

# POSTCOLONIAL COSMOPOLITANISM

*Between home and the world*

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## **Abstract**

The thesis aims to address criticisms of cosmopolitanism that characterise it as an elite discourse, by exploring the role that it might play in Third World resistance movements. In doing so, it complicates the landscape of international normative theory, which has traditionally been mapped as a debate between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism.

Part I of the thesis argues that cosmopolitanism and communitarianism can function as languages in which First and Third World states respectively justify exercises of power that impede the self-determination of Third World societies. These discourses of power frame the condition of postcoloniality, which might be understood – borrowing the terminology of International Society theorists – as an entrapment of Third World societies between ‘coercive solidarism’ and ‘authoritarian pluralism’. A normative worldview committed to enhancing the scope for self-determination of such societies must be critical of the production of both external and internal environments that are hostile to the enjoyment of self-determination by Third World peoples.

Part II of the thesis explores the political challenges of sustaining such a critique by studying four theorists of resistance who perceive themselves as manoeuvring between hostile external and internal environments. It analyses the political thought of Rabindranath Tagore and Edward Said, who were both leading figures of anti-colonial nationalist movements but also fierce critics of nationalism. It also studies the activism of two leaders in the field of ‘anti-globalisation’ protest – Subcomandante Marcos of the Zapatistas in Mexico and Professor Nanjundaswamy of the Karnataka State Farmers’ Association in India – who struggle against both national elites and global capital. Part II concludes that if resistance in the condition of postcoloniality must grapple simultaneously with both a hostile ‘outside’ and ‘inside’, it must speak in mixed registers of universalism and particularity.

Cumulatively, the thesis demonstrates that the language of common humanity operates in ways that are both oppressive and emancipatory, just as the language of community is a source of both repression and refuge. Normative theory that does not seek to hold both in tension fails the needs of our non-ideal world.

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Martha Nussbaum's *Cultivating Humanity* persuaded me that the process by which one might become cosmopolitan could never begin too early. I owe my interest in the world to my family – specifically to my father, for being unable to fall asleep except to the sound of the BBC World Service, to my mother, for her world atlas-buying fetish, and to my sister for our 'world dance' duets insistently performed for indulgent grandparents. I dedicate this thesis to them and to the memory of my dear friend Meeto.

The clerk in my uncle's office, who grew up as our neighbour in Dariya Mahal 3, tells me that Dariya Mahal 2 is 'cosmopolitan.' This is how the real estate brokers of Nepean Sea Road describe a building that is not Gujarati-dominated. For a Gujarati, this is not a term of approval. 'Cosmopolitan' means the whole world except Gujaratis and Marwaris. It includes Sindhis, Punjabis, Bengalis, Catholics, and God knows who else. Nonvegetarians, Divorcees. Growing up, I was always fascinated by the 'cosmopolitan' families. I thought cosmopolitan girls more beautiful, beyond my reach.

- Suketu Mehta, *Maximum City: Bombay Lost and Found* (2004)

## *1. Cosmopolitanism and its discontents: a Third World societal perspective*

Suketu Mehta's racy, documentary-style account of his return to the city of his youth begins, appropriately enough, with a vignette about house hunting. Yet house hunting is a rather ironic note on which to begin a thesis about cosmopolitanism. After all, Diogenes the Cynic whose apocryphal utterance 'I am a citizen of the whole world' is credited with 'inventing' cosmopolitanism, cared little for where he lived, sleeping out of doors even in cold weather and spending much of his life in a tub. For the Gujaratis of Dariya Mahal, however, home is a temple, its sanctity guarded via an elaborate set of understandings about purity and pollution. Cosmopolitanism at home is a threat. It portends the invasion of all sorts of destructive external influences – 'the whole world' – bringing in its wake miscegenation, meat eating and mishmash. The adolescent Mehta is fascinated by this outside world. For him, 'cosmopolitan' girls are unattainable, in a different class. *This* cosmopolitanism reeks of sophistication and glamour. It is a world of exotic cocktails and magazines with leggy blondes on glossy covers. It is elite, well-travelled, jet-setting. Yet in addition to being all of these things, for the *non-Gujaratis*<sup>1</sup> of the world that Mehta describes, whatever their class – for the Bombay that is peopled by the likes of Salman Rushdie's Everyman Saleem Sinai, or the Parsi residents of Rohinton Mistry's Firozsha Baag, for Christians, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains and the last remaining Bene Israel, for non-vegetarians and divorcees – cosmopolitanism is a refuge, an ethic that permits a sense of belonging in a place that no one fully owns. It is an ethic that has broken down with frightening consequences in the past – but even then, not entirely, so that Hindu householders have still hidden their Muslim neighbours from marauding Hindu mobs. Sometimes in Bombay, this quotidian cosmopolitanism has made the difference between life and death.

The term 'cosmopolitanism' might best be understood as an instance of what W. B. Gallie called an 'essentially contested concept'.<sup>2</sup> According to Gallie, essentially contested concepts are appraisive or value-laden, internally complex in the sense that they have a number of constituent elements that are variously describable and differently valued by rival users of the concept, and open to modification in the light of changing circumstances. The essential contestedness of 'cosmopolitanism' might be traced to two ideas lying at the heart of the

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<sup>1</sup> Staying within the terms of Mehta's vignette, I use 'non-Gujarati' here simply as a metaphor for minorities of all kinds. Gujaratis themselves are a linguistic minority in Bombay, although Gujarati Hindus (whom Mehta is referring to) are part of Bombay's 68% Hindu religious majority.

<sup>2</sup> W. B. Gallie, 'Essentially Contested Concepts', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 56 (1955-56): 167-98.

concept that tend to be variously emphasised in its different usages. The first of these is universality or the quality of being all-embracing. This is the sense in which John Stuart Mill said ‘capital is becoming more and more cosmopolitan’.<sup>3</sup> The second is egalitarianism. When Diogenes declared himself a citizen of the world, he was not describing an existing state of affairs so much as expressing a moral aspiration of belonging to an imagined political community that regarded all human beings as members of equal standing of a universal polity.

Strictly speaking, invocations of an essentially contested concept acknowledge its internal complexity and the fact that rival descriptions of that complexity abound. A number of usages of ‘cosmopolitanism’ imply both the dimensions of universality and egalitarianism, although these are manifested in different ways and accorded differing weight in different usages. For instance, both universality and egalitarianism are often implied in the use of the term ‘cosmopolitanism’ to describe particular conceptions of world moral or political community – whether these take the form of a world state, or a model of relations between members of the world’s actually existing political communities. Both dimensions are also implied in the occasional use of the term ‘cosmopolitanism’ as a rough analogue to ‘multiculturalism’. As an ethic that insists on the possibility of political cooperation despite cultural difference, multiculturalism aims at fostering egalitarian relations between all cultures encompassed by the polity. But in contrast to usages of ‘cosmopolitanism’ that imply both universality and egalitarianism, the adjectival form ‘cosmopolitan’ has also come to acquire the connotation of ‘worldliness’. To be cosmopolitan is to be worldly-wise or to know about the world as a whole. In this guise, the term might attach as easily to an imperial administrator, a frequently flying business executive, or a gap-year backpacker as to an international drug smuggler or a United Nations employee. In such usages, the descriptive dimension of universality – or, perhaps more accurately, of cross-border experience and knowledge – seems to have edged out any normative content implied in other usages of the term.

This thesis is interested in the full richness of cosmopolitanism, but that interest is qualified in two ways. First, the thesis is concerned with the potential of cosmopolitanism to function as a language of resistance. It asks how and why people articulate claims to self-determination<sup>4</sup> in

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<sup>3</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Principles of Political Economy with some of their Applications to Social Philosophy* 3, ed. William J. Ashley (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1909).

<sup>4</sup> The concept of ‘self-determination’ has been variously understood as a criterion to use in the event of territorial changes of sovereign states, a democratic principle legitimating the governments of modern states, an anticolonialist principle, a (secessionist) principle of freedom for ethnic or religious groups constituting minorities in sovereign states, and a prohibition against the occupation or invasion of the territory of other states (Antonio Cassese, ‘Self-Determination’, in *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, ed. Joel Krieger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 822-3). I understand ‘self-

the language of cosmopolitanism, which we might understand, in a rather preliminary fashion following from the discussion above, as an assertion of equality on the basis of common humanity. To what extent and in what ways might an assertion of common humanity – as distinguished from an assertion of communal particularity – be relevant to the practice of resistance by movements seeking to exercise self-determination?

Although I initially looked upon resistance as an idea that might help limit the scope of my interest in cosmopolitanism, it began to stretch the boundaries of the thesis as its relationships with associated concepts became evident. For a start, thinking about resistance necessarily entailed thinking about power. Like Siamese twins that can thrive only at the expense of their conjoined siblings, power and resistance are locked in a conflictual embrace. As I studied the operation of power, I came to realise that notwithstanding the progressive connotations that cosmopolitanism seemed to have in the literature and in common (liberal) parlance, it also functioned as a vocabulary in which states occasionally justified exercises of power. Further, thinking about cosmopolitanism led to a consideration of *its* conceptual antagonist – communitarianism – which *also* seemed to function both as a language of power and resistance. Accordingly, in its final form, this thesis has become centrally concerned with understanding cosmopolitanism and communitarianism as languages in which both the exercise of power and resistance to power have been justified.

The second qualification of interest in cosmopolitanism is spatial. I am interested in the way these discourses of power and resistance operate within, and in relation to, the ‘Third World’. The Third World is a rather old-fashioned place – one that many argue no longer exists. To speak of it in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, particularly after the disappearance of the communist Second World with the end of the Cold War, inevitably raises eyebrows. Much of this introductory chapter will therefore be spent explaining and justifying this category. Briefly, I interpret ‘Third Worldness’ as a condition of postcoloniality in which states engaged in radically incomplete state- and nation-building projects are hierarchically inserted into the international system.<sup>5</sup> Much of the argument of the thesis follows from this understanding.

I argue that the structural position of Third World states in the international system exerts pressures, from both outside and within, on the enjoyment of self-determination by their

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determination’ as embodying autonomy – my usage of the term most closely approximates the notion of self-determination as a democratic principle legitimating government. The concept receives more detailed treatment in chapters 2 and 3, which analyse the multiple sources from which the self-determination of Third World societies is under threat.

<sup>5</sup> I use ‘radically incomplete’ as a rough terminology to indicate the embryonic stages of these processes. I do not think any state *really* completes these projects. I do not, therefore, endorse category distinctions such as ‘real’ and ‘quasi’ states, but prefer to place states along a continuum.

societies. The hierarchical insertion of Third World states in the international system makes them vulnerable to intervention by external actors. These interventions are often justified in the cosmopolitan language of rescue, but frequently have the effect of constraining the scope of the political, thereby impeding the self-determination of Third World societies. In this way, cosmopolitanism as a language of state power sometimes renders the international environment deeply inhospitable to the self-determination of these societies. Meanwhile Third World states resort to a communitarian language focused on the need to complete unfinished tasks of state- and nation-building to justify exercises of power vis-à-vis their own societies. These supposed imperatives of community construction are also justified as being in the best interests of Third World societies, but also typically curtail the scope for self-determination within those societies. This communitarian language of state power therefore produces an internal environment (circumscribed by the state boundary) that is hostile to the self-determination of many societal groups. I argue that a normative position that values the self-determination of Third World societies must be critical of both cosmopolitanism and communitarianism as languages of state power. In other words, it must recognise and criticise the production of both the hostile ‘outside’ and ‘inside’.

Necessary though such a critique may be, it is also difficult. In the second half of the thesis, I explore the political challenges of sustaining such a critique by studying how four theorists of postcolonial resistance, who perceive themselves as manoeuvring between hostile external and internal environments, sought to grapple with what might be called the problem of simultaneity (i.e. the imperative of criticising, simultaneously, the production of the hostile outside and inside). I find that postcolonial resistances meet the challenge of simultaneity by themselves combining the languages of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism, speaking in mixed registers of universalism and common humanity *and* particularity and community. Accordingly, I conclude that cosmopolitanism on its own cannot function as a language of resistance in the Third World. It must ally itself with a certain kind of communitarianism if it is not to remain an elite discourse of rescue from above or, worse, a moral justification for a renewed exercise of imperialism in the Third World. More broadly, my thesis demonstrates how the language of common humanity operates in ways that are both deeply oppressive and emancipatory, just as the language of particularity is a source of both repression and refuge. Normative theory that does not seek to hold both in tension therefore fails the needs of our non-ideal world.

This introductory chapter is divided into three sections. The first addresses issues of perspective and attempts to think through what it might mean to look at the world from what I call a ‘Third World societal perspective’ (the indefinite article deserves emphasis). The

second part of the chapter begins a deeper engagement with the idea of cosmopolitanism. Building on the clusters of connotations and associations with which this chapter opened, it surveys the multiple ways in which the term is used in the literature, clarifies the specific usages in which I am most interested, and begins to consider the attractions and disaffections of cosmopolitanism from a Third World societal perspective. The third section outlines in more detail the steps in which the overall argument proceeds. It also discusses some key methodological problems.

