

---

---

# Dangerous Liaisons? Critical International Theory and Constructivism

RICHARD PRICE and CHRISTIAN REUS-SMIT  
*University of Minnesota and Monash University*

---

The 1990s have seen the emergence of a new 'constructivist' approach to international theory and analysis. This article is concerned with the relationship between constructivism and critical international theory, broadly defined. Contrary to the claims of several prominent critical theorists of the Third Debate, we argue that constructivism has its intellectual roots in critical social theory, and that the constructivist project of conceptual elaboration and empirical analysis need not violate the principal epistemological, methodological or normative tenets of critical international theory. Furthermore, we contend that constructivism can make a vital contribution to the development of critical international theory, offering crucial insights into the sociology of moral community in world politics. The advent of constructivism should thus be seen as a positive development, one that not only enables critical theorists to mount a more powerful challenge to the dominant rationalist theories, but one that also promises to advance critical international theory itself.

---

---

## *Introduction*

The 1990s have witnessed the emergence of a new 'constructivist' approach to international relations theory and analysis.<sup>1</sup> Rejecting the rationalist precepts of neorealism and neoliberalism, constructivists advance a sociological perspective on world politics, emphasizing the importance of normative as well as material structures, the role of identity in the constitution of interests and action, and the mutual constitution of agents and structures. They have honed these assumptions into an increasingly sophisticated set of theoretical propositions about international relations, demonstrated through a rapidly expanding body of empirical research.

---

This article is concerned with the relationship between constructivism and critical international theory, broadly defined.<sup>2</sup> The nature and extent of this relationship is the subject of considerable debate. On the one hand, leading constructivists explicitly identify themselves as critical theorists, and trace their intellectual roots to the Third Debate of the 1980s and to the canonical figures of critical social theory, notably Anthony Giddens, Jurgen Habermas and Michel Foucault, and to their predecessors such as Marx and Nietzsche. For these scholars, constructivism is part of a broad ‘family’ of critical international theories, a ‘family’ that includes postmodernists, neo-Marxists, feminists and others. On the other hand, this self-identification sits uncomfortably with how constructivism has been received by prominent critical theorists of the Third Debate. At times these scholars have responded hostilely, condemning what they see as constructivism’s masked rationalism and positivism (Campbell, 1996; George, 1994), and when not responding in this manner, they have treated constructivism with little more than benign neglect (Linklater, 1996b).

In the following pages we advance three principal arguments. First, we argue that constructivism has its roots in Third Debate critical theory, and that constructivists have consciously, and at times more implicitly, drawn on the conceptual, theoretical and methodological insights of earlier writers to fashion a new analytical and explanatory perspective on international relations. Though less preoccupied with metatheoretical issues and disciplinary critique as the core content of their scholarship than Third Debate theorists, constructivists work with ontological assumptions, conceptual frameworks and methodological approaches that originate in critical social theory. Second, we reject criticisms that constructivism violates key tenets of Third Debate critical theory, holding that such criticisms are either misplaced or overdrawn. We examine how constructivists have sought to engage the mainstream on issues of interpretation and evidence, generalizations, alternative explanations and variation and comparability, concluding that despite these moves constructivism remains compatible with critical international theory. Finally, we raise the stakes by contending that constructivism can make a vital contribution to the development of critical international theory, offering crucial insights into the sociology of moral community in world politics. The advent of constructivism should thus be seen as a positive development, one that not only enables critical theorists to mount a more powerful challenge to neorealism and neoliberalism, but one that promises to advance critical international theory itself.

The article is divided into four parts. We begin by revisiting critical international theory of the Third Debate, identifying its principal contentions and drawing out the differences between its modern and postmodern variants. Part Two examines the emergence of constructivism in the early

1990s. We argue that constructivists have drawn on ontological propositions, analytical strategies and methodological approaches contained within critical social theory but largely neglected in the heat of the Third Debate. In Part Three we confront and counter the criticisms of constructivism leveled by several Third Debate theorists, and in Part Four we elaborate the positive contributions of constructivism to critical approaches to world politics.

Overall, this article explores the relationship between the metatheoretical challenges issued during the Third Debate and recent constructivist scholarship. We ask whether such work lives up to these challenges, and whether the effort to move to a more empirically-based form of critical scholarship detracts from, or compromises, the critical project, as some critics would have it. Our aim here is not to attempt a comprehensive or categorical designation of which scholars shall be deemed critical or constructivist; we no doubt leave many out, while bracketing some of the differences between diverse scholars that we bring together for our particular purposes. Rather, our aim is simply to reflect upon how it is that scholars influenced by insights of the Third Debate have actually gone about the practice of telling us things about world politics.

### *Critical Theory of the Third Debate*

Critical international theory takes modern and postmodern forms. These forms are united by four common intellectual orientations. Epistemologically, critical theorists question positivist approaches to knowledge, criticizing attempts to formulate objective, empirically verifiable truth statements about the natural and social world. Methodologically, they reject the hegemony of a single scientific method, advocating a plurality of approaches to the generation of knowledge while highlighting the importance of interpretive strategies. Ontologically, they challenge rationalist conceptions of human nature and action, stressing instead the social construction of actors' identities, and the importance of identity in the constitution of interests and action. And normatively they condemn value neutral theorizing, denying its very possibility, and calling for the development of theories explicitly committed to the exposure and dissolution of structures of domination (George and Campbell, 1990; Hoffman, 1991; Lapid, 1989).

United by these general orientations, modern and postmodern critical theorists stand together in opposition to the dominant rationalist theories of neorealism and neoliberalism. Yet important differences separate the two critical perspectives. In reviewing several of the most important works in critical theory, Mark Hoffman (1991: 170) usefully distinguishes between

the 'critical interpretivism' of modern approaches and the 'radical interpretivism' of postmodern. Postmodernists reject all foundationalism, decrying post-Enlightenment efforts to establish Archimedean points from which to assess the validity of analytical and ethical knowledge claims, arguing that such attempts silence and marginalize alternative experiences and perspectives, in turn producing and reproducing relations of domination.<sup>3</sup> They shun the sovereign stance of judgment in favor of the dissident stance of unmasking (Ashley and Walker, 1990: 368). Modernist critical theorists shy away from such radicalism, adopting what Hoffman calls a posture of 'minimal foundationalism' (Hoffman, 1991: 170). While acknowledging the contingent nature of all knowledge, and recognizing the connection between morality and power, they nevertheless hold that some criteria are needed to distinguish plausible from implausible interpretations of social life, and minimal consensually-based ethical principles are required for meaningful emancipatory political action (Biersteker, 1989: 263–7; Linklater, 1990a: 207–26). Those of a more postmodern persuasion remain ever suspicious of the removal of power in the critical project, and vigilantly reject masked or not-so-masked universalisms as yet more versions of the totalizing project. George expresses this position by arguing that power operates in every site, and cannot be ultimately overcome by freeing up emancipatory potentials (read: Habermas). 'Power, instead, is integral to all discursive practices, to the way we think and act, to the way we are *defined* as thinkers and actors' (George, 1994: 157).

Despite these contentious debates, the gulf between modern and postmodern critical theory is not always as great as sometimes supposed. In part this is because postmodernists cannot avoid engaging in positive politics, though some give a justified impression of wrong-headed refusals to do anything of the sort. The gulf between a Foucauldian politics of 'resistance' and a politics of 'emancipation' seems subtle indeed (Linklater, 1990a: 290). It is also due in part to how those propounding discourse ethics defend procedural universalism. Linklater argues that the postmodern criticism that modernist critical theory is thereby committed to modes of thought that subsume difference within a totalizing entity is wrong. For Linklater (1990a: 292–3), reaching an agreement is not the same as a total consensus, but involves an understanding which captures the most important respect in which modernist critical theory, postmodernism, feminism and hermeneutics are involved in a common project.

Critical theory of the Third Debate had a distinctive metatheoretical or quasi-philosophical profile. There was a tendency for modern and postmodern critical theorists alike to focus on the epistemological, methodological and normative assumptions and implications of dominant rationalist theories. In comparison, little effort was made to apply the conceptual and

methodological apparatus of either modern or postmodern critical theory to the sustained empirical analysis of issues in world politics. To be sure, there were notable exceptions to this general tendency, with the work of Robert Cox (1987), James Der Derian (1987), Ann Tickner (1992), Stephen Gill (1988) and several contributors to the Der Derian and Shapiro volume (1989) deserving special mention. In essence, though, Third Debate critical theory was a metatheoretical project; its veracity lay in the critique of prevailing assumptions about legitimate knowledge, the nature of the social world and the purpose of theory, not in the substantive analysis of international relations. Critical theory of the Third Debate was inward looking, concerned primarily with undermining the foundations of dominant discourses of International Relations. In this respect, it served the valuable purpose of fracturing and destabilizing the rationalist/positivist hegemony, a necessary first step in establishing a new perspective on world politics.

Movement beyond metatheoretical critique was impeded, though, by the widespread assumption that a tight constitutive link existed between the discourse of international relations theory and the practice of post-1945 international relations. The hegemony of rationalist problem-solving theories was tied to the persistence of conflictual Cold War institutions and inequitable global economic structures. According to Richard Ashley (1986: 270), 'neorealist theory allies with, accords recognition to, and gives expression to those class and sectoral issues . . . that are actually or potentially congruent with state interests and legitimations'. Neorealism, as the dominant rationalist theory, was thus considered hegemonic not only in the sense that it structured international relations theory, but also in the sense that it structured the practice of international relations. As George (1994: 223) has reiterated recently, 'the positivist-realist image of the world "out there" has *become* reality, and the foundationalist approach to knowledge has become the *only* legitimate way of understanding global human society'. From this standpoint of theory as practice, exploring the dominant discourse of international relations theory is not considered a prelude to substantive analysis but the very essence of such analysis.

