-critique of the shortcomings of modernism and a fundamental form in itself.

Feminist, Environmentalist, Post-Colonial, First and Poor Peoples, and Religious Critiques

Another consequence of the success of modernist rationalism is the way that those who seek most actively to promote and protect it (i.e., white, well-off, environmentally indifferent men), try to marginalize those they deem to be inferior in this regard. The result is not only a global political culture that is sexist, eco-averse, racist, imperialist, and secularist but also the one that underpins all the analytical articulations of modernism mapped above.

One of the results of having hegemonic modernists trying to push people to the periphery is the way it opens up the possibility for said peoples to opt into the debates about world affairs and to do so wherever they think it is desirable to do so — as proponents of any particular analytic language within the modernist project, for example, or as proponents of any of the criticisms of modernism just outlined. This leads to yet more Critical Theorizing.

Feminism

Modernism is sexist, for example, in that it is a discourse dominated by males. It tends to depict women as less rationalistic than men and therefore as inferior to men. At the same time, it helps create and reinforce a world system and a world society that privileges the male gender despite the fact that one key articulation of modernism, namely, liberalism, actively exalts gender-neutrality and despite the fact that women are active participants in world affairs regardless of how much of their presence is made invisible by men. Males may dominate the world's legislatures and corporate boardrooms. They may also own most of the world's property and earn most of its income. However, women do most of the world's work and they are central to all the world's affairs.

Feminism as a form of Critical Theorizing highlights the ways in which state-, market-, and civic self-making are all male dominated, and offers a range of antidotes to this global issue. More particularly, it highlights the lack of life-chances that women are given and the reduced range of life-choices they must endure (Tickner, 1992). Modernist feminists may articulate their criticisms in one of the mainstream modernist languages despite the masculinist bias to modernism as a meta-discourse. They may talk in liberalist terms about women's rights (Pettman, 1996) or marxist terms about women as the world's last colony (Mies *et al.*, 1988), and so on. Non-modernist feminists opt out of the modernist project or they never opt in. They see the key issue as being the sexist bias built in to modernism itself (Cohn, 1987). They look to reflexivity (Sylvester, 1994). Or, they look to non-modernist alternatives for other ways to engage world affairs.

Environmentalism

Environmentalism is a form of Critical Theorizing that calls into question the environmental effects of modernist science and technology. This puts environmentalists at odds with people who have a great deal to lose and much to gain by stereotyping ecological activists as anti-scientific and anti-technology, i.e., as non-modernist.

Whether the issue that ecologists highlight is that of global overpopulation, pollution, or resource depletion, they continue to be pushed to the global periphery even though without a viable planet to live on anything else about world affairs is literally academic. Modernist environmentalists use modernist languages (such as liberalism or marxism) to make their case. Traditionalist environmentalists see modernism itself as the issue, advocating pre- or post-modernist strategies to recover a more harmonious state of ecological affairs. Reflexivist environmentalists (such as the deep ecologists) also see modernism as the issue, calling into question modernist narratives about the environment and the reliability of those narratives (Zimmerman, 1994; Luke, 1999; Dryzek, 2005).

Post-colonialism and the poor

Modernism is also ethnocentric — even racist — in that it is a Euro-American ideology that continues to result in global disparities in power, wealth, and prestige that favor Euro-Americans. Modernism was an upper-class European cultural innovation. It was taken from the Old World to the New World and was made there into a uniquely successful way of being and knowing. We can say that it was upper-class Euro-Americans, therefore, who were the first to formulate modernism as a whole cultural project. The scientific and industrial success of this cultural discourse prompted these Euro-Americans to feel that they were superior. Other ways of being and knowing were deemed inferior. However ardently their proponents embraced modernist skills and mores they were not seen until recently as having the same racially defined abilities.

Those stigmatized in this way are acutely aware of such assumptions. For example, post-colonialists critique the modernist project (typically in modernist terms) because of its Euro-American bias (Loomba, 2005; Chowdhry and Nair, 2002; Ling, 2002). Indigenous people may eschew modernism altogether (Smith, 1999) since they are usually faced with having to fight to preserve the use of their language, the viability of their way of living, and their ownership of their traditional lands. They know that European imperialism is not over

and they critique modernism accordingly, sometimes in terms modernists use themselves and therefore understand best, and sometimes in terms that pertain to their own cultural context. This is Critical Theorizing too, since it calls into question the fundamental principles upon which contemporary world politics is based.

Modernist science has produced not only great global wealth but also great global inequalities in wealth. It has not been able to feed, clothe, and house the global poor, even though it would be technically possible to do so. Modernists think that if the poor were better rationalists and capitalists, this would not be a problem. If the poor had the requisite entrepreneurial skills, for example, they, like the rest of the global population, could partake of what industry provides. Those poor who are able to argue back may do so, in modernist terms using analytic languages such as liberalism or marxism. Others may criticize the modernist project itself, turning on the prioritization of reason to legitimate alternative narratives such as sacralist ones (O'Hara, 2006). This, too, is a fundamental form of Critical Theorizing.

Sacralism

Most radical of all, modernism posits anything spiritual as the singular "other" to its secular pursuits. In modernist terms, the religious way of knowing is anti-rationalistic. Modernism evolved as an antidote to revealed forms of truth and modernists see the knowledge that spiritual belief provides as being highly unreliable, since it is knowledge that is not amenable to scientific testing.

Sacralists see modernism in the context of what they see the whole mind as capable of knowing, however. They are well aware that religion is not science. They are also well aware that it is often hard to differentiate faith from fraud (Trungpa, 1973). However, by putting modernism in the larger context that sacralism provides and talking about what they do in the context of the faith they espouse, the honest religious are able to see modernism as having arisen in a particular sacral environment and as bearing many of the marks of its religious

origins. Sacralists are also able to highlight how modernist leaders use prayer to help them determine what to do.