## 1.1 A Third World societal perspective

Thinking about cosmopolitanism as a language of resistance begs the question ‘resistance by whom and for what?’ This is another way of foregrounding Robert Cox’s celebrated observation that ‘theory is always *for* someone and *for* some purpose’.<sup>6</sup> The underlying motivation for this thesis is a desire to further knowledge about how the scope for self-determination within Third World societies might be enhanced. This seems to entail a study of both exertions of power by multiple actors *on* Third World societies (i.e. exertions of power that treat Third World societies as their object) as well as Third World societal responses to these exertions of power. I take states as the actors capable of the most potent exertions of power in the international system. Accordingly, much of this study is concerned with the relationship between Third World societies and states of all kinds – their own, as well as those most capable of shaping the international system as a whole. Because I regard states as defensible, not as ends in themselves but only as a means to furthering human welfare, I adopt what I call a ‘Third World societal perspective’. That is to say, I adopt the perspective of the very entity with whose welfare I am concerned. I see no way to *justify* perspective – it seems the sort of thing one can only declare upfront. Nonetheless, my perspective presupposes that there is such a thing as the Third World and that within this world it might be possible to distinguish state from society perspectives. This section is intended to justify these presumptions.

### 1.1.1 *What, or where, is the Third World?*

The ‘Third World’ appears to be falling out of fashion as an analytical category in the international relations literature. This may be the result of reading ‘Third’ as something additional (and perhaps more pejoratively, subordinate) to ‘First’ and ‘Second’. With the disappearance of the communist ‘Second World’ following the end of the Cold War, the existence of a ‘Third World’ is perhaps thought to be illogical. In fact however, when French

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Cox, *Approaches to World Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 87.

demographer Alfred Sauvy first used the French equivalent *tiers monde* in 1952, although it was juxtaposed against the then existing First and Second Worlds, the coinage was a corruption of *tiers état* (Third Estate). The implication was that like the radical revolutionary force of the French Revolution, the Third World hoped to play a transformational role in international politics.<sup>7</sup> The original connotations were therefore revisionist and progressive, and while it may no longer be accurate (if it ever was) to attach those connotations to Third World states, one might continue to see such transformational aspirations in Third World societies.

A more compelling criticism of the use of the category is that it encompasses too diverse a range of countries to permit any meaningful generalisations about them. This is a criticism that needs to be taken seriously, although it is worth noting that if it were found persuasive, we should also seek to banish from the IR literature the terms ‘global South’ and ‘developing countries’, which have eclipsed the ‘Third World’ but apply to the same referent object. North/South terminology was popularised by the Brandt Commission, charged with studying international development issues in the 1970s.<sup>8</sup> Typical of scholarship by committee, the terms strike me as anodyne and utterly lacking in political content in their attempt to euphemistically re-present the relationship between the richest and poorest states in the international system as if spatial location were the key feature that distinguished them. In contrast, the language of development *is* politically loaded but in a way that renders it more problematic. By representing ‘developing’ countries as striving towards a destination already reached by ‘developed’ countries, it shares the teleological mindset of the *mission civilisatrice*.<sup>9</sup> I therefore prefer ‘Third World’ to either of these widely used terms. This, however, still leaves the problem of heterogeneity.

Attempts to define the Third World conventionally begin with a set of objective criteria – for example, a relatively low per capita income, low literacy, short life expectancies and poor health indicators, agriculturally-based economies, low degrees of social mobility, strong attachments to tradition and a history of colonisation.<sup>10</sup> These are relatively tangible variables

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<sup>7</sup> Coral Bell, ‘American Policy in the Third World, 1947-87’, in *The West and the Third World – Essays in Honour of J. D. B. Miller*, eds. Robert O’Neill & R. J. Vincent (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990). As Sauvy put it, ‘...car enfin, ce Tiers Monde ignoré, exploité, méprisé comme le Tiers Etat, veut lui aussi, être quelque chose.’

<sup>8</sup> Independent Commission on International Development Issues, *North-South: A programme for survival* (London: Pan Books, 1980).

<sup>9</sup> Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995).

<sup>10</sup> Srinivas R. Melkote & Allen H. Merriam, ‘The Third World: Definitions and New Perspectives on Development’, in *The New Third World*, eds. Alfonso Gonzalez & Jim Norwine (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 9.

and while there is broad agreement that they might usefully serve as indicators of ‘Third Worldness’, there is no consensus on whether countries as different as Brazil and Congo-Brazzaville can be said to be so similar in these many respects as to be placed in a single category. Even looking primarily at economic criteria, which are perhaps the most easily quantifiable, some have argued that the appearance of oases of prosperity in what are otherwise deserts of poverty and vice versa – the First Worldisation of the Third World and the Third Worldisation of the First World – has resulted in such a blurring of boundaries between the two, that the enterprise of categorising states as one or the other should be abandoned.<sup>11</sup> Others have argued the case for retaining these analytical categories whilst redrawing their boundaries to take account of recent developments: for example, Caroline Thomas argues that the Third World is expanding, both in terms of the number of states that belong within its ranks (now including former Communist states undergoing difficult transitions to market economies), and in terms of intrastate differentiation between rich and poor.<sup>12</sup>

While socio-economic criteria continue to be used as indicators of Third Worldness, some analysts suggest that the nature of state-society relations or political culture may capture the specificity of this category with greater precision.<sup>13</sup> Mohammed Ayoob characterises Third World societies as ‘split societies’ and suggests two factors that might account for their internal disarticulation and feelings of vulnerability vis-à-vis more powerful actors in the international system: the incompleteness of state- and nation-building, and their late entry as full members into a society of juridically sovereign states. These factors are said to account for the basic characteristics of ‘the prototypical Third World state’:

...lack of internal cohesion, in terms of both great economic and social disparities and major ethnic and regional fissures; lack of unconditional legitimacy of state boundaries, state institutions, and governing elites; easy susceptibility to internal and interstate conflicts; distorted and dependent development, both economically and socially; marginalisation, especially in relation to the dominant international security and economic concerns; and easy permeability by external actors, be they more developed states, international institutions, or transnational corporations.<sup>14</sup>

Not all putatively Third World states embody these ‘prototypical’ characteristics to the same degree. Latin American states, for example, have had relatively uncontested interstate

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<sup>11</sup> Mark Berger, ‘The End of the “Third World”?’ , *Third World Quarterly* 15, no. 2 (1994): 257-75.

<sup>12</sup> Caroline Thomas, ‘Where is the Third World Now?’ , *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 5 (1999): 225-44.

<sup>13</sup> Louise Fawcett & Yezid Sayigh, ‘Introduction’, in *The Third World Beyond the Cold War: Continuity and Change*, eds. Louise Fawcett & Yezid Sayigh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 6.

<sup>14</sup> Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 15.

boundaries and relatively little interstate war for at least the past century, yet arguably possess other characteristics of Third Worldness (great economic and social disparities, dependent development, marginalisation from the core of International Society) to a sufficient degree to qualify for membership. Similarly, the oil-producing countries of the Middle East enjoy incomes per capita approaching those of the First World, but possess virtually all other characteristics of Ayoub's 'prototypical Third World state'. Thus, any definition of the Third World must allow for unevenness in the extent to which its criteria are met by its constituents.

Reference has already been made to a shared history of colonisation, which has left both an objective set of legacies with which Third World states continue to grapple<sup>15</sup> and a subjective sense of having suffered a historical injustice. I would argue that this history of colonisation and the shared futures that it has bequeathed Third World states constitutes one of their fundamental unifying characteristics. As Robert Young notes, starkly, but defensibly:

...the globalisation of western imperial power was to fuse many societies with different historical traditions into a history which, apart from the period of centrally controlled command economies, obliged them to follow the same general economic path. The entire world now operates within the economic system primarily developed and controlled by the west, and it is the continued dominance of the west, in terms of political, economic, military and cultural power, that gives this history a continuing significance.<sup>16</sup>

Of course this is not to suggest that a history of colonisation condemns a country to a particular future. One has only to compare the economic trajectories of East Asian countries with those of sub-Saharan Africa to refute this. But it is to suggest that all these countries are recognisably *postcolonial* in the sense that they have had to grapple with similar dilemmas, even if they have done so in divergent ways with varying degrees of success. For this reason, I will use the terms 'Third World' and 'postcolonial' interchangeably. How much the past impinges on and shapes the present is a contextual and an empirical question. But if, during the course of this thesis, my repeated references to the fact of colonisation to explain the behaviour of postcolonial states are persuasive, then I will be vindicated in this usage.

Because colonialism left in its wake a shared sense of historical injustice, the 'Third World' has also been a subjective notion, a psychological condition or state of mind, the essence of which is a sense of alienation or marginalisation from the core of International Society which is seen to be dominated by the 'West'.<sup>17</sup> Hedley Bull saw Third World alienation manifest

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<sup>15</sup> I discuss these more extensively in chapter 3.

<sup>16</sup> Robert Young, *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), 5.

<sup>17</sup> I use 'West' and 'First World' interchangeably, although the former has a cultural, and the latter a more economic, connotation. The composition of the 'West' is an exceedingly complex issue that I

itself in a ‘revolt against the West’, in which it struggled both for the application of conventional norms of International Society to itself (equal sovereignty, territorial integrity, non-intervention) and for the promulgation of new norms to further its distinctive interests (racial equality, economic justice and cultural liberation).<sup>18</sup> Contemporary observers attest that this sense of alienation continues to be strongly felt today.<sup>19</sup> Amitav Acharya identifies four issue areas central to world order that are marked by a deep divergence between First and Third World perspectives – global environmental change, arms control and non-proliferation, democracy and human rights, and frameworks for security and intervention in pursuance of values championed by the West.<sup>20</sup> The singularity and unity of ‘First’ and ‘Third’ World perspectives is of course open to question. More likely, there may be some unity of perspective at a very high level of generality with significant differences opening up as norms acquire greater specificity.<sup>21</sup> Further, not all parts of the Third World feel equally alienated from the core, and their alienation is not experienced simultaneously on all fronts. Third World states with liberal democratic constitutions such as South Africa and India might endorse core values such as democracy and human rights, whilst nonetheless disagreeing about the means by which these are to be effectuated, or experiencing conflicts of interest in other issue-areas.

Third World dissatisfaction with the international system is commonly seen to have acquired some institutional coherence at the 1955 Bandung conference in Indonesia and subsequently in the form of organisations such as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the Group of 77 (G77).<sup>22</sup> Yet the suggestion of coherence has been fiercely contested by Aijaz Ahmad, who refuses to see Bandung as a foundational moment for some generalised Third Worldist

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cannot do justice to here. During the colonial era it was understood as comprising Europe and her white settler colonial offshoots. The relative positions of states within the ‘West’ has changed over time, with the United States coming to be seen as paramount from at least the end of the Second World War. The composition of the West is also a matter of perspective: following the Sino-Soviet split, Maoists in the Third World came to see the Soviet Union as part of the dominant core of International Society. The position of the US, Russia and Latin American republics is further complicated by the fact that while all professed strong anti-colonial sentiments at various times, they were all built upon the subjugation – and often elimination – of indigenous peoples. To complicate matters still further, despite displaying many characteristics of Third Worldness, the Southern Cone states of Latin America have long thought of themselves as culturally European.

<sup>18</sup> Hedley Bull, ‘The Revolt Against the West’, in *The Expansion of International Society*, eds. Hedley Bull & Adam Watson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

<sup>19</sup> Louise Fawcett, ‘Conclusion: Whither the Third World?’, in *The Third World Beyond the Cold War: Continuity and Change*, eds. Louise Fawcett & Yezid Sayigh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 241.

<sup>20</sup> Amitav Acharya, ‘Developing Countries and the Emerging World Order: Security and Institutions’, in *The Third World Beyond the Cold War: Continuity and Change*, eds. Louise Fawcett & Yezid Sayigh (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 83-86.

<sup>21</sup> See for example my discussion of Third World perspectives on humanitarian intervention in chapter 3.

<sup>22</sup> Peter Lyon, ‘The Emergence of the Third World’, in *The Expansion of International Society*, eds. Hedley Bull & Adam Watson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

nationalism, but argues that its key players were drawn together by quite distinct compulsions rooted in their specific internal and external political environments.<sup>23</sup> More broadly, Ahmad argues that in terms of praxis, the so-called Third World has lacked a unified project and has instead been characterised by increasing differentiation and competitiveness. This is seen most starkly in the numerous wars that have been fought between countries of the so-called Third World, as well as in such conflicts of interest as the oil shocks, which were precipitated by, and wreaked havoc on, states that fall within this category.<sup>24</sup> In addition, at the level of discourse, he argues that the term ‘Third World’ is not a mere descriptive category but has been deployed by different actors with different meanings and political purposes.<sup>25</sup>

Even if Third World states came together at Bandung with very different motivations, Ahmad’s polemic glosses over the rhetorical unity of purpose that they succeeded in forging within organisations such as the NAM. This unity of purpose was particularly impressive given the number of countries involved, the diversity of their interests and their relative marginality in international affairs, and may be said to have reached its peak with the confrontational cartelism of oil-producing states in 1973 and the Declaration of a New International Economic Order (NIEO) in 1974.<sup>26</sup> It is a different matter altogether that such rhetorical demands yielded few material gains (this had at least as much to do with their hostile reception by conservative Western governments, as with growing cleavages between oil-producing and oil-importing Third World states). Nonetheless, to argue that there has never been such a thing as the Third World is, I think, to leave unexplained – and inexplicable – the behaviour of a very sizeable bloc of states between 1955 and 1974.