### *The 'Constructivist Turn'*

If the principal axis of debate during the 1980s lay between rationalists and early critical theorists, the major line of contestation now lies between rationalists and constructivists. For several leading critical theorists of the Third Debate this shift is lamentable, representing in their minds the renewed hegemony of rationalistic and positivistic approaches to international relations. Unfortunately, this interpretation obscures more than it

reveals, denying the very significant connections between Third Debate critical international theory and constructivism, and the potential for fruitful engagement between the two, not to mention their impact on positivism/behavioralism which we do not examine here. Acknowledging these connections leads to a very different interpretation of the shift in debate. The advent of constructivism, we suggest, is not only consistent with critical international theory, it promises a new phase in the development of that theory. As argued earlier, critical theory of the Third Debate focused on epistemological, methodological and normative critique, but neglected conceptual elaboration and sustained empirical analysis. Constructivists have taken up these neglected dimensions of the critical project, employing the ontological propositions, conceptual frameworks and methods of critical social theory to illuminate many aspects of world politics, particularly those pertaining to the parameters and dynamics of moral community.

### *Forces of Change*

In the last seven years, three mutually reinforcing factors have prompted the reorientation of critical international theory, producing the 'constructivist turn'. The first was the response by neoliberals and neorealists to the criticisms leveled by critical theorists. In one of his noted letters to the margins, Robert Keohane (1989: 174) admitted that many aspects of international relations defy narrowly focused rationalistic analysis, conceding that the 'reflectivist' stance of critical theorists promised significant insights into the intersubjective bases of international relations, particularly institutional construction. He went on to claim, though, that critical theorists 'have been more adept at pointing out what is omitted in rationalistic theory than in developing theories of their own with *a priori* content. Supporters of this research program', he argued, 'need to develop testable theories, and to be explicit about their scope', a view he later reiterated with Judith Goldstein (Goldstein and Keohane, 1993: 6).

Keohane's candid admission of the limitations of rationalism represented a potential opening for non-rationalist approaches, but Rob Walker (1989) in his emblematic reply noted that Keohane's version of what empirical research should look like amounted to an attempt to squeeze critical theory within the claustrophobic confines of the dominant Lakatosian model of theory construction. This response correctly argued that the testing of falsifiable theories was not the only model that empirical research could take, but the underlying sociological point was not so easily shaken — critical theorists had to move beyond critique to apply their conceptual and methodological precepts to interpreting aspects of world politics or become increasingly irrelevant. Keohane's challenge was thus an opening and a

critique, and one that has subsequently been taken up by constructivists. As this article demonstrates, the initial mainstream criticism that 'reflectivists don't do empirical research' cannot be maintained and indeed is no longer heard. Constructivism is, in large measure, a response to the sentiment that it was 'time to move beyond introductions and openings to concrete applications . . . a decisive demonstration of the plausibility of an alternative construction of some concrete issue or subject' (Biersteker, 1989: 266).

The second factor was the end of the Cold War. Though critical theorists had been making their case well before, international change proved a more effective catalyst of theoretical change than the dialectical interplay of competing theoretical perspectives. The relatively peaceful dissolution of the Soviet bloc, and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union itself, shook the foundations of international relations theory, with two specific implications for the development of critical theory. First, it undermined the explanatory hegemony of the dominant rationalist theories, particularly neorealism. Empowered by the failure of rationalists to predict, let alone comprehend, these revolutionary transformations, critical theorists went on the offensive.<sup>4</sup> According to Friedrich Kratochwil (1993), the end of the Cold War was a 'crucial test' of neorealism's capacity to explain international change, a test it failed. Not only did a substantial systemic change occur without any significant shift in the distribution of capabilities, that change resulted, in large measure, from transformations within domestic political systems. This shift opened space for critical theorists, as will be seen later, and also prompted a generation of scholars who took the constructivist turn due to a dissatisfaction with the fruits of their more conventional training in mainstream social science traditions of international relations (Katzenstein, 1996).

Ironically, the end of the Cold War also exposed the limitations of Third Debate critical theory, bringing us to the second implication. The constitutive link critical theorists had drawn between the dominant discourse of international relations theory and international practice was clearly not as tight as many had suggested. If neorealism was a hegemonic discourse, then the end of the Cold War demonstrated that its constitutive influence was not as totalizing as often suggested. Significant realms of political practice, even narrowly defined international practice, displayed a remarkable degree of autonomy from the discourse of power politics. Overall, the analytical space opened by the failure of the dominant rationalist theories to explain international changes, and the destabilization of the assumed simple connection between theory and practice, compelled many critically-inclined theorists of international relations to shift their focus from disciplinary critique to substantive analysis.

The third factor was generational change. For many young scholars, who had weaned their theoretical teeth on the insights of Third Debate critical international theory, the scope for innovative contributions lay less in the realm of metatheoretical critique than in conceptual elaboration, theoretical development and substantive empirical analysis. In part this was a response to the rationalist challenge laid down by Keohane and others, an unwillingness to concede the analytical high ground to the neoliberals and neorealists. This inclination was greatly encouraged, though, by the new openness of the discipline. With the end of the Cold War, greater scope existed for the formulation of new conceptual frameworks and theoretical perspectives. More importantly, perhaps, the changing nature of world politics threw up new and interesting questions — questions about traditional issues of security and political economy, and questions about new issues extending from the development of anti-racist norms to the rise and alleged demise of the system of sovereign states. A new generation of scholars has now emerged who are self-consciously informed by critical social theory and animated by a desire to revisit old questions and explore new ones (e.g. Bartelson, 1995; Deudney, 1995; Klotz, 1995a, 1995b; Litfin, 1994; Price, 1995, 1997; Reus-Smit, 1992, 1997; Thomson, 1994; Wendt, 1992, 1994; and Weber, 1995; to name but a few). For some constructivists the debt to critical social theory is less self-conscious and explicit, but this core group deliberately sought to reorient critical international theory toward conceptual development and sustained empirical analysis, and it is the implications of these scholars' efforts with which we are primarily, though not exclusively, concerned.

### *Constructivism*

This new generation of critical theorists have been labeled 'constructivists' because of their characteristic concern with the social construction of world politics. Whether modernist or postmodernist in orientation, constructivists have sought to elaborate and explore three core ontological propositions about social life and their impact on aspects of world politics.

The first of these propositions asserts the importance of normative or ideational structures as well as material structures (Adler, 1997). This is partly because constructivists hold that systems of meaning define how actors interpret their material environment. As Wendt (1995: 73) puts it, 'material resources only acquire meaning for human action through the structure of shared knowledge in which they are embedded'. Constructivists also stress the ideational because institutionalized meaning systems are thought to define the social identities of actors, and as we shall see later, social identities are said to constitute actors' interests and shape their actions.

‘All institutions have a *structural* dimension’, Wendt and Duvall (1989: 60) argue, ‘made up of one or more internal relations or *constitutive principles*, that generates socially empowered and interested state agents as a function of their respective occupancy of the positions defined by those principles.’

Their second ontological proposition, already anticipated earlier, asserts that identities constitute interests and actions. Neorealists and neoliberals consciously bracket questions of interest formation, treating preferences as exogenously determined givens that exist prior to social interaction. Constructivists, on the other hand, argue that understanding how interests are constituted is the key to explaining a wide range of international phenomena that rationalists have either misunderstood or ignored. For instance, according to Audie Klotz (1995a, 1995b) the development of international sanctions against the South African apartheid regime cannot be explained without reference to how the interests of leading states, particularly the United States, were redefined during the 1980s. To explain preference formation, constructivists focus on actors’ social identities. As Wendt (1992: 398) contends, ‘Identities are the basis of interests’. Wendt employs this insight to understand the practice of self-help under anarchy, Klotz uses it to explain the redefinition of American interests with regard to South Africa, and Koslowski and Kratochwil (1995) invoke it to illuminate the impact of Soviet new thinking on the end of the Cold War.

Their third ontological proposition claims that agents and structures are mutually constituted. As we have seen, constructivists stress the way in which normative, or ideational, structures ‘define the meaning and identity of the individual actor and the patterns of appropriate economic, political, and cultural activity engaged in by those individuals’ (Boli et al., 1989: 12). But in spite of the considerable constitutive power they attribute to such structures, constructivists insist that they do not exist independently of the knowledgeable practices of social agents. Following Anthony Giddens and other structurationists, they contend that social structures are nothing more than routinized discursive and physical practices that persist over an extended temporal and spatial domain. ‘It is through reciprocal interaction’, Wendt (1992: 406) argues, ‘that we create and instantiate the relatively enduring social structures in terms of which we define our identities and interests.’ While this has proven a difficult relationship to study (Checkel, 1998), constructivists lay claim to a richer understanding of state agency and a more dynamic conception of international systemic structures.

Like critical theory of the Third Debate, constructivism takes modernist and postmodernist forms. Yet, with the shift away from high epistemological, methodological and normative debate toward greater analytical engagement, the past metatheoretical differences between the two orientations appear to have been displaced. The principal difference between

modernist and postmodernist constructivism tends to be analytical, with the former concentrating on the sociolinguistic construction of subjects and objects in world politics, and the latter focusing on the relationship between power and knowledge. At this level the normative concern is largely a shared one of opening up space for alternatives rather than specifying those alternatives and thus replicating the potential conflicts between modernist and postmodernist traditions at the level of prescriptive theorizing. This is evident in their different approaches to the study of social norms in world politics. For example, the emphasis in critical theory on communicative rationality translates into studies such as Kratochwil's (1989: 15–16) analysis of how social conflicts become susceptible to non-violent and norm-guided solution through the emergence of a 'moral point of view' within a framework of communicative action. In contrast, studies more influenced by postmodernism focus on the connection between norms and power and question how we arrive at the kind of Habermasian speech situation in which norms operate as persuasive reasons, and investigate the power relations that forge such structures and are implicated in them.