In what context should we locate religion? For want of a better term, this might be called “the Beyond”. Wittgenstein said this context is one “we cannot speak about” and should therefore “pass over in silence” (Wittgenstein, 1961 [1921], p. 74). His injunction is supported by the way any attempt to talk about the experience of being “Beyond” misses the point. Since all religions are attempts to talk about “the Beyond”, we would do well to remain cautious of what they have to say. Religions continue to seek adherents regardless. For example, Christianity continues to seek converts around the world. It continues in the process to confront other faiths such as Islam. Inter-faith dialog mitigates some of the rivalry that ensues but the conflict between the two remains on-going. This conflict was seen until recently to have relatively little to do with world affairs but contemporary events have brought about a reassessment of the role religions play. Analyses of the politics in religion (such as the Protestant/Catholic conflict in Northern Ireland) or religion in politics (such as the conflict between modernists and Islamists in Pakistan) as well as analyses of what modernists might learn by listening to global religions (called here “religion and politics” and characterized by such unlikely pairings as Taoist strategics, Buddhist economics, Islamic civics, and the like) add weight to such a reassessment (Pettman, 2004).

All religions engender their own politico-cultural projects. For example, Christians were germane to the creation of the cultural discourse of modernism, a discourse that is currently being globalized. This has caused other sacral projects to respond. The hybrid result presents us with “multiple modernities” that are an important feature of modern-day world affairs (Eisenstadt, 2000). For example, the Buddhist concept of the not-self is very different from the Christian-derived sense of the self. This does not stop Buddhists being modernists. It does mean that Buddhists will interpret modernism in the light of their own beliefs and the result will be a creative combination of the two. Likewise for Taoists, Muslims, Jews, Sikhs, and Hindus.

Conclusion

The modernist account of world affairs is in practice a number of accounts. Each one articulates a different assumption about human nature and human-nurturing practices.

The modernist account of world affairs also includes self-criticisms of that approach. In addition, it includes criticisms of modernism by those who modernism marginalizes.

What accounts should be heeded the most? Is the propensity to be bad more important than the propensity to be calculating or good? Is the material construction of the immediate environment more important than the mental construction? Is it better to prefer a mixture of the latter two? Is the modernism that underpins all of the above better than non-modernism as a way to understand (and practice) world affairs?

There is no definitive answer to such questions as they all obtain. They all help describe and explain world affairs. As a consequence, there is no simple account of any particular current affairs event or world affairs issue and no simple answer to what a preferred policy should be.

This said, some answers are more pertinent than others at a particular point in time or in a particular place. Being both a liberalist and a marxist will always be problematic because a liberalist will see human nature as calculating while a marxist will see the material nature of human-nurturing practices as paramount. Entertaining both accounts at the same time means reconciling two very different assumptions about what causes world affairs even though both assumptions pertain to world affairs and an attempt to include both is arguably better than an account that ignores either one or the other.

At the moment, the most common assumption is that humans are a violent species. As a result, it is seen as reasonable to be pessimistic about human nature. However, from the above, it ought to be apparent that this is not what all humans are. This is why it is unreasonable to be only pessimistic. Humans are also non-violent and the historical record bears this out, too.

Indeed, there is no definitive scientific conclusion that says, as a species, humans are more bad than good. Until such a conclusion is available — i.e., one resulting from explicit hypotheses and repeated public attempts to falsify them — there are only assumptions and the contending analytic languages and dialects that articulate them.

Therefore, those who try to say that war is inevitable, and that the only realistic option is to prepare accordingly, are providing only part of the truth. What they say is true, but it is not the whole truth. It is a part-truth masquerading as the whole truth.

In terms of world affairs, the part truth that the realist promotes is that of a state-centered world. In addition, while the world is composed of autonomous, self-reliant states, there are other actors too, such as corporations, international organizations, cities, criminal networks, and diasporas.

In trying to depict world affairs as only or mainly a place of sovereign states, realists are acting as advocates and not as analysts. They may have managed to capture the label “realism” for their particular cause and this certainly is a significant ideological coup. However, it neither makes their cause uniquely realistic nor makes other perspectives less realistic. Each perspective represents a real assumption about human nature and nurturing practices. It is just not the same assumption.

Though analysts are committed to analytic consistency, this is not the case for policy practitioners. For example, consider a country deep in debt. Should its leaders try to trade their way out of trouble (economic liberalism)? Should they confront the predatory character of international capitalism (marxism)? Should they default or try to get their debt burden reduced (economic nationalism)? Should they appoint more women to the relevant decision-making positions (feminism), be less modernist (romanticism or phenomenology), seek out communal sources of wisdom (traditionalism), or meditate and pray (sacralism)? Analysts are likely to want them to choose one or the other of these approaches. However, wise state-makers are likely to choose them all. They will renegotiate their country’s interest repayments. They may even default. They will try to strengthen their country’s capacity to protect infant industries, control short-term investment flows, search for markets abroad, and seek to benefit from

female decision-making. They will initiate cycles of knowing that prompt them to stand back to look, stand close to listen, take part, and stand back to look again. This does not mean that they should throw away detachment. Rather, it means that they should seek to compensate for the shortcomings of detachment by employing other ways of knowing and being. These other ways have their own shortcomings, which will bid them return to modernism again to seek its clarity and comprehensiveness. Modernism blinds as well as illuminates, though, which will bring them back to the romantic, the phenomenological, the communal, or the sacral in cycles of knowing that make for a more nuanced account of world affairs and one better located in the larger scheme of things. Such cycles make it possible to appreciate not only what is being said about the subject but also what is not being said. And that, as any world leader knows, is a prize beyond price.