By the time the debt crisis had erupted in 1982, however, it would have been credible to argue that the Third World as a coalition of states had ceased to function, even rhetorically, as a unified agent in international relations. Although large numbers of countries in Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa fell into debt, no debtor cartel was formed and there was no collective

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<sup>23</sup> Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London: Verso, 2000), 303. Ahmad discusses the different motivations and agendas that Nehru, Nasser and Sukarno brought to the conference. Surveying the diversity of countries that attended, he observes: ‘None of the senses in which the term ‘Third World’ is now used – non-alignment, a global space other than capitalism and socialism, the tricontinent – would apply to this event’ (294).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

<sup>25</sup> Ahmad discusses the distinct meanings imparted to the category ‘Third World’ in its deployment by postcolonial bourgeois nationalists such as Nehru, Nasser and Sukarno, the Soviet Union, and Maoists (307).

<sup>26</sup> For detailed analyses of this period see Robert A. Mortimer, *The Third World Coalition in International Politics* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1984); Robert L. Rothstein, *The Weak in the World of the Strong: The Developing Countries in the International System* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977); Robert Cox, ‘Ideologies and the NIEO’, *International Organisation* 33, no. 2 (1979): 257-302.

default (possibly because countries fell into debt at different times and could be dealt with individually by creditors acting collectively through the mechanism of the Paris Club). Organisational platforms for Third World unity such as the NAM and G77 lingered on and states continued to come together in issue-based coalitions,<sup>27</sup> yet the Third World had ceased to be a political actor on the international stage. I shall have a great deal more to say about these political shifts in subsequent chapters. In particular, chapter 2 will discuss the increasing convergence of Third World states around norms of liberal capitalism in the aftermath of the debt crisis; and chapter 3 will provide an overview of their more uneasy and differentiated attitude towards liberal political norms. As a footnote to this discussion it should be added that despite the fragmentation of the Third World state coalition, many of the values that those states sought to promote at the height of their rhetorical unity (anti-imperialism, economic self-sufficiency, etc.) continue to be articulated by Third World societal actors in arenas such as the World Social Forums. The politics of social forums is different in a number of significant respects – not least in the anti-sovereigntist and more explicitly anti-capitalist positions taken by many of its participants – but the similarities have been strong enough for some observers to ask if they represent a resurgence of the politics of Bandung.<sup>28</sup>

*Pace* Ahmad, I would argue that the Third World *has* existed as a unified political agent (albeit for limited purposes) in international affairs. The fact that it no longer does should not preclude the use of the term ‘Third World’ as an analytical category, as distinguished from one that imputes a unified sense of political agency to its referent object. It is entirely possible for a number of states to face a similar set of political compulsions and to feel a subjective sense of marginalisation from the core of International Society without these commonalities inducing political cooperation and organisation (i.e. one can argue that the Third World exists without necessarily implying that it has the capacity to act). These commonalities provide the basis for the continuing utility of ‘Third World’ as an analytical construct; at the same time, the fact that they are expressed to different degrees by different states accounts for the internal fragmentation and lack of unified political agency of the Third World. For the purpose of this thesis therefore, I shall understand the Third World as a group of states characterised by a relatively late, hierarchical insertion into a Western-dominated Society of states and engaged in relatively early stages of state- and nation-building. Because these characteristics follow from a shared history of Western colonisation, I shall also refer to these states as ‘postcolonial’.

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<sup>27</sup> For a recent example, see the G20 coalition: <http://www.g-20.mre.gov.br/index.asp>.

<sup>28</sup> Michael Hardt, ‘Porto Allegre: Today’s Bandung?’, *New Left Review* 14 (2002): 112-8; Tom Mertes, ‘Grass-Roots Globalism: Reply to Michael Hardt’, *New Left Review* 17 (2002): 101-10.

Both ‘relatively late’ and ‘relatively early’ in my definition of the Third World receive further clarification in chapter 3, yet it should be obvious here that the point of comparison is Western states. This opens up a rather different objection to the analytical use of the ‘Third World’, namely that the understanding of this category of states in terms of their difference from Western states risks ‘othering’ these states as deviant or lacking in some respect and of repeating tiresome and infuriating tropes about Oriental decadence or African backwardness. This is a risk that I am encouraged to take by Phillip Darby’s defence of ‘worlding’ – setting apart certain parts of the world from others through practices of naming – as a strategic move to ensure the visibility of the problems and perspectives of people too often marginalized in dominant discourses.<sup>29</sup> Calling attention to difference always carries the risk that it will be recast as inferiority, but the price of not doing so is subsumption within a discourse of false universalism that simply ignores the specificity of marginal experiences.<sup>30</sup> This may be the appropriate juncture at which to acknowledge my own vulnerability to the criticism of false universality. It may be that while claiming to advance a Third World perspective, there is something peculiarly Indocentric about my point of view.<sup>31</sup> I have tried to guard against this, partly through my choice of case studies. Whether, and to what extent, I have been successful is for the reader to judge.

As mentioned earlier, the thesis proceeds from what I call a ‘Third World societal perspective’. Its perspective is ‘societal’ in two quite distinct ways – one moral and the other methodological. First, its subjects of moral concern are Third World societies, not states. It begins with the intuition that we ought to privilege the welfare of human societies over the rights and prerogatives of states. States are defensible, not as ends in themselves, but as potential means of furthering societal welfare. The vantage point of the thesis might therefore be said to be located spatially in the Third World and sociologically in Third World societies (rather than in state structures and elites). Although the notion of ‘Third World societies’ risks appearing rather thin and/or reified in the more abstract analysis in the first half of the thesis, it acquires greater concreteness in the second half when the discussion shifts to a consideration of specific social movements emerging out of Third World societies.

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<sup>29</sup> Phillip Darby, ‘Introduction’, in *At the Edge of International Relations: Post-colonialism, Gender and Dependency*, ed. Phillip Darby (London: Pinter, 1997), 2-3.

<sup>30</sup> For a powerful case for the adoption of a Third World perspective, see Arlene Tickner, ‘Seeing IR Differently: Notes from the Third World’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 32, no. 2 (2003): 302.

<sup>31</sup> See for example Young, *Postcolonialism*, 351, who remarks on ‘the Indocentrism of Indian intellectual life which continues to focus narrowly on India’ – an observation with which I agree emphatically.

In adopting a societal perspective, I have been influenced by the growing field of subaltern studies, although my work does not belong within that category. When the field first emerged as a specific approach to Indian historiography, the term ‘subaltern’ was used to refer to an autonomous domain of anti-colonial politics ‘in which the principal actors were not the dominant groups of indigenous society or the colonial authorities but...classes and groups constituting the mass of the labouring population and the intermediate strata in town and country’.<sup>32</sup> In relation to the colonial context then, the term refers to colonised non-elites as distinguished from both the colonial state and indigenous elites. In postcolonial contexts, the term continues to refer to non-elites, interpreted broadly to include any person or group of inferior rank and station (literally, ‘below the alter’) whether because of class, race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity or any other factor.<sup>33</sup> Yet despite the apparent breadth of the term, most work in subaltern studies continues to have a strongly materialist flavour.<sup>34</sup> The thesis shares this concern with material deprivation and is, in part, a study of movements resisting such deprivation. However the second half of the thesis is a study of four theorists and practitioners of resistance who, despite their commitment to, participation in, even leadership of, subaltern movements, cannot themselves be considered ‘subaltern’ in the sense outlined above. All four have, in some guise or the other, been university academics and indeed it is not difficult to see how their relatively privileged professional origins equip them with the intellectual and political resources with which to further resistance movements. Because at least half the thesis is essentially an engagement with these four voices, I hesitate to describe it as a work of subaltern studies.

Despite not being a work of subaltern studies, the thesis is fundamentally interested in subaltern resistance and the role that cosmopolitanism might play in furthering such resistance. This concern with subaltern resistance provides a key rationale for the adoption of a ‘societal’ instead of an ‘individual’ perspective. The rationale becomes clearer in section 1.2.2, but I shall foreground it briefly here. For reasons that are set out in section 1.2.1, the thesis is concerned with the relevance of liberal cosmopolitanism to subaltern resistance. Liberal cosmopolitanism is committed to moral individualism – that is to say, it regards

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<sup>32</sup> Ranajit Guha, ‘On Some Aspects of the Historiography of Colonial India’, in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, eds. Ranajit Guha & Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988), 40.

<sup>33</sup> For examples of work in different disciplines that appears to adopt this perspective, see Eric Hobsbawm, *Primitive Rebels: Studies in Archaic Forms of Social Movement in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1963); James C. Scott, *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1985); Balakrishnan Rajagopal, *International Law from Below* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Alejandro Colas, *International Civil Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), especially chapter 4.

<sup>34</sup> For a dissenting view arguing that ‘subaltern studies’ is not materialist enough, see Tom Brass, ‘Moral Economists, Subalterns, New Social Movements, and the (re-)Emergence of a (Post-) Modernised (Middle) Peasant’, *Journal of Peasant Studies* 18, no. 2 (1991): 173-205.

individuals as ultimate units of concern and judges the moral worth of all institutions in terms of their contribution to individual welfare. Yet critics of liberal cosmopolitanism allege that its individualism betrays an elite genealogy and alienates it from the imperatives of subaltern resistance, which demands the construction of *collective* oppositional agency. To begin the thesis with an a priori commitment to individualism would place the individualist premises of liberal cosmopolitanism beyond scrutiny, thereby impeding a critical evaluation of the potential of liberal cosmopolitanism to further subaltern resistance. The adoption of a societal perspective is therefore intended to strike a balance between recognising that states are only instrumentally defensible insofar as they further human welfare, without assuming that welfare ought to be understood in individualist terms.

Methodologically, the perspective of the thesis is ‘societal’ in the view it takes of states and the state system as a whole. Following in the tradition of the International Society approach,<sup>35</sup> it sees states as forming a society amongst themselves, emerging out of a consciousness of common interests and values, and evidenced by the mutual recognition of common rules and participation in common institutions.<sup>36</sup> The first half of the thesis attempts to provide an updated account of the place of Third World states in this Society of states. It argues that in the post-Cold War era, Third World states have been coercively socialised into accepting a host of new liberal political and economic norms, but not without resistance on the part of these states. This sets the stage for an exploration of how Third World societies might respond to the oppositional dynamic generated by coercive socialisation and the backlash thereto. In effect, the thesis might be understood as an account of how Third World societies might cope with a key source of conflict within the International Society of states. It should thus be clear that the adoption of a Third World societal perspective in no way precludes a focus on the international state system, but instead provides a distinct vantage point from which to study that system.

### *1.1.2 What is distinctive about a Third World societal perspective?*

IR theory has, as J. D. Singer once put it, ‘roamed up and down the ladder of organisational complexity with remarkable abandon, focusing upon the total system, international organisations, regions, coalitions, extra-national associations, nations, domestic pressure groups, social classes, elites, and individuals as the needs of the moment required.’ Yet it has conventionally settled on two levels of analysis (or vantage points) from which to view

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<sup>35</sup> For a historical account of this approach, see Tim Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998).

<sup>36</sup> Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (London: Macmillan, 2002), 13.

problems of world politics: the international system and states.<sup>37</sup> Again, conventionally, these levels have been posited as demonstrating distinctive distributions of power and authority. Neo-realist thinking in particular has entrenched a distinction between the international level, which is seen as being characterised primarily by anarchy, and the domestic level, where centralised authority or hierarchy is thought to prevail.<sup>38</sup> Although this rigid dichotomy has invited much criticism,<sup>39</sup> it continues to underpin orthodox thinking in the discipline.

From the vantage point of Third World societies, the orthodox assumption appears to be inverted. The incompleteness of Third World state- and nation-building suggests an anarchic domestic realm in which a Weberian state that has a monopoly over the legitimate use of force has yet to come into existence. And the meagre power resources and relatively late entry of Third World states as juridically sovereign members of the Society of states suggests a hierarchical positioning vis-à-vis other states. Indeed, Edward Keene has shown that with the advent of colonialism, the extra-European international order began to be constructed differently from the 'Westphalian' European order: while the anarchical ordering of the latter was underpinned by the principle of toleration of difference, the former was intended to promote a particular kind of civilisation transmitted through a set of *hierarchical* institutions maintained by colonial and imperial powers.<sup>40</sup>

The internal anarchy / external hierarchy image is of course as simplistic a dichotomy as its reverse maintained by orthodox theory. The incompleteness of state-building, for example, does not necessarily imply pure internal anarchy – more likely, some political actor will have monopolised the means of coercion, at least in a given region, but will not (yet) have been recognised as legitimate. And a lack of power relative to other states does not necessarily imply pure external hierarchy – political communities might be ordered in hierarchical relations of authority for some purposes, but permitted autonomy in other respects. Nevertheless, all theoretical assumptions necessarily simplify and flatten out nuances. Thus, although the internal anarchy / external hierarchy dichotomy certainly does not capture the specificities of how all Third World states relate to International Society, it may nonetheless provide a more fruitful point of departure for theory-building.

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<sup>37</sup> J. David Singer, 'The Level-of-Analysis Problem in International Relations', in *International Politics and Foreign Policy: a reader in research and theory*, ed. James N. Rosenau (New York: The Free Press, 1969), 21.

<sup>38</sup> See for example, Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979), 88.

<sup>39</sup> See for example, Helen Milner, 'The assumption of anarchy in international relations theory: a critique', *Review of International Studies* 17, no. 1 (1991): 67-86.

<sup>40</sup> Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), xi, emphasis mine.