Modernist constructivism has assumed two principal forms — 'systemic constructivism' and 'holistic constructivism'. The former accepts the neorealist penchant for systemic theory, while the latter adopts a more encompassing perspective that seeks to incorporate domestic and international phenomena. Wendt is the principal — and some would say the only — exponent of systemic constructivism, a fact that critics of constructivism often fail to appreciate. As we have seen, Wendt holds that the identity of the state informs its interests and in turn its actions. He distinguishes, however, between a state's corporate identity (its internal human, material and ideological characteristics) and its social identity ('the meaning an actor attributes to itself while taking the perspective of others') (1994: 385). Because of his commitment to systemic theory, Wendt brackets the corporate sources of state identity, focusing entirely on the constitutive role of international social interaction. This leads him to adopt a relatively narrow conception of the structuration process, simply contending that international institutional structures constitute states as legitimate international actors and state practices in turn reproduce such structures. This concentration on systemic processes is adequate so long as one is not seeking to explain fundamental changes in state identity and social structures. Without introducing non-systemic sources of state identity — such as domestic political culture — at some point in the structuration process, systemic constructivism offers an overly static conception of the state and the international system, providing no clue as to how agents or structures change.

Holistic constructivism, in contrast, is more concrete and historical, consciously shunning systemic theorizing. Concerned with the dynamics of international change, two of its leading proponents — Kratochwil and Ruggie — treat domestic and international structures and processes as two faces of a single, global social order. They then consider the mutually constitutive relationship between this order and the state. This does not mean that they deny the existence of domestic and international realms, instead they see this partitioning as a unique historical construct, the chief consequence and characteristic of a distinctly modern political order built around territorial sovereign states. This general perspective has spawned two distinctive, yet complementary, analyses of international change, one focusing on grand shifts between international systems, the other on recent changes within the modern system. The former is exemplified by Ruggie's (1986, 1993) work on the shift from the medieval system of rule to the modern, where the principle of sovereignty supplanted the old heteronomous mode of unit differentiation. The latter is typified by Kratochwil's (1993; Koslowski and Kratochwil, 1995) recent work on the more limited, if equally perplexing and contentious, question of why the Cold War stand-off between the superpowers came to such an abrupt conclusion, sparking, among other things, the collapse of the Soviet Union itself without a decline into hegemonic war. Both authors focus on how domestic and international social phenomena interact to determine the rules that structure international orders, employing this holistic constructivist perspective to explain both systems and systemic change.

While maintaining an interest in the sociolinguistic or discursive construction of subjects and objects in world politics, postmodern constructivists have concentrated on the sociohistorical conditions under which language, meaning and social power interact, 'in particular the *how* question concerning the sociolinguistic conditions of the construction of dominant knowledge forms and their disciplining and representation in contemporary life' (George, 1994: 156). This emphasis on how meanings arise and operate in different ways provides the questions and informs the methods of a variety of constructivist analyses of world politics, including Doty (1996a, 1996b), Litfin (1994), Price (1995, 1997), Thomson (1994) and Weber (1995). While some postmodernists would decry the very attempt to categorize postmodern works and assess their accomplishments (Ashley, 1996: 248), it is clear that a number of works have appeared that with ease and success have engaged in something that looks every bit like empirical work, with case studies on topics from environmental treaties to US intervention.

Observing the disappearance of mercenarism, privateering and mercantile companies, the puzzle for Janice Thomson (1994: 18–19) is how and why the boundaries between the domestic and international, the economic and

political, and the state and non-state realms of authority were redrawn such that non-state violence in the international system was eliminated – ‘What accounts for this fundamental change in the institution of sovereignty that occurred in the nineteenth century?’ Echoing the postmodern problematic, she asks (1994: 13) ‘How are these boundaries produced, reproduced, legitimated, contested, changed and naturalized?’ Continuing the concern with sovereignty, Cynthia Weber (1995: 3) asks ‘How is the meaning of sovereignty fixed or stabilized historically via practices of international relations theorists and practices of political intervention?’ To answer this question she (1995: 30) proposes ‘to trace historically the constitution and interpretation of community standards for legitimate intervention practices and their corresponding effects upon collective understandings of state sovereignty’. The list could go on, but such works exhibit a broad similarity in illuminating the social construction of objects (chemical weapons), subjects (state identity), events (Cold War), institutions (sovereignty) and so on, and investigating their implications for the theory and practice of international relations.

### *Constructivism as a Violation of the Critical Project*

Critically-minded scholars such as Campbell and George have been quick to impugn some constructivists for tell-tale signs of rationalist and positivist heresies. George (1994: 15) takes issue with ‘alternative’ scholarship that reinforces the discursive limitations of the orthodoxy, citing scholars such as Ruggie and Biersteker ‘whose perspective bristles with the tensions between their “open” liberal inclinations and the closure of their behavioralist training rituals’ due to a commitment to ‘a positivist ontology of real meaning’. Campbell (1996: 13) has similarly characterized Ruggie as ‘another instance in which a rationalist faith overcomes postmodern potential’. For Campbell, ‘the rationalist commitment is evident’ in Ruggie’s use of terms such as ‘pretheoretical’, ‘research agenda’ and ‘systematic questions’ to orient his quest for a new vocabulary for world politics.

We too have bristled at the connotations of calling our work ‘empirical research’, our findings ‘data’, our propositions ‘hypotheses’ and so on. But while this strategy of identifying traces of rationalistic and positivistic terminology in the writings of constructivists and using this to damn the entire constructivist project makes powerful polemic, it is a precarious strategy at best — either it can be turned easily against the critics themselves, or, denying that, then it is not clear what the critics can say about the improvements they offer. One could equally indict some critical theorists for parallel sins using the same technique of guilt by word association. For example, consider Campbell’s statement (1993: 3) that in his book on the

Gulf War he hopes to offer ‘evidence’ for his contentions. Or George’s contention (1994: 23) that critical work offers ‘more sophisticated, inclusive, and adequate reference points for understanding a complex world’, and opens up the opportunity for ‘a more comprehensive and insightful agenda by which questions might be answered and problems might be “solved”’. ‘Evidence.’ ‘Reference points.’ ‘Comprehensive.’ One could impugn that the use of these terms displays a tell-tale, if disguised, reliance on empiricism or correspondence theories of truth.

The fact is that any serious evaluation of constructivist scholarship, and its relationship to Third Debate critical theory, must look beyond the terminology employed to the underlying logic of analysis, for it is here that interesting and fruitful engagement between rival approaches can be undertaken. By embarking on the path of conceptual development and empirical analysis constructivists have indeed engaged mainstream international relations scholarship, sometimes offering answers to questions neglected by the discipline, sometimes presenting new answers to old questions, answers that upon close analysis are often much more measured and persuasively defended than some of the claims that leapt out of the metatheoretical fire. For some the very idea of such engagement violates the critical project (Ashley, 1996: 248), but as Ole Wæver (1996) argues, this extreme position is untenable, even on its own terms. To decry engagement is to call for closure, directly contradicting the critical ethos and spirit of discursive freedom and communicative dialogue. The real issue is not whether engagement is occurring, but whether in engaging with the mainstream constructivists have abandoned or transgressed certain principles of critical international theory.

In this section we examine how constructivists have sought to translate the metatheoretical insights of critical international theory into empirical claims and, as a consequence, engaged mainstream international relations scholarship. This translation and engagement has brought constructivists face to face with four key issues — the use of evidence and the limits of interpretation, the possibility and status of generalizations, the use of alternative explanations and the problems of variability and comparability. Because of the centrality of these issues to traditional social science, examining how constructivists have dealt with them provides insights into both the costs and benefits of engagement.

### *Evidence and the Limits of Interpretation*

One of the central departures of critical international theory from positivism is the view that we cannot escape the interpretive moment. As George (1994: 24) argues, ‘the world is always an interpreted “thing”, and it is

always interpreted in conditions of disagreement and conflict, to one degree or another'. For this reason, 'there can be no common body of observational or tested data that we can turn to for a neutral, objective knowledge of the world. There can be no ultimate knowledge, for example, that actually corresponds to reality per se.' This proposition has been endorsed wholeheartedly by constructivists, who are at pains to deny the possibility of making 'Big-T' Truth claims about the world and studiously avoid attributing such status to their findings. This having been said, after undertaking sustained empirical analyses of aspects of world politics constructivists do make 'small-t' truth claims about the subjects they have investigated. That is, they claim to have arrived at logical and empirically plausible interpretations of actions, events or processes, and they appeal to the weight of evidence to sustain such claims. While admitting that their claims are always contingent and partial interpretations of a complex world, Price (1995, 1997) claims that his genealogy provides the best account to date to make sense of anomalies surrounding the use of chemical weapons, and Reus-Smit (1997) claims that a culturalist perspective offers the best explanation of institutional differences between historical societies of states.