Because of the underlying motivations of this thesis, it might be useful to consider the implications of this re-imagined structure of the international system for the enjoyment of self-determination within Third World societies. At this stage little more than tentative speculation is possible. In the context of incomplete state- and nation-building, it is often the case that a dominant actor or groups of actors is engaged in the as yet unfinished task of monopolising the means of coercion and/or acquiring the legitimacy needed to sustain this monopoly. This usually entails persuading rival aspirants to state control that they have little prospect of succeeding and that they ought either to recognise and endorse the claim to power of the dominant actors or to exit the state in question. Coercion is often a standard (even primary) ingredient in the range of techniques that might be employed in this persuasive process and, as might be expected, those at the receiving end have little prospect of exercising self-determination in any meaningful sense. Just as internal anarchy has damaging implications for the enjoyment of self-determination, external hierarchy can also prove detrimental. Insofar as the distribution of goods and bads in the international system is the outcome of adversarial negotiations between states, we might expect states at the bottom of the hierarchy to emerge less well off from this process (experiencing relative losses, even if not absolute ones). And insofar as the scope for self-determination of societies is circumscribed by the aggregate level of resources possessed by their respective states, international inter-state hierarchy might impair the enjoyment of self-determination by societies.

One idea that emerges from this discussion is the notion that, from a Third World societal vantage point, both the external and internal political environments appear structurally hostile to the enjoyment of self-determination (i.e. threats to self-determination emanate from both the international and domestic spheres). This might seem a truism, but there appears to be strikingly little appreciation of the idea in some of the literature of international normative theory. The image of hostile external *and* internal environments and the need for political actors concerned with self-determination to confront – simultaneously – the challenges posed by both, provides a unifying thread that runs through the length of the thesis.

Having provided some content to the idea of a Third World societal vantage point, I can now begin my engagement with cosmopolitanism from this perspective. Many of the connotations that the terms ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘cosmopolitanism’ bear in common parlance, have closely corresponding referents in the specialist literature. The following section provides an overview of this literature and identifies the particular conceptions of cosmopolitanism in which I am most interested.

## 1.2 Cosmopolitanism

### 1.2.1 Conceptions of cosmopolitanism

As suggested earlier, ‘cosmopolitanism’ is a versatile and essentially contested concept because its constituent elements of universality and egalitarianism tend to be differently emphasised in different usages. Martha Nussbaum has argued that the term ‘cosmopolitan’ – derived from the Greek words ‘cosmos’ (world) and ‘polis’ (city, people, citizenry) – was first used by the Stoics and Cynics to describe a moral stance rooted in a belief in the equal worth of humanity in all persons, by virtue of their capacity to reason. This was to be accompanied, or reinforced, by an affective attitude of universal love for humanity as a whole, regardless of the particular polis of which one claimed membership.<sup>41</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary suggests that in contemporary usage, the term ‘cosmopolitan’ has come to acquire rather less value-loaded connotations, signifying among other things, the phenomenon of being ‘widely diffused over the globe; found in all or many countries’.<sup>42</sup>

At the most fundamental level, therefore, we might distinguish between a *normative* usage of the term ‘cosmopolitanism’ and a more *empirical-analytic* usage intended to describe phenomena of cross-border interaction and identity formation.<sup>43</sup> While normative cosmopolitanism is a moral view of how relations between all human beings ought to be ordered, empirical-analytic cosmopolitanism describes the cross-border realities that are brought into being by all manner of human activity – conquest, commerce and carbon consumption being perhaps the most significant.<sup>44</sup> It would be a mistake to assume that these realities are of recent provenance – as Ulrich Beck notes, ‘the (forced) mixing of cultures is nothing new in world history; on the contrary, it has been the rule through all the plunder and conquests, the migrations, slave trade and colonisation, ethnic cleansing, settlements and expulsions’.<sup>45</sup> In a similar vein, the editors of a recent collection of essays entitled *Cosmopolitanism*, seeking to move away from a normative to a more epistemological usage

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<sup>41</sup> Martha C. Nussbaum, ‘Kant and Cosmopolitanism’, in *Perpetual Peace: Essays on Kant’s Cosmopolitan Ideal*, eds. James Bohman & Matthias Lutz-Bachmann (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1997), 28-32, 46.

<sup>42</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* (2005).

<sup>43</sup> Ulrich Beck, ‘Cosmopolitical realism: on the distinction between cosmopolitanism in philosophy and the social sciences’, *Global Networks* 4, no. 2 (2004): 131-56.

<sup>44</sup> Beck is wrong to see normative cosmopolitanism ‘in Kant’s sense of the term’ as ‘an active task’ and empirical-analytic cosmopolitanism as the result of ‘uncontrollable liabilities... something that merely happens to us’ (Ibid., 135). While it is certainly the case that normative cosmopolitanism must be actively promoted by specific agents if its principles are to have any prospect of realisation in world politics, the phenomena described by empirical-analytic cosmopolitanism are also the result of conscious human endeavour. The difference is that while the former is a project driven by explicitly moral motivations, empirical cosmopolitanism is the result of human activity driven by all sorts of motivations among which morality may or may not find a place.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 137.

of the term, frame their task as one of ‘look[ing] at the world across time and space [to] see how people have thought and acted beyond the local’.<sup>46</sup> This collection treats phenomena such as the circulation of Sanskrit literature in pre-colonial Asia from Central Asia to the South China Sea, or the melange of architectural styles that characterised pre-war Shanghai, as cosmopolitan practices. ‘Cosmopolitanism’ in this sense refers to the potentially infinite ‘ways of living at home abroad or abroad at home’<sup>47</sup> that have developed as a result of human migrations and the global circulatory networks of goods and ideas that have resulted from these migrations.

The distinction between normative and empirical cosmopolitanism notwithstanding, there are a number of ways in which the two may be connected. It *may* be the case, for example, that the cosmopolitanisation of culture, even if occasioned by some initial act of coercion, fosters a greater habituation to, possibly even respect for, cultural difference and diversity. For example, ‘multiculturalism’ has been a normative accommodative response by Western liberal democracies to the influx of immigrants from their former overseas colonial empires. Or as Beck notes, the cosmopolitanisation of risk occasioned by increasing interdependence *might* generate the pressure to cooperate in the fashioning of cosmopolitan norms and governance arrangements.<sup>48</sup> While remaining sensitive to these potential connections, this thesis – as a work of normative political theory – is chiefly concerned with normative cosmopolitanism. It therefore focuses on conceptions of cosmopolitanism that insist that we ought to think of ourselves as belonging to a universal moral community and on the implications of this idea for resistance politics.

In an essay entitled ‘Conceptions of Cosmopolitanism’, Samuel Scheffler identifies two strands in cosmopolitan thinking, both of which may be seen to have explicit normative commitments.<sup>49</sup> First, cosmopolitanism as a doctrine about justice posits that the scope of justice ought to be universal. It rejects communitarian views, which hold as a matter of principle that norms of justice apply primarily within bounded groups comprising some subset of the global population.<sup>50</sup> In the cosmopolitan worldview, boundaries are morally

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<sup>46</sup> Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, Carol A. Breckenridge, & Dipesh Chakrabarty, ‘Cosmopolitanisms’, in *Cosmopolitanism*, eds. Carol A. Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, & Dipesh Chakrabarty (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 10.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>48</sup> Beck, ‘Cosmopolitical realism’, 138.

<sup>49</sup> Samuel Scheffler, *Boundaries and Allegiances: Problems of Justice and Responsibility in Liberal Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 112. See also Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2006), xv.

<sup>50</sup> See Charles Jones, *Global Justice: Defending Cosmopolitanism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 15-16, for a succinct statement of the difference between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism.

arbitrary and have no ultimate or irreducible significance.<sup>51</sup> Second, cosmopolitanism as a doctrine about culture and the self posits that the well-being, identity or capacity for effective human agency of individuals does not require membership in a determinate cultural group whose boundaries are clear and whose stability and cohesion are secure. Instead, cultures are seen as constantly in flux, influenced by, and in their turn influencing, other cultures. At first glance this cultural conception of cosmopolitanism might appear to coincide with empirical-analytic cosmopolitanism discussed above. Yet it is crucial to recognise that Scheffler's second strand of cosmopolitanism is both a descriptive view of how cultures evolve (all cultures simply *are* cosmopolitan mixtures, evolving in interaction with other cultures, so that we are all 'naturally' hybrid and it is purification that is taught and imposed<sup>52</sup>) and a normative view of how they ought to evolve (as can be seen in some of the more explicitly celebratory writing on cultural miscegenation<sup>53</sup>).

Again, it is possible to see potential (but not inevitable) connections between normative views about justice and culture. For example, it is precisely because many communitarians see culture as the source of norms about justice *and* because they (implicitly) see cultures as discrete entities boxed off from one other, that they deny that the scope of justice can ever be universal.<sup>54</sup> In other words, they are communitarian about justice *because* they are communitarian about culture and see culture as the source material for thinking about justice. But equally it is possible to identify views that see culture as the source of *some*, but not all, norms of justice, thereby endorsing a thin universalism but insisting on the cultural specificity of other standards of justice.<sup>55</sup> Other normative worldviews might see justice and culture as essentially distinct concerns – multicultural nationalists, for example, would appear to be cosmopolitan on the question of culture, but not justice. Given these multiple

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<sup>51</sup> This is not to suggest that cosmopolitans ascribe *no* significance to boundaries and communities. Boundaries may have derivative significance – i.e. they do not have value in and of themselves, but only insofar as they are of value to cosmopolitanism's ultimate units of concern (individuals in the case of liberal cosmopolitanism, the proletarian class in the case of socialist cosmopolitanism, etc.).

<sup>52</sup> Pollock et al., 'Cosmopolitanisms', 12.

<sup>53</sup> Jeremy Waldron, 'Minority Cultures and the Cosmopolitan Alternative', *University of Michigan Journal of Law Reform* 25, no. 3 (1992): 751; Salman Rushdie, 'In Good Faith', in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981 - 1991* (London: Granta, 1991), 394. See Luis Eduardo Guarnizo & Michael Peter Smith, 'The Locations of Transnationalism', in *Transnationalism From Below*, eds. Michael Peter Smith & Luis Eduardo Guarnizo (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1999), 4, for a critical review of the cultural studies and social science literature that tends to celebrate transnationalism, hybridity and other border-crossing practices as unqualifiedly emancipatory.

<sup>54</sup> David Miller, *Principles of Social Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), 18; Daniel Bell, *Communitarianism and its Critics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 32, 37-39, 94.

<sup>55</sup> Michael Walzer, *Spheres of Justice: A Defence of Pluralism and Equality* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1995), xv, argues for the universality of rights of life and liberty but insists that standards of distributive justice are internal to cultures. See also Michael Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001), for an elaboration of the relationship between minimal universalism and maximal particularism.

conceptualisations of the relationship between justice and culture, this thesis is interested in both the justice-oriented and cultural strands of normative cosmopolitanism. Indeed the thinkers studied in chapter 4, who are clearly cosmopolitan in matters of both culture and justice, enable us to see different kinds of linkages and the occasionally difficult relationship between these different domains.

To the extent that culture serves as a source of norms about justice, we might expect a variety of justice-oriented cosmopolitanisms, reflecting the diversity of cultures that exist in the world. Many writers in the Western academy claim that three elements are shared by all cosmopolitan positions: individualism (the ultimate units of concern are individual human beings), universalism (the status of ultimate unit of concern attaches to every human being equally) and generality (individuals are ultimate units of concern, equally, for everyone).<sup>56</sup> Yet in its very individualism, this is a peculiarly liberal form of cosmopolitanism that cannot claim to cover the field of justice-oriented cosmopolitanisms. One might, for example, speak of ‘socialist cosmopolitanism’<sup>57</sup>, for which the ultimate unit of analysis is class and the privileged unit of concern the proletariat class more specifically, but which is nevertheless cosmopolitan in its assumption that class interests transcend national boundaries and other forms of particularity. Again both liberalism and socialism, being Western in their origin, cannot claim a monopoly over the content of justice-oriented cosmopolitan worldviews. Writing about Indian conceptions of order and justice, Kanti Bajpai mentions both ‘Gandhian cosmopolitanism’<sup>58</sup> (a worldview in which individuals are the irreducible subjects of social and political life, whose needs must be met in radically decentralised fashion through the devolution of power to small community governments) and a more chauvinistic ‘Hindu notion of cosmopolitan justice’<sup>59</sup> (a world order in which relations between distinct states/civilisations would be regulated by Hindu dharmic rules of behaviour, given the assumed superiority of Hindu culture). In a similar review of Islamic perspectives on International Society, Sohail Hashmi distinguishes ‘Islamic cosmopolitanism’ from more statist and internationalist varieties of Muslim thought.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Thomas Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), 169; Simon Caney, ‘Review Article: International Distributive Justice’, *Political Studies* 49, no. 5 (2001): 977.

<sup>57</sup> Alejandro Colas, ‘Putting Cosmopolitanism into Practice: the Case of Socialist Internationalism’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 23, no. 3 (1994): 513-34.

<sup>58</sup> Kanti Bajpai, ‘Indian Conceptions of Order and Justice: Nehruvian, Gandhian, *Hindutva*, and Neo-Liberal’, in *Order and Justice in International Relations*, eds. Rosemary Foot, John Lewis Gaddis & Andrew Hurrell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 244-48.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 248-53.

<sup>60</sup> Sohail H. Hashmi, ‘Islamic Ethics in International Society’, in *International Society: Diverse Ethical Perspectives*, eds. David R. Mapel & Terry Nardin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998), 223. See also Hassan Hanafi, ‘An Islamic Approach to Multilateralism’, in *The New Realism: Perspectives on Multilateralism and World Order*, ed. Robert W. Cox (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 118.