Do such claims contradict the interpretive ethos of critical international theory? For two reasons, we argue that they do not. First, the interpretive ethos of critical international theory is driven, in large measure, by a normative rejection of totalizing discourses, of general theoretical frameworks that privilege certain perspectives over others. One searches constructivist scholarship in vain, though, for such discourses. With the possible exception of Wendt's problematic flirtation with general systemic theory and professed commitment to 'science', constructivist research is at its best when and because it is question driven, with self-consciously contingent claims made specifically in relation to particular phenomena, at a particular time, based on particular evidence, and always open to alternative interpretations. Second, the rejection of totalizing discourses based on 'big-T' Truth claims does not foreclose the possibility, or even the inevitability, of making 'small-t' truth claims. In fact, we would argue that as soon as one observes and interacts in the world such claims are unavoidable, either as a person engaged in everyday life or as a scholar. As Nietzsche pointed out long ago, we cannot help putting forth truth claims about the world. The individual who does not cannot act, and the genuinely unhypocritical relativist who cannot struggles for something to say and write. In short, if constructivists are not advancing totalizing discourses, and if making 'small-t' truth claims is inevitable if one is to talk about how the world works, then it is no more likely that constructivism per se violates the interpretive ethos of critical international theory than does critical theory itself.

It is worth noting too that when the critics of constructivism undertake substantive analyses of world politics they cannot escape making ‘small-t’ truth claims. Take, for instance, Campbell’s studies of US foreign policy and the Gulf War. In the former (1992: 248), Campbell does not eschew making claims about ‘real’ events that happened in the world, and makes recourse to ‘evidence’ such as US Security Council documents, though he cloaks them in the garb of ‘texts’. In his work on the Gulf War (1993: 17), he sets out to ‘examine the political discourse of moral certitude that mobilized the coalition led by the United States and the extent to which prewar policies, the conduct of the war, and postwar legacies justify this figuration of the conflict’. Though he unconvincingly disavows it, Campbell (1993: 33, 44) refers to his ‘empirical facts’ of the case, as it were, to show that the Iraqi–Kuwait border was contingent and arbitrary, and considers factors that contextualize the invasion and that render predominant interpretations more ambiguous. His point is not to deny the existence of such events, policies and factors as real phenomena, of course, but just that they either get buried or highlighted depending upon the narrative that emerges. Indeed, Campbell (1993: 79) goes so far as to contend that his central proposition is showing how the issues painted in black and white terms were in *actuality* washed in shades of gray. Campbell’s interpretive stance is thus indistinguishable from that of most constructivists, and despite his own dismissal of constructivism it would seem entirely appropriate to classify his empirically-informed writings as constructivist. Constructivists do not deny that reference can be made to what we perceive in the world — this is what we loosely mean by ‘evidence’ — but they insist that these ‘facts’ do not arrange themselves in a single, self-evident explanation that is the only one objectively possible. Campbell employs this perspective to devastating effect. By rearranging the telling of events in an alternative narrative, he illuminates the political consequences that follow from the officially scripted version, and how the latter legitimizes and produces the conditions of its own acceptance and thus the justification and enactment of war itself.

### *On Generalizations*

Critical theorists have long decried the search for law-like generalizations about the nature of international politics, arguing that such quests privilege certain accounts of international life over others, reify social actors and institutions, and deny historical contingency and cultural particularity. Constructivists have followed Third Debate theorists in rejecting the possibility and desirability of formulating law-like generalizations that would justify a meaningfully positivist science of international politics. Yet they have not shied away from offering more contingent generalizations about aspects

of world politics. Drawing on their analyses of historical processes, cultural practices, intersubjective meanings and norm formulation they have proffered generalizations about the nature and dynamics of international change, institutional development and moral community. Learning from the transformation from medieval heteronomy to modern sovereignty, Ruggie (1993) suggests that future changes toward a postmodern international system are likely to be driven by changes in material environments, strategic behavior and, most importantly, social epistemology. Comparing the ancient Greek and the modern systems of states, Reus-Smit (1997) generalizes about the constitutional structures of international societies, arguing that different systems exhibit different ideals of the moral purpose of the state and procedural justice, leading to the development of different fundamental institutions. Studying the development of international anti-racist norms and their impact on the collapse of the apartheid regime in South Africa, Klotz (1995a: 151–64) draws conclusions about the effective application of economic and cultural sanctions in international politics. And after tracing the evolution of taboos against the use of chemical weapons and land mines, Price (1997: 174–6; 1998) offers several propositions about the conditions that affect the successful generation and robustness of international social norms.

The contingency of these generalizations is evident in three areas, which together differentiate constructivist claims from the law-like generalizations sought by positivists. First, when Ruggie singles out changes in material environments, strategic behavior and social epistemes as likely catalysts of change in the international system these forces are not identified as timeless determinants of human social and political life. In fact, for Ruggie they are nothing more than analytical categories, the content of which is necessarily historically and culturally contingent. He thus denies the possibility of developing a grand theory of international change, explicitly stating that understanding historical transformations ‘requires an epistemological posture that is quite different from the imperious claims of most current bodies of international relations theory’ (1993: 169). Second, when Reus-Smit (1997) generalizes about the constitutional structures of international societies his aim is not to obscure the cultural and historical particularities of those systems but to highlight them, crafting a narrative of historical discontinuity that is directly at odds with the conventional realist account of international history. Third, when constructivists draw general conclusions about norm formation, maintenance and change the factors they focus upon are not treated as context-free independent variables that may be transferred unproblematically to any and all situations to produce a necessary outcome. Constructivists do offer analytics that travel, but systematic conclusions at the level of abstraction and in the form of causal determinism demanded by

the most insistent proponents of the positivist legacy are not forthcoming from constructivism.

When understood in these terms, the generalizations made by constructivists differ markedly from those desired by positivists, and they turn out to be similar in kind to those advanced by prominent Third Debate critical theorists. It should be remembered that Foucault and other critical social theorists have not been averse to making generalizations. What is the contention that 'humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity . . .' but 'proceeds from domination to domination' (Foucault, 1984: 85) if not a generalization about repeated human phenomena that can be analyzed in more than one *sui generis* context? Claims of a similar nature appear in the writings of leading critical theorists. For instance, one can cite the common refrain, offered with mantra-like repetition by postmodern critical theorists, that human identities are multiple and fluid, not singular and fixed. What is this if not a generalization about the social-psychological nature of the human self, a generalization no less categorical or controversial than any other claim about the nature of human identity?

Our central point here is that rejecting the pursuit of law-like generalizations does not entail a simultaneous rejection of more contingent generalizations; in fact any serious attempt to understand domination and resistance and inclusion and exclusion in world politics, as well as the potential for meaningful transformations, may well demand such generalizations. The issue is not that we either have generalizations or we do not, but that we need to be conscious about the degrees of abstraction involved in our statements about politics and the degree to which our claims and stories travel from the unique and historically contingent to other contexts.

#### *Alternative Explanations and Interpretations*

In making generalizations about aspects of world politics constructivists have been forced to address the question of alternative explanations and interpretations. In most cases, their response has been one of deliberate and explicit engagement, although the precise nature of this engagement varies from one scholar to another. This strategy contrasts with the general reticence, and at times explicit refusal, of Third Debate critical theorists to cast their substantive claims about world politics in relation to alternative accounts. To weigh one explanation or interpretation against another is thought to imply that one or the other ultimately constitutes the single, true causal explanation of the empirical world, when in fact it is impossible to

establish an Archimedean point from which to judge alternative interpretations; any attempt to establish such a point merely empowers a particular social and political standpoint. Furthermore, pitting the interpretations of critical theorists against those of mainstream scholars is thought to reinforce the rationalist/positivist hegemony by treating conventional accounts as the touchstone of legitimate scholarship and forcing critical theory into the mainstream's preferred mode of causal analysis. By confronting alternative arguments and interpretations head on, therefore, constructivists purportedly risk violating the epistemological posture of much critical theory and abandoning the politics of resistance embraced by more 'committed' postmodern critical theorists.

In their empirical work, constructivists have applied complex and historically sensitive frameworks to concrete issue-areas of world politics. In doing so, many such works advance our understanding by specifying how their accounts relate to conventional explanations, whether they displace them, subsume or complement them, or address different questions altogether (Katzenstein, 1996: 37). The first strategy is exhibited in Risse-Kappen's (1997) work on NATO, and Price and Tannenwald's (1996; Price, 1995) delineation of the incompleteness, indeterminacy or error of alternative accounts of specific aspects of the nuclear and chemical weapons taboos. The second is evident in the work of constructivists who present their accounts as subsuming or complementing rationalist explanations by problematizing the key analytical constructs that other approaches take as given. Contributors to Peter Katzenstein's *The Culture of National Security* (1996), and other works such as those by Finnemore (1996), Klotz (1995a, 1995b), and the epistemic communities literature of Haas and Adler, all take the similar tack of historicizing and politicizing the 'interests' of states that are left exogenous to rationalist models. This version of explanatory complementarity invokes the critical move of showing that the world is more complex than overly simplistic theories suggest; more specifically, they demonstrate how the interests or preferences of states that are assumed to be exogenous, unproblematic, materially derived and/or objective in rationalist explanations are in fact socially constructed. In the third strategy, constructivists have not sought to subsume or contradict rationalist explanations, but have set out to answer different questions from those addressed by mainstream scholars. For instance, Weber (1995: 30, 31) does not claim to provide an alternative explanation of 'why' a particular intervention occurred, but instead provides answers to 'what' and 'how' questions of the construction of a discourse, a familiar formulation for the more postmodern inclined (see Doty, 1996a, 1996b). Likewise, Bartelson (1995: 4) does not set out to explain the nature of sovereignty, identifying its essential qualities in comparison with other definitional and analytical attempts. Rather, he asks

'*how* it has been spoken of and known throughout a period of time' and '*why* it seems so difficult to speak of and to know sovereignty today'.

From an uncompromising critical stance, all but the third of these moves are likely to be unsatisfying — the first because it asserts the superiority of one interpretation over others (by implying the very Archimedean point denied by critical theorists), the second because it cedes too much ground to rationalism (by accepting that politics is all about the pursuit of interests) or positivism (that the goal is causal explanations), and both because they engage in the impossible task of placing incommensurate epistemological and methodological standpoints in explanatory and interpretive dialogue.