Even this brief survey suggests a wide and often unacknowledged diversity of justice-oriented cosmopolitan worldviews. These can all be seen as justice-oriented views of normative cosmopolitanism because the norms of justice that they posit transcend the state-system and are universal in their scope (though unevenly egalitarian in their content). They describe what Hedley Bull would have called ‘world orders’ of different kinds, as distinct from an ‘international order’ in which the primary units of membership are states.<sup>61</sup> While they all share a universal scope or range of concern, they differ with respect to the content of that concern. Specifically, the ultimate units of concern are different in each case (individuals, classes, civilisations) and different sorts of relations are posited between those units (hierarchical and non-hierarchical). In recognition of this cultural diversity, I shall henceforth take the word ‘cosmopolis’ to mean simply a universal polis, with the nature of relations within that polis being specified by a qualifying adjective (liberal, socialist, Hindu, Islamic, etc.).

Having obtained a sense of the potential diversity of cosmopolitan thought, I can now refine my initial statement of purpose considerably. I intend to focus more narrowly on the potential of liberal cosmopolitanism<sup>62</sup> to function as a language of resistance in the Third World. The scope of analysis is restricted in this way for two reasons. First, liberalism as a political philosophy is globally hegemonic, both in the sense that the current international order is heavily informed and structured by liberal principles,<sup>63</sup> and in the sense that its assumptions dominate much of the literature in IR, particularly on issues of globalisation.<sup>64</sup> Second, as chapter 2 demonstrates, liberal cosmopolitanism provides the normative underpinning for an ever-increasing intrusiveness by powerful external actors in the internal affairs of states – particularly Third World states – with profound impacts on Third World societies.<sup>65</sup> These interventions are often justified in the language of common humanity as exercises in rescue

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<sup>61</sup> Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 80-82.

<sup>62</sup> From here on, all references to ‘cosmopolitanism’ must be understood as references to ‘liberal cosmopolitanism’ unless otherwise specified. This is a regrettable abbreviation because it undermines my intention to provincialise liberal cosmopolitanism as one of many possible cosmopolitanisms. I introduce it, nonetheless, to facilitate less cumbersome reading.

<sup>63</sup> Eivind Hovden & Edward Keene, ‘Introduction’, in *The Globalisation of Liberalism*, eds. Eivind Hovden & Edward Keene (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 3. The authors argue that while liberalism in IR is often cast as a utopian and largely prescriptive theoretical approach, many of the so-called Westphalian rules of International Society – relying on a view of the state as macrocosm of the human being – transpose thoroughly liberal beliefs about the rights and liberties of individuals to the level of the state.

<sup>64</sup> Andrew Hurrell & Ngaire Woods, ‘Globalisation and Inequality’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 24, no. 3 (1995): 447.

<sup>65</sup> Andrew Hurrell, ‘Order and Justice: What is at Stake?’, in *Order and Justice in International Relations*, eds. Rosemary Foot, John Lewis Gaddis & Andrew Hurrell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 34. This intrusiveness (or what Hurrell calls an increasing solidarism) is not driven solely by liberal cosmopolitanism – much of it can be understood in functional terms as being compelled by the need to manage problems created by globalisation and interdependence.

purporting to operate in the best interests of Third World societies. The thesis engages most closely with liberal cosmopolitanism because this is the variant of cosmopolitanism that is most vociferously ‘sold’ as an emancipatory discourse to the Third World.

### *1.2.2 Liberal cosmopolitanism and its discontents*

In evaluating the potential of liberal cosmopolitanism to function as a language of resistance, it is useful to think of ethics and politics as twin tracks along which this evaluation might proceed. By ‘ethics’, I refer to the content of liberal cosmopolitan norms and to the particular courses of human action that they prescribe. By ‘politics’, I refer to the social and historical contexts that enable the conception and realisation of these norms. A roughly analogous conceptualisation of these twin tracks is suggested by Fred Halliday, who, in reviewing the progressive potentials of the Western Enlightenment, calls for a methodological linking of the domains of speculative political theory and historical sociology.<sup>66</sup> In his view, such an endeavour entails the intellectual<sup>67</sup> task of reasserting the values of the Enlightenment and the sociological task of asserting that purposive action in pursuance of those values is possible within the constraints of the contemporary world (i.e. that ‘progressive’ agency is possible within current structures). My interest in the ‘politics’ of liberal cosmopolitanism is wider and less explicitly normative than Halliday’s ‘sociological’ task. It calls attention both to the genealogy of liberal cosmopolitanism as well as to the eminently political questions triggered by the fact that its norms, like all norms, do not translate directly into praxis but require interpretation and application.<sup>68</sup> Much international normative theory is a battle over ethics, with rather less attention paid to the politics of normative discourse. Yet when both these dimensions are taken into account, the ambiguous appeal of liberal cosmopolitanism to the Third World becomes evident.

In the ethical debate between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism over the scope of justice, cosmopolitanism appears to be more hospitable to the needs and interests of the Third World in a number of respects. If marginality and weakness are defining characteristics of the Third World condition, then liberal cosmopolitanism’s promise of universal inclusion appears very attractive indeed.<sup>69</sup> Yet the attraction is tentative and *prima facie*, because universalism

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<sup>66</sup> Fred Halliday, ‘The potentials of Enlightenment’, *Review of International Studies* 25, no. 5 (1999): 108.

<sup>67</sup> A better term might have been ‘philosophical’.

<sup>68</sup> Fred Dallmayr, ‘Cosmopolitanism: Moral and Political’, *Political Theory* 31, no. 3 (2003): 434.

<sup>69</sup> Boaventura de Sousa Santos, *Toward a New Legal Common Sense: Law, Globalisation and Emancipation* (London: Butterworths, 2002), 460, asks ‘who needs cosmopolitanism?’ and then replies ‘whoever is a victim of intolerance and discrimination needs tolerance; whoever is denied human dignity needs a community of human beings; whoever is a non-citizen needs world citizenship in any given community or nation.’

by itself is a rather empty concept and there is no reason to celebrate it unless we endorse the ethical content of whatever is being universalised and the political means by which it is to be made universal. Admission into a universal polity is not straightforwardly liberating unless the terms of inclusion have specific emancipatory content. In this respect, liberal cosmopolitanism's egalitarianism – its promise to weigh equally the claims of every person who would be affected in the choice of policies or institutional arrangements<sup>70</sup> and the radical distributive implications of this maxim<sup>71</sup> – is appealing from a Third World perspective. Conversely, communitarianism's claim that it is permissible or necessary to give ethical priority to one's compatriots<sup>72</sup> appears to be a profoundly selfish one from a consequentialist viewpoint, given the gross inequalities that exist between political communities in the world today.<sup>73</sup> These prima facie attractions notwithstanding, liberal cosmopolitanism's individualist premises imply that it ascribes only instrumental value to communal self-determination.<sup>74</sup> It is committed to respecting the self-determination of communities only insofar as communities matter to individuals, and to disrespecting such self-determination when they are judged not to matter any longer. Who does the judging raises serious political questions and it is on this account that communitarians level the charge of imperialism against cosmopolitans.<sup>75</sup> If persuasive, this would make liberal cosmopolitanism abhorrent to many in the Third World.

Critics of cosmopolitan ethics have attacked the putative universality of the scope of justice on one or both of two grounds: that it is undesirable on a variety of counts,<sup>76</sup> and that it is

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<sup>70</sup> Charles R. Beitz, 'Social and Cosmopolitan Liberalism', *International Affairs* 75, no. 3 (1999): 519.

<sup>71</sup> Charles R. Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), 143-53, argues for the global application of Rawls' difference principle whereby resources should be distributed so as to maximise the condition of the least well-off human being. See also Charles R. Beitz, 'Cosmopolitan Ideals and National Sentiment', *Journal of Philosophy* 80, no. 10 (1983): 595, where additional justifications are advanced for this position. Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, 132-33, recasts the obligation to alleviate poverty as one to do no harm (rather than one to do good) and argues that the obligation applies with equal force to the domestic and the foreign poor. Henry Shue, *Basic Rights: Subsistence, Affluence, and US Foreign Policy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), ch. 6 attacks three grounds commonly offered for giving ethical priority to one's compatriots.

<sup>72</sup> For the nationalist version of this thesis see David Miller, *On Nationality* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), 11; David Miller, 'In Defence of Nationality', *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 10, no. 1 (1993): 5.

<sup>73</sup> Michael Freeman, 'Universalism, Particularism and Cosmopolitan Justice', in *International Justice*, ed. Tony Coates (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 82: 'Miller's particularistic ethic is unattractive because it endorses only a weak, low-cost humanitarianism and thereby endorses a great deal of collective selfishness and is indifferent to a great deal of human suffering.' My observation in the main text is not meant to discount the extent or significance of inequality *within* political communities.

<sup>74</sup> See for example, Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*, 104.

<sup>75</sup> Miller, *On Nationality*, 77.

<sup>76</sup> See for example David Miller's argument that nationalism maintains a sense of solidarity in large anonymous societies, without which it would be impossible to solve collective action problems, support redistributive principles of justice and practise deliberative forms of democracy (Miller, *On Nationality*, 90-98, 185; Miller, 'In Defence of Nationality', 9; David Miller, 'Nationality: Some

unfeasible given well-known ‘facts’ about human moral psychology.<sup>77</sup> But there is another strand of criticism that calls attention less to the content of cosmopolitan norms than to the politics and political economy of their imagination and implementation. Attempting what he calls a genealogical analysis of the cluster of ideas that crowd around the term ‘cosmopolitan’, Anthony Pagden demonstrates persuasively that European ideas of cosmopolitanism emerged in tandem with the spread of European empires. As he astutely observes, ‘just as Cicero was writing as the Roman republic was being replaced by the Roman Empire, so Zeno was writing at the very moment that the independent Greek city-states were being absorbed into Alexander’s ‘world’ empire...one of the greatest of the Roman Stoics [Marcus Aurelius] was also an emperor, and...Seneca wrote for Nero’.<sup>78</sup> Similarly, he writes that it was European Enlightenment cosmopolitans who often advanced moral justifications for later exercises in European imperialism.<sup>79</sup>

These observations suggest that Stoic, Cynic and Enlightenment cosmopolitanisms were philosophies particularly well suited to the spread of empire. We might speculate that this was because the ideas of universal moral community that they recommended seemed more practicable at precisely those times and in those places where universal political communities (i.e. empires) were being constructed. More cynically (with a small ‘c’, that is), we might speculate that ideas of universal moral community provided attractive justifications for these projects of empire-building. The notion that ideas of cosmopolitan ethics enjoy a resurgence at precisely those moments when their proponents sense the political power to take them forward, might explain a great deal about the provenance and timing of particular conceptions

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Replies’, *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 14, no. 1 (1997): 70; See also Yael Tamir, *Liberal Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 96, 115, 118.)

<sup>77</sup> One version of this argument is that the scope of justice ought to be restricted because the principles of social justice that we use ‘are always, as a matter of psychological fact, applied within bounded communities’ (Miller, *Principles of Social Justice*, 18; see also Walzer, *Spheres of Justice*, 28-29). Another version is that moral motivation is strongly linked to identity, that community is constitutive of identity, and therefore that the motivation necessary to assume moral obligations is likely to be restricted in some important way to those with whom one shares a communal identity (Miller, *On Nationality*, 80; see also David Miller, ‘The Ethical Significance of Nationality’, *Ethics* 98, no. 4 (1988): 661; Bell, *Communitarianism and its Critics*, 137-38; Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, 81; and the contributions by Benjamin Barber, Michael McConnell and Robert Pinsky in *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, ed. Joshua Cohen (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996). For my criticism of communitarian arguments from feasibility, see Rahul Rao, ‘How to Make a Cosmopolitan: the problem of moral motivation across boundaries’, M. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 2003.

<sup>78</sup> Anthony Pagden, ‘Stoicism, Cosmopolitanism, and the Legacy of European Imperialism’, *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* 7, no. 1 (2000): 6. Pagden problematically asserts that ‘cosmopolitanism is a distinctively European concept, however we define it, whose fortunes have been linked, for far longer than has generally been supposed, with the history of European universalism’ (3). I have argued above that it is simply incorrect to suppose that cosmopolitanism, understood as a set of ideas about the desirability of a universal polity, is ‘owned’ by European thought.

<sup>79</sup> Anthony Pagden, *Peoples and Empires: Europeans and the Rest of the World, From Antiquity to the Present* (London: Phoenix Press, 2002), 145.

of cosmopolitanism. It might explain why non-Western universalist discourses seem to have emerged largely in the pre-colonial period. And, as I shall demonstrate in the following chapter, it might explain why liberal cosmopolitan discourse flourished in the unipolar ‘moment’ afforded by the end of the Cold War. For now, note how cosmopolitanism begins to look like the prerogative of the powerful.