Our response to the first of these criticisms echoes what we have already said about constructivist truth claims and generalizations. Whenever one makes such a claim or generalization, one declares implicitly or explicitly that it is more logical and empirically plausible than other claims or generalizations pertaining to the same research question. The great virtue of constructivist scholarship is that the authors' explanatory or interpretive claims are, in most cases, clearly articulated, and their purported superiority to alternative explanations or interpretations is argued and demonstrated, not merely implied.

One way constructivists have pursued this is to examine the ways that interpretive 'how' questions of possibility relate to more conventional 'why' questions of causal explanation (Price, 1994). For example, while the primary question animating Price's book is 'How is it that among the countless cruel technological innovations in weaponry of humankind, chemical weapons stand out as a weapon that has come to be stigmatized as morally illegitimate' (1997: 1), he shows how his answer to this question contributes to a compelling explanation for why chemical weapons were not used in World War II or the Gulf War, an explanation directly at odds with materialist accounts. In making such a move, constructivists make the causal significance (in the sense of having an effect) of discourses explicit rather than smuggling in an implied causal argument (that the discourse *qua* discourse mattered) relative to other phenomena. This contrasts with the practice of some Third Debate critical theorists. For instance, Der Derian's (1987) erudite genealogy of diplomacy does indeed provide an alternative telling of the story of diplomacy, but he does not establish in a compelling fashion why the usual story of diplomacy is such a problem that his account is indispensable. If there is a virtually infinite variation of stories that could be told, why should the reader be interested in his particular account over another? Furthermore, comparing rival or complementary accounts at strategic points provides a practical Socratic model of advancing knowledge by eliminating less plausible accounts. The benefits of engaging the question of alternative explanations include a greater self-consciousness about the

status of one's own claims (thus enhancing reflexivity), and the virtue of being pushed to articulate why it is that one's own account is interesting for scholarly inquiry (beyond idiosyncratic personal tastes) and important for world politics.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, attempts to engage the question of alternative explanations — even if the response primarily shows how a given interpretive/constructivist work strictly speaking does not offer an 'alternative' 'explanation' but an interpretation to a different and neglected question — make the appeal of constructivism all the more compelling. Nothing has done more to establish the importance of constructivism than its explicit demonstration of how the evolution and perpetuation of the dominant political institution of our time — state sovereignty — has taken place in ways that are not captured by existing perspectives (for a good overview see Biersteker and Weber, 1996).

With regard to the second criticism, we recognize that the division of labor approach between constructivism and rationalism threatens to give the latter an overwhelming home field advantage, but we argue that this strategy represents one of the trade-offs involved in exploring more explicitly questions of agency, variation and causal explanation. As noted earlier, several constructivists have argued that the constructivist and rationalist projects are compatible, with the former explicating the identities and interests of actors, the latter explaining the strategic pursuit of such interests. Klotz (1995a, 1995b) invokes the complementary model in arguing that interpretive approaches offer a set of prior, not alternative, theoretical assumptions that explain the conditions that make strategic models of behavior useful or inappropriate. This is similar to the stance assumed by Adler and Haas (1992: 369), who argue that in explaining policy coordination the epistemic communities approach provides the necessary prerequisites for rational choice theory. While segmenting the analytical project in this way has a certain elegance, and represents a refreshing attempt at bridge (not fence) building, it risks misrepresenting the social constitutive relationship between intersubjective beliefs, social identities, interests and behavior. As Reus-Smit (1997) demonstrates, intersubjective values not only shape state identity but also condition strategic and institutional rationality. Combining constructivist and rationalist modes of explanation in the manner suggested may thus involve grafting a socially-embedded account of identity construction and interest formation to a socially-denuded account of strategic behavior, a move that critics rightly characterize as 'thin' constructivism (Laffey and Weldes, 1997).

On the other hand, while attempts to integrate constructivist insights with other modes of explanation might be somewhat akin to tip-toeing through an academic minefield, so too are there problems with a constructivism that eschews any talk whatsoever of outcomes, causes, behaviors, agency and

choice as unduly complicit in the rationalist project. Sensitive to such concerns and sympathetic with criticisms of Foucault's treatment of agency, Litfin (1994: 119) attempts an admittedly 'precarious balancing act' in order to take agency seriously; her formulation, perhaps characteristically, ends with a rather subtle difference between her focus on the role of scientists in framing science as opposed to the epistemic communities literatures' allegedly overly rationalist focus on the promotion of policy (Litfin, 1994: 119). While scholars like Campbell treat questions of causal explanation as anathema to a strategy of interpretation, understanding why one discursive formation prevails can be an interesting and important question, one that requires some attention to notions of causality and variability in some form if one addresses it. Those that do not, such as Klein's work on strategic studies, are susceptible to criticisms that they fail to adequately spell out the constitutive effects of discursive formations (Dessler, 1995: 806). We are not suggesting that all work must attend to these issues, but rather that constructivist work that attempts to do so need not necessarily violate key tenets of critical theory.

Similarly, there is concern that treating ideational phenomena as answers to why questions rather than how questions means treating them as Humean causes rather than as constitutive, implicitly denying the efficacy of social beliefs (Laffey and Weldes, 1997: 14). The more such a move is made, however, the more it would leave constructivism with an unsatisfactory structural determinism that forecloses any room for constructivism to talk about agency and moral responsibility. In the end this is at odds with the critical project, as a chief implication of the idea that the world is socially constructed is an assumption of responsibility for how the world turns out. We are not arguing that constructivist accounts need take a particular form, nor that scholarship which does not attempt to meet other approaches and questions in more direct ways is not entirely justifiable on its own terms. We are arguing that one of the great strengths of constructivism is its integrative and bridge-building ability to pay attention to both structure and agency and thus avoid the pitfalls of an exclusive embrace of either a thoroughgoing holism or unrepentant individualism.

In response to the third criticism — that it is impossible to place incommensurate epistemological and methodological perspectives in explanatory and interpretive dialogue — we would emphasize the importance of question driven research and scholarly dialogue. An infinite array of interesting questions can be asked about world politics, both of a historical and contemporary nature. Sometimes constructivists and rationalists will seek to answer the same questions, and here the value of divergent epistemological and methodological standpoints can be argued in relation to the question at hand. At other times, scholars will ask different types of

questions, as evident in the preference of some postmodern constructivists for addressing ‘how’ questions over conventional ‘why’ questions. Once again, the merits of particular epistemological and methodological stand-points should be debated in relation to answering these different types of questions. Taking questions as our starting point prioritizes what really matters in our field — understanding aspects of world politics — and provides a reference point from which to debate the suitability, comparability and compatibility of different epistemological and methodological approaches. To argue otherwise is to condemn constructivism to the same mistake made by some proponents of quantitative methods for the social sciences who argue that we should not study what we cannot measure. Such a stance is a primary reason why the study of identities, norms and cultures was neglected in the discipline in the first place, and this kind of method-driven distortion of the discipline is not a mistake that should be replicated in reverse.

In sum, the sound and fury of metatheoretical debates at times would have us believe that alternative approaches on different sides of the various divides could not possibly make any valuable contributions to understanding world politics given their erroneous ontological, epistemological and methodological presumptions. Such denials are not tenable from those arguing from the Nietzschean perspectivism that informs much of critical theory; those in the critical tradition cannot insinuate that their work is to replace wholesale other traditions of inquiry and types of explanations insofar as that would merely substitute one totalizing discourse for another. All accounts of the world are partial, whether they be rationalist or constructivist, and the best that can be claimed on behalf of either is that they illuminate aspects of an event or phenomena that are required for an adequate understanding of the explanandum in question.

This conclusion has implications for how we understand and respond to the repeated call by critical theorists of the Third Debate for international relations scholarship to be more attentive to the historicity and ambiguity of a complex world (George, 1994; Campbell, 1996: 7–31). For instance, Walker (1989) criticizes the rationalist preoccupation with structure and space, arguing that we need a reflective/interpretive approach attuned to the vicissitudes of history, practice and time. This call was in part responsible for inspiring the new wave of constructivist scholarship, and was certainly influential on the authors’ own research. But unless these new approaches are placed in dialogue with structuralist perspectives, the result will be yet another form of closure. The call for ‘greater complexity’ is empty unless alternative frameworks are actually engaged — the world is indeed complex, but the degree of abstraction, simplification or descriptive detail in any given account depends upon what one is interested in. One may put no faith in the

ability of grand parsimonious structural theorizing to ever deliver the kind of ‘theory’ that it promises, as we do not, nor perhaps even find the questions that motivate such efforts particularly interesting. But maintaining that history must be privileged over structure is no more theoretically sustainable than the reverse, least of all from a postmodern position which removes the grounds for privileging any one perspective. It depends, simply, upon the questions that are posed.

### *On Variation and Comparability*

A final issue already foreshadowed earlier concerns the question of variability and comparison. Critical theory’s attack on positivism emphasized the difficulties in transferring to the human world the natural science statistical model of explanation, which assumes that enough independent variables can be held constant to isolate the ones responsible for variation in the dependent variable. Critical theory rejects the language of variability as a denial of historical and contextual specificity and the mutually constitutive nature of political phenomena. But in rejecting the statistical model of variation, the practice of empirical constructivism need not — nor cannot, we argue — entirely dispense with any notion of variation and comparability altogether as has often been implied in theoretical discussions. For example, despite her attacks on behavioralism, Weber (1995: 32–3) must assume a criterion of comparability for case selection (the cases to respond to modalities of punishment) to tie together her studies of intervention. Even though we agree with critical theorists that the isolation of independent and dependent variables to account for variability is quite improbable as a model of rigorous science for human life, the basic urge behind it, we submit, is understandable enough for certain purposes. If we are interested in preventing deaths from traffic accidents, we want to know what causes are preventable and which are not. Because we have limited resources, we want to know whether we are best to put our efforts towards mechanical redesign of cars, better weather forecasting, drunk-driving campaigns, improved ambulance service, fortune-telling, driver-training programs or rain dances. Similarly, with issues like war and famine, what among the plethora of conditions that make such tragedies possible and actual do we best direct our attention towards? It is for such laudable reasons that international relations theorists want to know not just what factors make possible a particular outcome (cooperation on the environment, avoidance of chemical warfare, intervention), but how much the factors analyzed by scholars mattered in actually producing the specific practice or event in question.