While Pagden may be seen as highlighting the political conditions under which cosmopolitanism came to be imagined, Craig Calhoun argues that liberal cosmopolitans often fail to recognise the social and economic preconditions of their own discourse. He argues that liberal cosmopolitanism is misrepresented as freedom from social belonging rather than a special sort of belonging, or as a view from nowhere or everywhere rather than one from particular social spaces.<sup>80</sup> For Calhoun, the socio-historical conditions<sup>81</sup> of cosmopolitan discourse production are empire and capitalism. By this he means that the culture of cosmopolitanism flourishes in locations created by those enterprises – imperial capitals and trading cities – and, in our own time, in the top management of multinational corporations and the consulting firms that serve them.<sup>82</sup> Calhoun suggests that the notion of world citizenship has been championed by, or at least comes more readily to, elites who are able to experience a sense of inhabitation of the world as a whole thanks to their ability to enter and exit polities and social relations around the world, armed with visa-friendly passports, credit cards, membership in airline clubs, invitations to conferences, etc.<sup>83</sup>

These material privileges provide an unacknowledged grounding for the intellectual positions articulated by liberal cosmopolitans, distorting them in specific ways. For example, it is precisely their individual material self-sufficiency that enables cosmopolitans to recommend the repudiation of particularistic attachments such as ethnic solidarities. But such solidarities are often a resource for effective collective action and mutual support among the less powerful.<sup>84</sup> Put differently, if inclusion in the polis has usually had to be fought for, the subaltern – as *individual* – would appear to stand little chance in that fight. Subaltern inclusion seems likely only as a result of the strengthening of collective consciousness, will

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<sup>80</sup> Craig Calhoun, ‘“Belonging” in the cosmopolitan imaginary’, *Ethnicities* 3, no. 4 (2003): 532.

<sup>81</sup> In acknowledging the ‘historical social conditions’ in which liberal cosmopolitanism began to be imagined, I am attempting the excursion into historical sociology that Halliday recommends as a necessary accompaniment to the enterprise of speculative normative political theory.

<sup>82</sup> Craig Calhoun, ‘The Necessity and Limits of Cosmopolitanism: Local Democracy in a Global Context’, paper presented to the UNESO/ISSC Conference on ‘Identity and Difference in the Global Era’ (Candido Mendes University, Rio de Janeiro, 20-23 May 2001), 6.

<sup>83</sup> Craig Calhoun, ‘The Class Consciousness of Frequent Travellers: Toward a Critique of Actually Existing Cosmopolitanism’, *South Atlantic Quarterly* 101, no. 4 (2002): 872.

<sup>84</sup> Calhoun, ‘“Belonging” in the cosmopolitan imaginary’, 545.

and agency – in a word, of subaltern *community*.<sup>85</sup> A doggedly individualist liberal cosmopolitanism, forged under conditions of individual material self-sufficiency, appears seriously alienated from these considerations. This suggests that the contexts within which cosmopolitan norms come to be imagined might exert a powerful but implicit influence on the very content of the norms themselves. Liberal cosmopolitanism's thinking about justice carries the indelible impressions of the material conditions and privileges that make cosmopolitan culture possible. Justice is tied to culture, ethics to politics.

Liberal cosmopolitanism emerges from the criticisms of Pagden and Calhoun, as a discourse bearing the unmistakable whiff of power and privilege. Conversely, communitarianism has often been seen as the 'natural' vocabulary of grievance and resistance. Isaiah Berlin saw nationalism, perhaps the single most influential modern variant of communitarianism, as 'a response to a wound inflicted upon a society'.<sup>86</sup> Yet things are not quite so clear-cut. Resistance does not inevitably take the path of emphasising communal particularity and difference. Marx and Engels' call for workers of the world to unite<sup>87</sup> might be seen as an exhortation to cosmopolitan resistance (but equally, it could be regarded as a call to forge a new kind of community transcending pre-established communities). And as James Scott has shown so meticulously, the resistance of the *very* weak is often individualised.<sup>88</sup>

The cosmopolitanism = privilege / communitarianism = grievance dichotomy that I have built up so far might be further disrupted by reconsidering some of the links in Calhoun's argument above. Calhoun sees cosmopolitan norms about justice as being profoundly influenced by the material conditions that make cosmopolitan culture possible. He sees that culture in turn as the preserve of the privileged few whose extraordinary mobility gives them a sense of inhabitation of the world as a whole. Like Calhoun, Arjun Appadurai ties cosmopolitanism to mobility, arguing that the contemporary world is 'post-national' in a number of respects largely because of global migration and global mass media.<sup>89</sup> Yet in his view, the sorts of

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<sup>85</sup> In a very similar vein, see Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Colonialism is a System', in *Colonialism and Neocolonialism* (London: Routledge, 2001), 41, who indicts French colonialism in Algeria for, among other things, imposing 'an individualistic and liberal legal code in order to ruin the frameworks and the development of the Algerian community...it fabricates 'natives' by a double movement which separates them from their archaic community by giving them or maintaining in them, *in the solitude of liberal individualism*, a mentality whose archaism can only be perpetuated in relation to the archaism of the society. It creates *masses* but prevents them from becoming a conscious proletariat by mystifying them with the caricature of their own ideology.'

<sup>86</sup> Isaiah Berlin, 'Nationalism: Past Neglect and Present Power', in *Against the Current: Essays in the History of Ideas*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: Hogarth Press, 1980), 349.

<sup>87</sup> Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London: Penguin, 2004).

<sup>88</sup> Scott, *Weapons of the Weak*.

<sup>89</sup> Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalisation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 21.

people whose movement provides the demographic basis for a ‘post-national’ imaginary includes many who are much less privileged than Calhoun’s frequent flyers – refugees, exiles, indentured labour, illegal aliens<sup>90</sup> – but are equally integral to the creation of ‘diasporic public spheres’, which he sees as ‘crucibles of a postnational public order’.<sup>91</sup>

Further, insofar as we believe norms of justice to be tied to culture, it is important to note that even the relatively immobile underprivileged have access to extra-local resources, images and ideas with which to imagine their own ‘post-national’ presents and futures without necessarily having to move. Reverting to Beck’s more empirical usage of cosmopolitanism, we might see the penetration of modernity in all its dimensions as foisting a sort of ‘forced cosmopolitanism’ on rooted subalterns. Only the powerful can live in locales entirely of their own creation – the weak find it harder to resist the encroachment of external influences and the consequent cosmopolitanisation of their lives. Hybridity often emerges first on the terrain of the weak.<sup>92</sup> Nevertheless in attempting to dissociate cosmopolitanism from privilege, we have moved from (normative) liberal cosmopolitanism to a more value-agnostic (empirical-analytic) usage of the term. The argument in this and the previous paragraph suggests only that non-elites have access to cosmopolitan cultural contexts, while leaving open the sorts of thinking about justice that might emerge from different cosmopolitan cultures.

The discussion in this section has demonstrated something of liberal cosmopolitanism’s ambiguous appeal to the Third World. Looking primarily at the ethical content of the two discourses, cosmopolitanism appears to have radical redistributive implications, while communitarianism justifies the perpetuation of deeply inegalitarian relations between political communities. Looking more broadly at the political and material contexts within which their worldviews appear to be fashioned, cosmopolitanism appears to be a discourse of power and privilege, while communitarianism is a discourse of grievance and resistance. Yet these neat dichotomies are blurred, on the ethical side by cosmopolitanism’s refusal to accord intrinsic value to communal self-determination thereby inviting the charge of imperialism, and on the political side by the fact that cosmopolitan cultural contexts are available to non-elites. The

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 22, 160.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>92</sup> See Mike Featherstone, ‘Localism, Globalism, and Cultural Identity’, in *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary*, eds. Rob Wilson & Wimal Dissanayake (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 65, who, from similar intuitions, writes that the postmodern emphasis upon the mixing of codes, pastiche, fragmentation, incoherence, disjunction and syncretism – were characteristic of cities in colonial societies, decades or even centuries, before they appeared in the West. ‘From this perspective, the first multicultural city was not London or Los Angeles but probably Rio de Janeiro, Calcutta or Singapore.’

point is that neither cosmopolitanism nor communitarianism is easily aligned to privilege or marginality.<sup>93</sup>

### 1.3 Outline and methodology

The thesis is divided into two parts. Part I (chapters 2 and 3) is devoted to understanding cosmopolitanism and communitarianism as languages in which states sometimes justify exercises of power vis-à-vis Third World societies. Chapter 2 argues that ideas of liberal cosmopolitanism enjoyed a resurgence in the unipolar ‘moment’ afforded by the end of the Cold War. These ideas have underpinned a growing intervention in the affairs of Third World states by powerful Western states and the international institutions that they dominate. Operating in accordance with a dynamic that Andrew Hurrell has called ‘coercive solidarism’,<sup>94</sup> they have tended (for the most part) to justify their interventions as rescuing Third World societies from the political tyranny and economic mismanagement of their own elites. I argue that we should be sceptical of the claims of the interveners to be operating in the best interests of Third World societies, and suggest that the fantasy of rescue conceals a more self-interested exercise of power in which liberal cosmopolitanism is deeply complicit.

Chapter 3 studies the communitarian justifications of power that Third World states employ in relation to their own societies. It demonstrates how the supposed imperatives of state- and nation-building, as particular forms of community-construction, are used to justify the exercise of power. I am particularly keen to highlight the ironies, selectiveness and arbitrariness of these practices of power – which I describe as constituting a condition of ‘authoritarian pluralism’ – and the impact of these practices on Third World societies. Rather than positing ‘coercive solidarism’ and ‘authoritarian pluralism’ as static, alternative conceptualisations of International Society, I argue that they must be seen in a dynamic, historical and mutually constitutive fashion as political responses to one another.

In employing the categories ‘coercive solidarism’ and ‘authoritarian pluralism’ to describe the operation of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism respectively as languages of state power, I draw on a framework developed by the so-called English School of IR or the International Society approach. While my interest in cosmopolitanism and communitarianism

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<sup>93</sup> Walter D. Mignolo, ‘The Many Faces of Cosmo-Polis: Border Thinking and Critical Cosmopolitanism’, in *Cosmopolitanism*, eds. Carol A. Breckenridge, Sheldon Pollock, Homi K. Bhabha, & Dipesh Chakrabarty (Durham: Duke University Press, 2002), 157, puts it slightly differently, writing that ‘cosmopolitanism is not easily aligned to either side of globalisation (from above, or from below).’

<sup>94</sup> Andrew Hurrell, ‘Society and Anarchy in the 1990s’, in *International Society and the Development of International Relations Theory*, ed. Barbara Roberson (London: Pinter, 1998), 31.

as alternative forms of world ordering was sparked off by an engagement with the field of international normative theory, I have been frustrated by the relative lack of attention to questions of political agency, implementation and praxis in that body of work. Conversely, my interest in norms meant that strictly rationalist approaches in IR also proved inadequate.<sup>95</sup> The English School provides a hospitable methodological environment in which to combine an interest in the ethical content of norms with attention to the political mechanisms by which norms are held in place or undermined.

Yet the School's own dearth of attention to state-society relations has led me to draw, in a rather omnivorous and autodidactic fashion, on the work of sociologists, anthropologists and, most importantly, postcolonial theorists. Postcolonial theory in turn has remained marooned, rather oddly in my view, in English Literature faculties (Young speculates that this is because literature and psychoanalysis are the last remaining corners of the academy in which subjective experience is taken seriously). Whatever the reason, it was not long before I realised that my love for postcolonial literature did not have to remain separate from the work of this thesis. The idea of manoeuvre between a hostile outside and inside has been an enduring theme in postcolonial fiction, so that many of the ideas I try to develop in this thesis seemed to leap out at me from the pages of novels that I read.<sup>96</sup>

Chapters 2 and 3 try to strike a difficult balance between the empirical and the normative. I have never quite appreciated the distinction between ideal and non-ideal theory, believing that moral theorising has to begin with the world as one finds it. We will of course disagree even in our descriptions of the world as it appears to us, but that is where a conversation about global justice has to begin. As such I have tried to write something more empirically informed than a work such as John Rawls's *The Law of Peoples*.<sup>97</sup> At the same time, I have tried to focus on the morally relevant features of particular states of affairs, so as to give myself enough space to think about the moral questions involved. In doing so, I have tried to steer a path between providing too much empirical detail to be able to do justice to the normative

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<sup>95</sup> On the failure of rationalist approaches to take seriously the normative dimension of International Society, see Andrew Hurrell, 'International Society and the Study of Regimes: A Reflective Approach', in *International rules: approaches from international law and international relations*, eds. Robert J. Beck, Anthony C. Arend & Robert D. Vander Lugt (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

<sup>96</sup> My choice of novels will, perhaps, betray my elite non-subaltern positionality, for I will be reading postcolonial fictions written in English or translated into English.

<sup>97</sup> John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999). For a criticism of the manner in which Rawls sometimes uses empirical evidence, see Andrew Hurrell, 'Norms and Ethics in International Relations', in *Handbook of International Relations*, eds. Walter Carlsnaes, Thomas Risse & Beth Simmons (London: Sage, 2002), 140. In trying to strike the appropriate balance between the empirical and the normative, I have also been influenced by Marc Stears, 'The Vocation of Political Theory: Principles, Empirical Inquiry and the Politics of Opportunity', *European Journal of Political Theory* 4, no. 4 (2005): 325-50.

questions, and too little to offer a nuanced description of so vast and internally complex a canvas as the Third World. A great deal of the discussion in these chapters is located in specific geographical and historical contexts, but where I have generalised about the Third World as a whole, I have tried to do so in a way that takes into account Onora O'Neill's distinction between abstraction and idealisation.<sup>98</sup> O'Neill argues that abstraction is an innocuous and unavoidable feature of ethical reasoning. We abstract whenever we make claims that bracket some predicates and that are indifferent as to their satisfaction or non-satisfaction. We can of course disagree about which predicates to bracket, but the act of bracketing itself is uncontroversial. It is idealisation – the denial of certain predicates or the assertion that absent predicates obtain – that is argumentatively problematic. In thinking about as vast and variegated a space as the Third World, I have abstracted certain features of the structural position of Third World states in the international system and considered some normative problems that follow from these. I can be criticised for having abstracted the wrong features, but cannot, I hope, be accused of idealisation.