To be sure, the constitutive view of the political world embraced by constructivists rejects the notion of holding constant independent variables

from the context of their unique historical and cultural constructions and conjunctions. Nevertheless, constructivist analysis can be pushed to come up with ways to answer the hard and good question inevitably asked by traditional scholars — ‘show me your discourse matters and how much’. This problem arises because ‘one can almost always identify, post hoc, a norm to explain a given behavior’ (Kowert and Legro, 1996). In addition, critics are suspect of using discourses and cultural constructs to account for both stasis and change in and of themselves, and note that appeal is often made to exogenous factors such as ‘uncertainty’ or ‘shocks’.

Considering the counterfactual question here usefully pushes constructivists to consider and specify what it is that makes the possible into the actual, which clarifies the contributions and scope of constructivist analysis. For example, one might argue that what made the rise and entrenchment of norms prohibiting slavery possible was a normative change in a complex of intersubjective meanings regarding the status of human beings, influenced by Christian ideas focusing on the individual and Western concepts of human rights and the like. This may be so, but if one invokes such collective understandings as a cause of norms prohibiting slavery, then one can legitimately ask why these same structures did not result in the abolition of other inhumane practices such as foot-binding, female genital mutilation, torture and so forth.<sup>6</sup> If change is possible, then the move of many constructivists to make explicit the analysis of the counterfactual that is left implied by some varieties of discursive analysis can only further the critical project.

When different factors are viewed as mutually constitutive, attempting to measure causal weight as independent variables seems about as fruitful as trying to argue whether a kneecap, hamstring or lungs are more important for a runner competing in a marathon. Instead of wrestling with the quantitative connotations of ‘how much’ a norm or institution or ideational structure mattered, constructivist arguments have often taken the form of demonstrating that a given phenomenon was an indispensable/necessary condition for a particular set of practices or events, and placing focus on tracing the processes of *how it mattered*. This does not amount to a claim that the presence of such constructs must produce a particular outcome, but it does amount to ‘isolating an independent variable’ to a degree, in the sense that the assumption is made that in its absence things would have turned out differently. In the end all we may have are post facto explanations that scholars subject to scrutiny on the basis of plausibility and documentary evidence with an awareness of their prescriptive implications. One of the chief contributions of constructivism is providing just this sort of thoroughly-researched accounts that will challenge potential critics to engage in even more thorough analyses. And this is exactly what has

happened. In response to an initial wave of constructivist research, friendly critics more concerned with issues of comparative politics than critical theory have sought to push constructivism further on the issue of variation to better delineate issues such as why and when norms matter (Checkel, 1998; Legro, 1997).

The move by constructivists to clarify more precisely the constitutive impact of intersubjective meanings on the nature, empowerment and behavior of actors in world politics contributes to the critical project of problematizing the 'taken for granted' dimensions of the existing international order and understanding the dynamics of systems and systemic change, and also to the problem-solving projects of managing conflict and cooperation, preserving the global environment and protecting human rights. In the case of the former, Reus-Smit (1997) uses comparative history to draw out the salient factors that produce institutional variations across different societies of states, demonstrating the determining role played by intersubjective beliefs about legitimate statehood and rightful state action over material factors and abstract notions of institutional rationality. With regard to systemic change, Herman (1996), Koslowski and Kratochwil (1995), Risse-Kappen (1995) and others have shown how changing ideas and non-state actors played decisive roles in the end of the Cold War, specifically addressing the relative unimportance of those 'variables' emphasized by neorealists and neoliberals. On the question of problem-solving, constructivists, like critical theorists, have made various contributions. As we have seen, Adler (1992), Klotz (1995a, 1995b), Price (1995, 1997), Litfin (1994) and others have taught us much about the control of weapons of mass-destruction, combatting global racism and environmental protection. Through theory as practice, therefore, constructivists are profoundly engaged as agents of change.

### *Constructivism and the Further Development of Critical International Theory*

The preceding sections have advanced two principal arguments — that constructivism is rightly seen as an outgrowth of Third Debate critical theory, and that despite the move by constructivists to engage the mainstream through empirically-informed analyses of world politics, constructivism need not be inconsistent with the development of a broadly defined critical theory of international relations. In seeking to understand a wide range of aspects of world politics, constructivists have built on ontological assumptions and drawn on conceptual frames and methodological techniques that have their origins in critical social theory. But the movement from intra-disciplinary critique to substantive analysis has forced

them to engage the mainstream, which has in turn made them more conscious of issues concerning evidence, generalizations, alternative arguments and variation and comparability. Contrary to the claims of several Third Debate stalwarts, this engagement need not render constructivism positivistic or rationalistic, in fact it has enhanced constructivist scholarship, while at the same time increasing intra-disciplinary dialogue. In this final section we raise the stakes by asserting the positive contribution that constructivism can make to critical international theory, a contribution that centers on constructivist insights into the sociology of moral community.

In a series of programmatic articles, Linklater (1990b, 1992) has outlined a vision of how critical international theory should evolve and shape the wider discipline of international relations. It is a vision entirely lacking in paradigmatic triumphalism. Unlike Hoffman (1987), Linklater rejects the notion of critical international theory displacing other theories as the new dominant paradigm. Instead, he argues that critical international theory can provide an orienting framework for the discipline, a series of mutually interconnected questions that can 'map out a new way forward for the theory of international relations' (1992: 79). These questions concern the politics of inclusion and exclusion, questions that Linklater rightly contends have been central to the study of international relations from the outset, questions that go to the very heart of the sovereign state and the system of states. By clearly articulating these questions, and by providing a normative defense of their centrality, critical theory 'can clarify the nature of the common scholarly enterprise to which different perspectives are related by setting out the particular strengths of different approaches and by showing how they can be drawn more closely together' (1992: 79). The great merit of this vision is the way that it combines intellectual coherence with theoretical diversity and scholarly dialogue. Critical theory, Linklater argues, ought to provide the core questions that animate the discipline, but the relationship between this 'critical-theoretical framework' of inquiry and particular theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches should be open and mutually-adaptive (1992: 97–8).

Linklater identifies three principal questions to guide the further development of international relations theory. Each of these questions concerns an aspect of the politics of inclusion and exclusion. The first is the normative question of the state, a question that concerns the philosophical justifications that have defined the sovereign state as a territorially defined system of inclusion and exclusion, a system that grants some individuals all the rights and benefits of membership while denying these to others (1992: 92–3). It also concerns the formulation of new justifications that might warrant alternative, less exclusionary systems of rule. The second is the sociological question of community. The point here is 'to ascertain whether political

community is likely to expand or to contract, remain bound up with the sovereign state or change so that sub-national and transnational loyalties acquire greater importance' (1992: 94). The third is the praxeological question of reform. Global change will be the product of changing human practices, but to the extent that traditional theories have anything to recommend about human practices, they are concerned largely with strategic practices, with the art of surviving and managing in the established international order. Critical theory broadens the praxeological question to consider the opportunities and constraints bearing on emancipatory political action, on action geared toward changing the existing order to realize greater human freedom and well-being. Together, these questions are designed to infuse international theory with a new critical ethos and purpose, while simultaneously broadening the purview of the discipline to explore the normative and sociological foundations of the international system we have so long taken for granted.

Six years after the publication of Linklater's vision, the discipline has indeed moved in the direction he envisaged. The study of the justificatory foundations of the sovereign state and the modern international system has now moved center stage, and analyses of changing patterns of moral community abound. Curiously, though, leading critical theorists of the Third Debate have contributed little to this change. The work of Cox (1986, 1987), Der Derian (1987) and Tickner (1992) certainly presaged much of what was to come, and Campbell's (1992, 1993) empirical work has made a valuable contribution, yet many of those at the vanguard of the Third Debate have seemed content to simply reiterate their long-standing epistemological and methodological critiques of the discipline. To be sure, Linklater has taken important steps toward formulating a normative defense of a post-sovereign, non-territorial form of moral community (1998). Yet his excursions into the sociology of moral community are thin indeed. Take, for instance, his analysis of citizenship and post-Westphalian state (1996a), an analysis that plots the evolution of modern norms of citizenship and sovereignty through reference to the writings of canonical political theorists alone, and that identifies patterns of extended moral community in contemporary European integration without acknowledging other, more skeptical accounts of European change that emphasize the rigidities of state sovereignty and the exclusivities of recidivist nationalisms.

Without intending to draw overly stark lines between the two, in general it has been constructivists who have proceeded from where critical theorists left off and pushed the analysis of the normative foundations of the sovereign international order and the sociology of moral community to the forefront of the discipline, and in doing so their work promises to make a valuable contribution to the development of critical international theory. In

differing ways, Barkin and Cronin (1994), Bartelson (1995), Biersteker and Weber (1996), Hall (1997), Jackson (1990), Reus-Smit (1997), Ruggie (1986, 1993) Thomson (1994), Weber (1995) and Wendt (1994) have done much to illuminate the shifting justificatory bases of sovereignty, not only in the modern international system but also in its historical precursors. This work is but part of the larger constructivist exploration of the sociology of moral community, particularly the politics of inclusion and exclusion in the modern world. At the heart of this project lies the question of legitimate social and political agency and action, for inclusion and exclusion are ultimately about who, in a given social domain, is recognized as a legitimate actor and how such actors are entitled to behave. To be denied recognition as a rightful participant in social and political life is to be excluded from moral community; to be recognized as a legitimate actor, but to have one's realm of legitimate action circumscribed when others are not subject to the same constraints is to occupy the precarious frontiers between inclusion and exclusion; to be recognized as a rightful member of society, enjoying all of the rights and benefits pertaining to that status, is the mark of true inclusion, and the nature and extent of those rights and benefits reveal the depth, breadth and texture of one's moral community.

Constructivist studies of legitimate agency in the modern world fall into two groups. The first is concerned with state-based agency. Since constructivists generally define the state as an administrative and institutional structure, not an actor, they explore how intersubjective meanings, operating at the levels of domestic and international society, license and define sovereign, territorial political units, and how the definition of such units constitutes and empowers certain political actors, particularly governments. Notable here is Jackson's (1990) work on the relationship between the institution of juridical sovereignty and the persistence of empirically weak Third World states; Barkin and Cronin's (1994) work on how the differing conceptions of 'state sovereignty' and 'national sovereignty' have produced radically different sorts of postwar international settlements, licensing different state formations; and Wendt and Barnett's (1993) work on international ideals of legitimate statehood and homogeneous patterns of Third World militarism. The second group of studies concentrates on non-state agency, although in doing so they often illuminate dimensions of state-based agency as well. Again the emphasis is placed on how international norms empower particular types of actors, this time non-state actors. Once empowered, these actors often work to redefine the norms of the international system, altering the terms of legitimate statehood and shaping state practices, both domestic and international. Examples include Keck and Sikkink's (1998; Sikkink, 1993) studies of the impact of transnational 'principled issue-networks' on the development and implementation of

international human rights norms, Finnemore's work on the role that international organizations play in the socialization of state interests and behavior (1996) and Price's (1998) analysis of transnational civil society's role in banning land-mines.

Recognition as a legitimate social and political agent is a necessary prerequisite for inclusion within a moral community, but the norms of that community determine the nature and extent of legitimate social and political action. Recognition never licenses absolute freedom of action; citizens are expected to act within the realm of legitimate action prescribed by domestic social and political norms, and sovereign states are expected to act within the realm prescribed by international society. As globalization proceeds, these realms of legitimate action are becoming increasingly blurred, with implications for state-based and non-state agency. Constructivist research has done much to explain how social and political norms emerge, both domestically and internationally, and how these norms affect the actions of governments and individuals. From human rights and the use of violence to the relationship between humans and nature, constructivist research has greatly illuminated the normative structures that define modern international society and which shape the actions of both individuals and states.

If critical theorists are right that our theoretical and empirical inquiries should seek not just to understand the world but to change it, then questions of practice inevitably come to the fore, questions concerning the potential within contemporary structures and processes for meaningful reform. This is the logic behind Linklater's third set of questions. But as Cox (1986) points out in his seminal article, resolving the issue of practice necessarily requires a mutually-constitutive dialogue between the type of normative inquiry exemplified by Linklater's work and the systematic analysis of the prevailing international order, to which constructivism has much to offer. Only by placing our normative contemplations in dialogue with our empirically-informed accounts of the limits of possibility can we arrive at practices that will lead to more inclusive, less violent patterns of communal identification and interaction. It is thus unfortunate that there has been little in the way of such dialogue. Instead of seeking engagement, Third Debate critical theorists have either condemned constructivism out of hand or simply ignored it. To the extent that such responses stem from the belief that constructivism is rationalistic or positivistic, we have tried to show that such concerns are misplaced, to say the least.

It is possible that the more benign neglect of Linklater and others derives from a concern about the normative orientation of constructivist theory, something that constructivists seldom discuss at any length. But here too concern — if translated into dismissal or disengagement — threatens to deprive the critical project of a crucial tool. As argued by Cox, the normative

orientation of rationalist theories — their commitment to the status quo — is bounded by their underlying ontological assumptions (which reify agents and structures) and their epistemological and methodological posture (which privileges certain forms of knowledge and modes of inquiry over others). As we have seen, constructivism is based on radically different ontological and epistemological foundations, and as such it opens space for questions — and the methods that follow — that are foreclosed by positivism and rationalism. Constructivism problematizes both agents and structures, it explores the dynamics of change as well as the rhythms of stasis, it calls into question established understandings of world politics, it is analytically open not closed. For these reasons, it is necessarily ‘critical’ in the sense meant by Habermas and Cox. As a social theory, constructivism contains no philosophy of the good life or the ideal political order per se (Adler, 1997, 323; Finnemore, 1996, 27–8), but its underlying ontological and epistemological assumptions are normatively predisposed to questions of change (particularly questions of moral inclusion and exclusion), just as contrasting assumptions ethically bound rationalist theories within certain limits. As an empirical strategy attentive to the historicity and contingency of political life, the conclusions of constructivism are not preordained — the uncovering of additional sources of politics such as identity and culture uninvestigated by rationalism does not mean the effects of such phenomena are always progressive, as the people of former Yugoslavia can attest. Nor does it mean that the analysis need conclude that all such sources of politics are necessarily less intractable to change (see Johnston, 1995; Wendt, forthcoming), as implied for instance by a pessimistic reading of post-modernism’s emphasis on the necessity of difference/other for self. But the point is that without such a key all we are left with to open doors of possibility are bulldozers and blueprints. There is no reason, in short, why critical theory and constructivism cannot be brought into fruitful and productive dialogue, and there is much to be gained from such engagement. One could even argue that dialogue between those focusing on the normative and sociological aspects of communal inclusion and exclusion is essential before any progress can be made on the praxeological front.

### *Conclusion*

There are many constructivists, and thus perhaps many constructivisms. Our concern here has not been so much with the purity of categorizing a diverse array of scholars past and present, but to assess whether the empirically oriented scholarship of contemporary constructivists versed in Third Debate critical theory need violate key tenets of the critical project. We argue that it need not, and indeed that constructivist scholarship can help to realize the

promises of critical theory. The rise of constructivism is often portrayed as a ‘turn’, and this is certainly the case for those who have embraced constructivism out of a dissatisfaction with their backgrounds in behavioralist traditions. But for the many constructivists self-consciously inspired by the promise of critical international theory, systematic empirical work involved not a turn but a logical continuation of Third Debate critical theory. This work has been of singular importance, clearly establishing, in a systematic and rigorous fashion, the value of cultural and discursive analysis in world politics. The initial charge that ‘reflectivists’ don’t do empirical work has gone by the wayside, and the charge that norms or discourses simply don’t matter is now made by only a small (if vocal) minority. The mainstream now often consists of engaged, interested and potentially friendly critics, who admonish constructivists for not being adequately attentive to their traditional concerns of variability, comparison and middle-range theory. Answering such challenges can only lead to the further strengthening of constructivist scholarship, and in turn to the enhanced development of critical international theory. All of this will inevitably produce tensions in the varieties of elaborations of the constructivist program and in responses to it — all the better for the discipline.

#### *Notes*

1. The authors wish to thank the following people for discussions on issues presented in this article and/or their helpful comments on previous drafts — Robyn Eckersley, Amy Gurowitz, Peter Katzenstein, Mark Laffey, Marc Lynch, Heather Rae, Richard Shapcott, Kathryn Sikkink, seminar participants at the Australian National University, Cornell University, Monash University, and the University of Minnesota, and the anonymous referees of the *European Journal of International Relations*.
2. We use the term ‘critical international theory’ in reference to the broad spectrum of ‘post-positivist’ and ‘post-rationalist’ works on international relations that first emerged to challenge the dominance of neorealism and neoliberalism during the ‘Third Debate’ of the 1980s. This spectrum encompasses the work of post-Marxist scholars influenced by the Frankfurt School and as well as that of postmodernists.
3. Our use of the general categories of ‘modern’ and ‘postmodern’ is a heuristic device and is not meant to suggest that there are clean lines separating these two general groupings, nor that these two camps are homogeneous within.
4. We are not arguing that our primary criterion for successful theorizing is prediction; we simply note that rationalist approaches did not even meet their *own* criterion of prediction that justifies the rationalist enterprise, and are thus suspect even on their own internal grounds.
5. Though to the extent that the baseline alternative explanations are always rationalist ones, and it is mostly constructivists engaged in such comparisons, then

reflexivity might be mostly one way as Mark Neufeld (1993: 53–76) suggests in arguing that the mainstream has not become more reflexive as a result of the Third Debate.

6. We thank Kathryn Sikkink for this example, and Sikkink and Jeff Legro for underlining the theoretical significance of such variation.