Part I is followed by an intermezzo, which serves as an introduction to Part II as a whole and explains the relationship between the two parts of the thesis. If Part I describes how the self-determination of Third World societies is threatened by actors external to their states but also *by their states*, Part II considers how they might respond to these multiple sources of threat. Thus, Part I might be understood as describing the operation of power in International Society, while Part II considers possibilities for resistance in Third World societies. It does this by studying four voices of resistance who perceive themselves as defending the self-determination of their political communities from both external and internal threats.

The premise underlying Part I – namely, that the structural position of Third World states in International Society exerts pressures from both outside and within on the enjoyment of self-determination by their societies – also serves as the guiding principle for the selection of case studies in Part II. Chapter 4 studies the corpus of work produced by two public intellectuals – the Indian Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore and the Palestinian-American academic Edward Said – who suggest themselves for analysis because of their active role in their respective national movements, whilst also being fierce critics of nationalism. Chapter 5 studies the political theoretic ideas generated by two prominent leaders in the field of ‘anti-globalisation’ protest – Subcomandante Marcos of the Zapatistas in southern Mexico and Professor Nanjundaswamy of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (Karnataka State Farmers’ Association) in southern India – who suggest themselves for analysis because of their

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<sup>98</sup> Onora O'Neill, *Bounds of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 68, 120.

simultaneous struggles against global neoliberal capitalism as well as their own governments and other internal opponents.

As might be expected, comparison across the four cases is challenging because of differences in geographical, temporal and intellectual context. Each chapter also studies a qualitatively different kind of resistance – anti-colonial nationalism in chapter 4 and ‘anti-globalisation’ protest in chapter 5. There are substantive differences in how the relationship between the hostile outside and inside is construed in each case, which I foreground in the intermezzo and deal with more extensively in the individual chapters themselves. These chapters also differ in the kinds of subjects that have been chosen for analysis – public intellectuals writing in their individual capacity in chapter 4, and leaders of social movements in chapter 5. I explain my motivations for this shift as well as the methodological challenges that follow from it, at the start of chapter 5.

I ask three questions in respect of each of these cases. First, how do they grapple with the problem of simultaneity, or in other words, how do they manage to be critical of the inside and the outside, the national and the foreign, the self and the other, at the same time? Second, how do they represent the scope of their resistance, that is to say, is resistance framed primarily in the language of common humanity or communal particularity? Third, what is their attitude towards the postcolonial state? One key finding is that postcolonial resistance achieves simultaneity by speaking in mixed registers. Resistance in the condition of postcoloniality seems to demand a language that combines the vocabularies of universalism and common humanity with those of particularity and community.

From an analytical point of view, this finding challenges the polarisation of these concepts in the literature of international normative theory. Witness Chris Brown’s observation that ‘the cosmopolitan/communitarian classification is more or less inclusive for the modern age – all variants of international relations theory can be seen as falling into one *or* the other camp without too much violence being done to the intentions of the theorist.’<sup>99</sup> This thesis argues that the normative landscape is significantly more complicated than Brown suggests. From a normative point of view, the thesis argues that cosmopolitanism can function as a language of resistance in the Third World only if it allies itself with a certain kind of communitarianism. If we are to be critical of both external and internal impediments to self-determination in the Third World, a contrapuntal rendition of the apparently dissonant worldviews of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism seems desperately necessary.

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<sup>99</sup> Chris Brown, *International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), 27, emphasis mine.

The conquest of the earth, which mostly means the taking it away from those who have a different complexion or slightly flatter noses than ourselves, is not a pretty thing when you look into it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea – something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to...

- Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902)

## *2. Cosmopolitanism and the hostile outside*

In the previous chapter, I suggested that the exercise of self-determination by Third World societies is impeded by pressures from both within and outside their states, following directly from their structural position in International Society. This chapter focuses on one half of this dynamic, analysing the ways in which self-determination is impeded by hostile external pressures that are legitimised by liberal cosmopolitanism. The hierarchical insertion of Third World states in International Society leaves them vulnerable to intervention by powerful external actors in ways that adversely affect the welfare of their societies. Liberal cosmopolitanism is frequently used to justify such interventions. My argument is not that liberal cosmopolitanism *creates* an external environment that is inhospitable to self-determination – the hostility of that environment is a function of the structure of the international system. But the contemporary praxis of liberal cosmopolitanism condones, utilises, justifies and reproduces that structure. Although it purports to do this in the best interests of Third World societies, I argue that we should be thoroughly sceptical of this claim. Liberal cosmopolitanism is deeply complicit in, even if not causally responsible for, the production of the hostile outside.

My argument, paraphrasing Conrad's protagonist Marlow, is that liberal cosmopolitanism is not a pretty thing when you look into the contemporary practice of it too much. The literature on liberal cosmopolitanism makes a distinction between moral and institutional cosmopolitanism, emphasising the primacy of the former and paying rather less attention to the latter. I argue that when, in the absence of institutional cosmopolitanism, ideas with normatively appealing moral cosmopolitical foundations are put into practice within the hierarchical state system, they undergo severe deformations. They become vulnerable to appropriation and distortion by powerful states whose claim to be operating in the universal interest is undermined by four problems: the enduring influence of their own national interests, the constant danger of the abuse of their power thanks to a lack of accountability, the hypocrisy inherent in their failure to recognise their own partial culpability for the problems they claim to be solving, and the loss of credibility that they suffer as a result of continuities with historic imperialism.

The political praxis of such a liberal cosmopolitanism might be described, borrowing English School terminology, as 'coercive solidarism' – a dynamic in which the normative agenda of International Society is advanced by a vanguard of powerful states, who play a disproportionately large role in the promulgation, definition and implementation of norms.

This chapter analyses the four problems outlined above in the context of two contemporary dimensions of coercive solidarism that have particularly profound impacts on Third World societies - humanitarian intervention and economic conditionality. I argue that both can be understood as disciplinary practices that rely on radically unequal distributions of power within the international system to enforce compliance with political and economic norms underpinned by moral cosmopolitical foundations. I hope to demonstrate why these practices arouse suspicion and hostility within Third World states and societies. In effect, I want to explain why the praxis of liberal cosmopolitanism justifiably arouses resistance in these parts of the world. Much of the contemporary literature on cosmopolitanism is alarmingly congenial to coercive solidarism as a particular way of giving effect to moral cosmopolitanism. Yet as Marlow would have said, what redeems coercive solidarism is only the idea of moral cosmopolitanism at the back of it – an idea that has no prospect of being realised so long as its implementation is entrusted to those at the apex of the hierarchical state system.

## 2.1 Moral and institutional cosmopolitanism

In addition to the various substantive conceptions of cosmopolitanism outlined in the previous chapter, leading theorists of liberal cosmopolitanism have introduced a further distinction between two different ventures that cosmopolitan theory might pursue. In Charles Beitz's view, institutional cosmopolitanism is concerned with the way political institutions ought to be designed so as to give effect to cosmopolitan precepts. Although it could conceivably permit a range of possible institutional arrangements, from 'world government' at one extreme to looser networks of regional arrangements at another, 'the distinctive common feature is some ideal of world political organisation in which states and state-like units have significantly diminished authority in comparison with the status quo and supranational institutions have more'.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, moral cosmopolitanism is concerned, not with institutions themselves, but with 'the basis on which institutions, practices or courses of action should be justified or criticised. It applies to the whole world the maxim that answers to questions about what we should do, or what institutions we should establish, should be based on an impartial consideration of the claims of each person who would be affected by our choices.'<sup>2</sup> Beitz rightly argues that moral cosmopolitanism is more fundamental than

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<sup>1</sup> Charles R. Beitz, 'Cosmopolitan liberalism and the states system', in *Political Restructuring in Europe: Ethical Perspectives*, ed. Chris Brown (London: Routledge, 2002), 124.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. See also Charles R. Beitz, 'International Liberalism and Distributive Justice: A Survey of Recent Thought', *World Politics* 51, no. 2 (1999): 287. Thomas Pogge makes an identical distinction between what he calls 'legal' and 'moral' cosmopolitanism (See Thomas Pogge, 'Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty', in *Political Restructuring in Europe: Ethical Perspectives*, ed. Chris Brown (London: Routledge, 2002), 90; Pogge, *World Poverty and Human Rights*, 53).

institutional cosmopolitanism because it provides the foundation for arguments on behalf of cosmopolitan institutions as well as for the specification of institutional design.<sup>3</sup>

My discomfort with this distinction in liberal cosmopolitanism theory begins with Beitz's claim that there is no necessary link between moral and institutional cosmopolitanism:

Someone who adopts the point of view of moral cosmopolitanism is not necessarily committed to the belief that the world should be reorganised as a unitary or stateless political and legal order. Indeed, it might be argued that a state-based world order is more likely to be justifiable from a point of view that includes everyone – at least under contemporary conditions...Two points follow from this. First, the widely alleged undesirability of world government is not a good reason to reject the ethical aspiration it represents. If advocacy of world government is a mistake, this is more likely because it exhibits political naivety than philosophical error. More importantly, what moral cosmopolitanism requires of political institutions is a complex question – more complex than both the friends and the opponents of cosmopolitan views have sometimes appreciated.<sup>4</sup>

Conceptually, Beitz may be correct that precepts of moral cosmopolitanism can be given effect to in a world that is not institutionally cosmopolitan. He gives the example of the doctrine of universal human rights, which is cosmopolitan in its foundations without being cosmopolitan in its institutional requirements. Universal human rights are founded on the cosmopolitan idea that conceptions of individual well-being are not fundamentally relative to culture or geographical location and that, in the assignment of responsibility for satisfying basic individual needs, national (or cultural or ethnic) boundaries do not necessarily play a limiting role. At the same time, human rights doctrine does not prescribe any particular institutions for the world as a whole.<sup>5</sup> Accordingly in Beitz's view, 'human rights doctrine does not rule out the possibility – indeed, it trades on the hope – that its institutional requirements can be satisfied within a political structure containing nation-states more or less as we know them today.'<sup>6</sup> As I have said above, it may be possible *conceptually* to imagine moral cosmopolitanism guiding political action in the state system as it exists today. Yet *politically*, in the absence of changes to the incentives that representatives of states face in making policy decisions, this seems to assume saintly state elites. Without reform that would institutionalise the requirement to act in accordance with moral cosmopolitan precepts and prescribe fair procedures for doing so, a more historically- and politically-informed reading of International Society raises questions about the *desirability* of allowing nation-states, as we know them today, to act on precepts of moral cosmopolitanism. In other words, moral

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<sup>3</sup> Beitz, 'Cosmopolitan liberalism and the states system', 125.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 125-26.

<sup>5</sup> This is certainly true in the sense that universal human rights do not demand cross-boundary institutions, but they do insist that institutions everywhere protect certain interests.

<sup>6</sup> Beitz, 'Cosmopolitan liberalism and the states system', 127.

cosmopolitanism unleashed in an institutionally unreformed state system might do more harm than good.

In arguing that moral cosmopolitanism need not necessarily entail institutional cosmopolitanism, Beitz is defending cosmopolitanism against those of its critics who argue that its precepts necessarily lead in the direction of a world state – an eventuality that is fraught with the prospect of global tyranny. Yet responding to this criticism need not entail a retreat into moral cosmopolitanism and a corresponding neglect of institutional cosmopolitanism. This becomes necessary only if institutional cosmopolitanism is reduced to world statehood<sup>7</sup> – an understanding that appears needlessly impoverished in light of Beitz’s earlier recognition that institutional cosmopolitanism might take a variety of forms, of which world government is the most extreme.<sup>8</sup> In the quotation above, Beitz sets up a false opposition between an institutionally unreformed state system operating in accordance with the precepts of moral cosmopolitanism, and an institutional cosmopolitanism that takes the form of a world state, neglecting to explore the possibility of forms of institutional cosmopolitanism that fall short of a world state. Henry Shue – notwithstanding the importance that he attaches to philosophical engagement with questions of institutional design – appears to set up a similar opposition when he says that ‘rather than global institutions, which may be dangerous and are in any case most unlikely, we should pursue minimal global standards for national institutions’.<sup>9</sup> Yet – if I may paraphrase Beitz above – the widely alleged undesirability of world government is not a good reason to jettison institutional cosmopolitanism altogether.

While the specification of cosmopolitan institutional design falls outside the scope of this thesis, my broader critique of the contemporary practice of liberal cosmopolitanism rests on a demonstration of the perils of moral cosmopolitanism in an institutionally unreformed state system. These perils appear more starkly in the writing of Martha Nussbaum. Historicising Beitz’s distinction between moral and institutional cosmopolitanism, Nussbaum argues that cosmopolitanism in its Stoic, Cynic and Kantian incarnations has never been fundamentally interested in the establishment of a world state or in specific kinds of cosmopolitan political institutions. Instead, its core insight has been that we ought to live as if all human beings were

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<sup>7</sup> Pogge appears to understand legal cosmopolitanism (his equivalent of Beitz’s institutional cosmopolitanism) in this reductive fashion, defining it as ‘a concrete political ideal of a global order under which all persons have equivalent legal rights and duties – are fellow citizens of a universal republic’ (Pogge, ‘Cosmopolitanism and Sovereignty’, 90).