### *References*

- Adler, Emanuel (1992) 'The Emergence of Cooperation: National Epistemic Communities and the International Evolution of the Idea of Nuclear Arms Control', *International Organization* 46(1): 101–45.
- Adler, Emanuel (1997) 'Seizing the Middle Ground; Constructivism in World Politics', *European Journal of International Relations* 3(3): 319–63.
- Adler, Emanuel and Peter M. Haas (1992) 'Conclusion: Epistemic Communities, World Order, and the Creation of a Reflective Research Program', *International Organization* 46(1): 367–90.
- Ashley, Richard (1986) 'The Poverty of Neorealism', in Robert O. Keohane (ed.) *Neorealism and Its Critics*, pp. 255–300. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ashley, Richard (1996) 'The Achievements of Post-Structuralism', in Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (eds) *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, pp. 240–53. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ashley, Richard and R.B.J. Walker (1990) 'Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies', *International Studies Quarterly* 34(3): 367–416.
- Barkin, J. Samuel and Bruce Cronin (1994) 'The State and the Nation: Changing Norms and the Rules of Sovereignty in International Relations', *International Organization* 48(1): 107–30.
- Bartelson, Jens (1995) *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Biersteker, T.J. (1989) 'Critical Reflections on Post-Positivism in International Relations', *International Studies Quarterly* 33(3): 263–7.
- Biersteker, T.J. and Cynthia Weber (eds) (1996) *State Sovereignty as Social Construct*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Boli, John, John Meyer and George Thomas (1989) 'Ontology and Rationalization in the Western Cultural Account', in George Thomas et al. (eds) *Institutional Structure: Constituting State, Society, and the Individual*, pp. 10–25. London: Sage.
- Campbell, David (1992) *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Campbell, David (1993) *Politics Without Principle: Sovereignty, Ethics, and the Narratives of the Gulf War*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- Campbell, David (1996) 'Political Prosaics, Transversal Politics, and the Anarchical World', in Michael J. Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker (eds) *Challenging Boundaries: Global Flows, Territorial Identities*, pp. 7–32. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Checkel, Jeffrey (1997) 'International Norms and Domestic Politics: Bridging the

- Rationalist–Constructivist Divide’, *European Journal of International Relations* 3(4): 473–95.
- Checkel, Jeffrey (1998) ‘The Constructivist Turn in International Relations Theory’, *World Politics* 50(1): 324–48.
- Cox, Robert W. (1986) ‘Social Forces, States and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory’, in Robert O. Keohane (ed.) *Neorealism and Its Critics*, pp. 204–54. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Cox, Robert W. (1987) *Production, Power and World Order: Social Forces in the Making of History*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Der Derian, James (1987) *On Diplomacy*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Der Derian, James and Michael Shapiro (eds) (1989) *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*. Lexington: Lexington Books.
- Dessler, David (1995) Book review of Bradley Klein, *Strategic Studies and World Order*, *American Political Science Review* 89(3): 805–6.
- Deudney, Daniel (1995) ‘The Philadelphian System: Sovereignty, Arms Control, and Balance of Power in the American States-Union, Circa 1787–1861’, *International Organization* 49(2): 191–228.
- Doty, Roxanne Lynn (1996a) ‘Immigration and National Identity: Constructing the Nation’, *Review of International Studies* 22(3): 235–56.
- Doty, Roxanne Lynn (1996b) *Imperial Encounters*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Finnemore, Martha (1996) *National Interests in International Society*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Foucault, Michel (1984) ‘Nietzsche, Genealogy, History’, in Paul Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*, pp. 76–100. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.
- George, Jim (1994) *Discourses of Global Politics: A Critical (Re)Introduction to International Relations*. Boulder: Lynne Rienner.
- George, Jim and David Campbell (1990) ‘Patterns of Dissent and the Celebration of Difference: Critical Social Theory and International Relations’, *International Studies Quarterly* 34(3): 269–94.
- Gill, Stephen (1988) *The Global Economy: Perspectives, Problems, and Policies*. New York: Harvester.
- Goldstein, Judith and Robert O. Keohane (eds) (1993) *Ideas and Foreign Policy*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Hall, Rodney Bruce (1997) ‘Moral Authority as a Power Resource’, *International Organization* 51(4): 591–622.
- Herman, Robert G. (1996) ‘Identity, Norms, and National Security: The Soviet Foreign Policy Revolution and the End of the Cold War’, in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, pp. 271–317. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Hoffman, Mark (1987) ‘Critical Theory and the Inter-Paradigm Debate’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 16(3): 231–49.
- Hoffman, Mark (1991) ‘Restructuring, Reconstruction, Reinscription, Rearticulation: Four Voices in Critical International Theory’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 20(2): 169–85.

- Jackson, Robert H. (1990) *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Johnston, Alastair Iain (1995) *Cultural Realism: Strategic Culture and Grand Strategy in Chinese History*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Katzenstein, Peter J. (ed.) (1996) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Keck, Margaret and Kathryn Sikkink (1998) *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Keohane, Robert O. (1989) *International Institutions and State Power*. Boulder: Westview Press.
- Klotz, Audie (1995a) *Norms in International Relations*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Klotz, Audie (1995b) 'Norms Reconstituting Interests: Global Racial Equality and US Sanctions Against South Africa', *International Organization* 49(3): 451–78.
- Koslowski, Rey and Friedrich Kratochwil (1995) 'Understanding Change in International Politics: The Soviet Empire's Demise and the International System', in Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen (eds) *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War*, pp. 127–66. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kowert, Paul and Jeffrey Legro (1996) 'Norms, Identity, and Their Limits: A Theoretical Reprise', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, pp. 451–97. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Kratochwil, Friedrich (1989) *Norms, Rules, and Decisions: On the Conditions of Practical and Legal Reasoning in International Relations and Domestic Affairs*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kratochwil, Friedrich (1993) 'The Embarrassment of Changes: Neo-realism as the Science of *Realpolitik* Without Politics', *Review of International Studies* 19(1): 63–80.
- Laffey, Mark and Jutta Weldes (1997) 'Beyond Belief: Ideas and Symbolic Technologies in the Study of International Relations', *European Journal of International Relations* 3(2): 193–237.
- Lapid, Yosef (1989) 'The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era', *International Studies Quarterly* 33(3): 235–54.
- Legro, Jeffrey (1997) 'Which Norms Matter? Revisiting the "Failure" of Internationalism', *International Organization* 51(1): 31–63.
- Linklater, Andrew (1990a) *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations*, 2nd edn. London: Macmillan.
- Linklater, Andrew (1990b) 'The Problem of Community in International Relations', *Alternatives* 15(2): 135–54.
- Linklater, Andrew (1992) 'The Question of the Next Stage in International Relations Theory: A Critical Theoretical Point of View', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 21(1): 77–98.
- Linklater, Andrew (1996a) 'Citizenship and Sovereignty in the Post-Westphalian State', *European Journal of International Relations* 2(1): 77–104.

- Linklater, Andrew (1996b) 'The Achievements of Critical Theory', in Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (eds) *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, pp. 279–300. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Linklater, Andrew (1998) *The Transformation of Political Community: Ethical Foundations of the Post-Westphalian Era*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Litfin, Karen (1994) *Ozone Discourses*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Neufeld, Mark (1993) 'Reflexivity and International Relations Theory', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 22(1): 53–76.
- Price, Richard (1994) 'Interpretation and Disciplinary Orthodoxy in International Relations', *Review of International Studies* 20: 201–4.
- Price, Richard (1995) 'A Genealogy of the Chemical Weapons Taboo', *International Organization* 49(1): 73–104.
- Price, Richard (1997) *The Chemical Weapons Taboo*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Price, Richard (1998) 'Reversing the Gun Sights: Transnational Civil Society Targets Land Mines', *International Organization* 52(3).
- Price, Richard and Nina Tannenwald (1996) 'Norms and Deterrence: The Nuclear and Chemical Weapons Taboos', in Peter J. Katzenstein (ed.) *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics*, pp. 114–53. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Reus-Smit, Christian (1992) 'Realist and Resistance Utopias: Community, Security and Political Action in the New Europe', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 21(1): 1–28.
- Reus-Smit, Christian (1997) 'The Constitutional Structure of International Society and the Nature of Fundamental Institutions', *International Organization* 51(4): 555–89.
- Risse-Kappen, Thomas (1995) 'Ideas do not Float Freely: Transnational Coalitions, Domestic Structures, and the End of the Cold War', in Richard Ned Lebow and Thomas Risse-Kappen (eds) *International Relations Theory and the End of the Cold War*, pp. 187–222. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Risse-Kappen, Thomas (1997) 'Between a New World Order and None: Explaining the Reemergence of the United Nations in World Politics', in Keith Krause and Michael Williams (eds) *Critical Security Studies*, pp. 255–97. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Ruggie, John Gerard (1986) 'Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity: Toward a Neorealist Synthesis', in Robert O. Keohane (ed.) *Neorealism and Its Critics*, pp. 131–57. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Ruggie, John Gerard (1993) 'Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations', *International Organization* 47(1): 139–74.
- Sikkink, Kathryn (1993) 'Human Rights, Principled Issue-Networks, and Sovereignty in Latin America', *International Organization* 47(3): 411–42.
- Thomson, Janice (1994) *Mercenaries, Pirates, and Sovereigns*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Tickner, J. Ann (1992) *Gender in International Relations*. New York: Columbia University Press.

- Wæver, Ole (1996) 'The Rise and Fall of the Inter-Paradigm Debate', in Steve Smith, Ken Booth and Marysia Zalewski (eds) *International Theory: Positivism and Beyond*, pp. 149–85. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walker, R.B.J. (1989) 'History and Structure in the Theory of International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 18(2): 163–83.
- Weber, Cynthia (1995) *Simulating Sovereignty: Intervention, the State, and Symbolic Exchange*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wendt, Alexander (1992) 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization* 46(2): 391–426.
- Wendt, Alexander (1994) 'Collective Identity Formation and the International State', *American Political Science Review* 88(2): 384–95.
- Wendt, Alexander (1995) 'Constructing International Politics', *International Security* 20(1): 71–81.
- Wendt, Alexander (forthcoming) *Social Theory of International Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wendt, Alexander and Michael Barnett (1993) 'Dependent State Formation and Third World Militarism', *Review of International Studies* 19(4): 321–48.
- Wendt, Alexander and Raymond Duvall (1989) 'Institutions and International Order', in Ernst–Otto Czempiel and James N. Rosenau (eds) *Global Changes and Theoretical Challenges: Approaches to World Politics for the 1990s*, pp. 51–74. Lexington: Lexington Books.