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, 124.

<sup>9</sup> Shue, *Basic Rights*, 175. See Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism*, 163, for a similar false choice between a world state and a world of nation-states.

members of a common polity, whether or not this is reflected in the political and legal structures that actually govern us.

As do Marcus and Cicero, Kant stresses that the community of all human beings in reason entails a common participation in law, and, by our very rational existence, a common participation in a *virtual* polity, a cosmopolis that has an implicit structure of claims and obligations regardless of whether or not there is an *actual* political organisation in place to promote and vindicate them.<sup>10</sup>

The exhortation to act upon precepts of moral cosmopolitanism even if the institutions that could enforce compliance with such precepts were absent, is intended as a moral improvement over the status quo. Yet in contexts in which it is not clear what such action ought to involve, the virtualisation of politics recommended here is fraught with imperialist possibilities. It is puzzling that Nussbaum does not demand the establishment of actual deliberative structures (or the improvement of existing ones) that might facilitate ‘common participation’ in the definition and enforcement of cosmopolitan obligation, believing instead that the content of such obligation can be gleaned through an act of hypothetical deliberation. By substituting the vital step of actual deliberation with other human beings who might be affected by one’s actions, with a hypothetical deliberation in which one is required to make judgments about what those other people would have wanted had they been able to participate in the deliberative process, those with voice are permitted *both* to define what it is that the voiceless desire as well as to act in gratification of those alleged desires.

The insistence on the adequacy of moral cosmopolitanism and the dispensability of institutional cosmopolitanism stems from a methodological assumption that the content of justice can be known in its entirety by thinking about what it would be rational for reasonable individuals to conclude as being in their interest, were they to operate behind a veil of ignorance that denied them knowledge of their citizenship and nationality (among other indicators of their station in life). The Rawlsian original position is a device that claims to make the content of justice accessible to anyone who is able to adopt its presuppositions. Yet even if universal norms could be arrived at in this manner, as Fred Dallmayr reminds us, norms do not translate directly into praxis but require careful interpretation and application – both of which raise eminently political questions: ‘who has the right of interpretation? And in case of conflict: who is entitled to rule between different interpretations?’ Dallmayr rightly argues that ‘this right or competence cannot simply be left to ‘universal’ theorists or intellectuals – in the absence of an explicitly *political* delegation or empowerment.’<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Nussbaum, ‘Kant and Cosmopolitanism’, 37, emphasis mine.

<sup>11</sup> Dallmayr, ‘Cosmopolitanism’, 434, emphasis in original.

In the absence of cosmopolitan institutions and deliberative structures in which these political dimensions of the praxis of moral cosmopolitanism can be considered, interpretation and application fall to states in International Society and, in particular, to the most powerful states. One of the clearest expressions of scepticism about the feasibility and desirability of pursuing moral cosmopolitanism in an institutionally unreformed state system comes from Hedley Bull, whose views on the issue are worth quoting at length:

The world society or community...does not exist except as an idea or myth which may one day become powerful, but has not done so yet. The great mass of political mankind does not have the means of interest articulation and aggregation, of political socialisation and recruitment, which (we are told) are the hallmarks of a political system. In so far as the interests of mankind are articulated and aggregated...this is through the mechanism of the society of sovereign states. For guidance as to what the interests of the world as a whole might be...we are forced to look to the views of sovereign states and of the international organisations they dominate...But if it is chiefly through the views of states, and of states assembled in international organisations, that we have perforce to seek to discover the world common good, this is a distorting lens; universal ideologies that are espoused by states are notoriously subservient to their special interests, and agreements reached among states notoriously the product of bargaining and compromise rather than of any consideration of the interests of mankind as a whole.<sup>12</sup>

Bull may be understood as suggesting that in the absence of cosmopolitan institutions that can articulate and aggregate the 'interests of mankind' we are forced to rely on the voices of states to understand what these interests might be. Yet states are an unreliable guide to the imperatives of moral cosmopolitanism, not least because they frequently subordinate universal ideologies to their own special interests.<sup>13</sup> Bull was convinced that moral cosmopolitanism could only be pursued in tandem with institutional cosmopolitanism: 'Ideas of world or cosmopolitan justice are fully realisable, if at all, only in the context of a world or cosmopolitan society. Demands for world justice are therefore demands for the transformation of the system and society of states, and are inherently revolutionary.'<sup>14</sup>

To illustrate the effect of the 'distorting lens' of the state system on 'universal ideologies', I analyse two contemporary practices of International Society – humanitarian intervention and economic conditionality – that have particularly profound impacts on Third World societies. Both may be understood as disciplinary practices intended to enforce conformity with political and economic norms that rest on moral cosmopolitical foundations. Although institutions are involved to different degrees in both practices, I argue that it is states,

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<sup>12</sup> Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 82.

<sup>13</sup> The argument recalls E. H. Carr's critique of the doctrine of harmony of interests. Carr argues that it is 'natural' (read: rational) for the dominant groups in a community to conflate their interests with those of the community as a whole and to proclaim them as such (E. H. Carr, *The Twenty Years' Crisis 1919-1939* (London: Macmillan, 1949), 87).

<sup>14</sup> Bull, *Anarchical Society*, 84.

particularly powerful states, that play the key role in interpreting and enforcing these norms. In section 2.2, I construe these practices as exemplars of moral cosmopolitanism without institutional cosmopolitanism. In line with the broader methodological intent of this thesis to consider both politics and ethics (section 1.2.2), I outline the political contexts in which the practices of humanitarian intervention and economic conditionality emerged (section 2.2), before moving on to a discussion of the ethical problems that moral without institutional cosmopolitanism raises in both contexts (section 2.3).

## **2.2 Moral without institutional cosmopolitanism**

### *2.2.1 Humanitarian intervention*

The normative debate over ‘humanitarian intervention’ basically centres on the question of when, if ever, it is appropriate to take coercive action against a sovereign state for the purpose of protecting those of its citizens who are at risk as a result of neglect or wilful misconduct on the part of that state. That it might sometimes be appropriate to take such action is a paradigmatically liberal cosmopolitan notion. If, as liberal cosmopolitans assert, individual human beings are ultimate units of concern, with this status attaching to all human beings, equally, vis-à-vis everyone else, then sovereign boundaries are of moral worth only to the extent that they are of value to individuals. When they cease to be of value to individuals, in circumstances of severe and widespread violations of human rights for example, liberal cosmopolitans would argue that it is permissible (or, in stronger versions of the thesis, obligatory) to intervene to protect those individuals from further harm.<sup>15</sup>

Before considering the ethical questions provoked by this claim, it would be useful to recall the political context within which the contemporary debate over humanitarian intervention has reopened. Writing in 1984, Bull noted that intervention in the Third World had become much more difficult following the Second World War, than it had been in the interwar period or, of course, in the heyday of European imperialism. Bull attributed the increasing difficulty of intervention to five factors: the growth of a Third World will and capacity to resist intervention, the weakening of the West’s will to intervene, the growing power of the Soviet Union, the operation of the general balance of power and the fear that intervention by either of the superpowers or their allies outside their respective spheres of influence might escalate Cold War hostilities, and finally the emergence of a new normative climate that was

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<sup>15</sup> See for example, Fernando R. Teson, *Humanitarian Intervention: An Inquiry into Law and Morality* (Irvington-on-Hudson: Transnational Publishers, 1997), 118; Fernando R. Teson, *A Philosophy of International Law* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1998), 1, 40.

unfavourable to intervention.<sup>16</sup> This last was due in no small measure to an emphasis on the more statist commitments of the UN Charter<sup>17</sup> in state practice and in numerous resolutions reaffirming those commitments.<sup>18</sup> Bull correctly notes that the normative consensus against intervention was particularly hostile to Western intervention in the Third World, which was seen as portending a regression to colonialism.

In practice, of course, both superpowers intervened frequently and flagrantly in their respective client states – the US in accordance with the perceived imperatives of its ‘containment’ policy, and the USSR under the terms of its proclaimed Brezhnev Doctrine. Nor did the apparent normative consensus against intervention seem to prevent intervention by Third World states in each other’s affairs (recall interventions by India in East Pakistan (1971), Vietnam in Cambodia (1979) and Tanzania in Uganda (1979)). Crucially, none of these interventions were justified in humanitarian terms, even though they might plausibly have been, given the massive human rights abuses that might be said to have occasioned them. Nicholas Wheeler argues that the fact that humanitarian justifications were not invoked in any<sup>19</sup> of these cases despite the plausibility that such a claim might have enjoyed suggests that ‘humanitarian claims were not accepted as a legitimate basis for the use of force in the 1970s’.<sup>20</sup> Indeed as recently as 1986, the British Foreign Office could categorically assert that

[The] overwhelming majority of contemporary legal opinion comes down against the existence of a right of humanitarian intervention for three main reasons: First, the UN Charter and the corpus of modern international law do not seem to specifically incorporate such a right; secondly, state practice in the past two centuries, and especially since 1945, at best provides only a handful of genuine cases of humanitarian intervention, and, on most assessments, none at all; and finally, on prudential grounds, the scope for abusing such a right argues strongly against its creation...in essence, therefore, the case against making humanitarian intervention an exception to the principles of non-intervention is that its doubtful benefits would be heavily outweighed by its costs in terms of respect for international law.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Hedley Bull, ‘Intervention in the Third World’, in *Intervention in World Politics*, ed. Hedley Bull (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 138.

<sup>17</sup> These are particularly evident in arts. 2(1), 2(4) and 2(7), which guarantee the sovereign equality and territorial integrity of states and prohibit intervention in ‘matters which are essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of any state’.

<sup>18</sup> See for example the Declaration on Granting Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, G. A. Res. 1514 (XV), U. N. Doc. A/4684 (1961); Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of their Independence and Sovereignty, G. A. Res. 2131 (XX), U. N. Doc. A/Res/2131 (XX)/Rev. 1 (1966). I discuss these at greater length in the following chapter.

<sup>19</sup> India made a feeble attempt at invoking humanitarian claims, but rested the bulk of its argument on an alleged right of self-defence against ‘refugee aggression’ caused by the influx of nearly 10 million refugees from East Pakistan.

<sup>20</sup> Nicholas J. Wheeler, *Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 8, and chapters 2,3 and 4.

<sup>21</sup> Foreign & Commonwealth Office, Foreign Policy Document No. 148, *British Yearbook of International Law* 57 (1986): 614.

Evidently, states can change their minds rather quickly. Had Bull lived to see the end of the Cold War, he would no doubt have commented on the seismic shifts that heralded a new era that was far more receptive to claims of humanitarian intervention. Most obviously, the Soviet Union had collapsed, making way for what many saw as a unipolar world. In a 1993 speech widely regarded as setting out US priorities for that world, then US National Security Advisor Anthony Lake declared that ‘the successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement...of the world’s free community of market democracies’.<sup>22</sup> Enlargement was seen to entail, first, ‘strengthen[ing] the core of major market democracies’, second, ‘help[ing] democracy and markets expand and survive in other places where [the US had] the strongest security concerns and where [it could] make the greatest difference’, third, ‘minimis[ing] the ability of states outside the circle of democracy and markets to threaten it’, and fourth, humanitarian goals which were described, somewhat vaguely, as ‘play[ing] an important supporting role in [US] efforts to expand democracy and markets’.<sup>23</sup> In addition to the systemic changes that seemed to invite Western efforts to spread democracy and markets, changes within Western societies and electorates also prompted a renewal of the interventionist impulse. As David Chandler notes, centre-left parties increasingly saw the articulation of ‘Third Way’ policies that rejected traditional political programmes of the Left and Right and focused instead on ethics and morality, as the most effective means of connecting with a citizenship alienated from party politics. One consequence was that ethical foreign policies began to be seen as a central component of domestic legitimacy.<sup>24</sup> In light of these systemic and state-level changes, powerful Western states faced a dramatically altered set of incentives in deciding whether and how to respond to humanitarian crises in other parts of the world.

Nevertheless, humanitarian intervention – as a particular species of coercive action – continues to be governed by a legal regime on the use of force that has remained largely unaltered (in letter, if not in spirit) since the end of the Second World War. Article 2(4) of the UN Charter prohibits the use of force ‘against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the Purposes of the United Nations’. This general rule is subject to two exceptions – Article 51, which preserves the inherent right of states to individual or collective self-defence in case of armed attack, and

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<sup>22</sup> Anthony Lake, ‘From Containment to Enlargement’, Address to the School of Advanced International Studies (Johns Hopkins University), Washington, DC, 21 September 1993, <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/lakedoc.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> David Chandler, *From Kosovo to Kabul: Human Rights and International Intervention* (London: Pluto Press, 2002), 63.

Article 42, which permits the Security Council to authorise the use of force should this be necessary to maintain or restore international peace or security. The earliest humanitarian interventions of the post-Cold War era (the establishment of no-fly zones and safe havens in Iraq between 1991-93, the delivery of humanitarian aid in Somalia in 1992-93, the tragically belated intervention in Rwanda in June 1994, and the delivery of aid and the subsequent defence of 'safe havens' in Bosnia in 1992-93) all took place under cover of explicit authorisations for the use of force from the Security Council.<sup>25</sup>

NATO's intervention in Kosovo in March 1999 marked a decisive break<sup>26</sup> from this pattern because it had not received the prior authorisation of the Council. The Council had passed two resolutions addressing the human rights situation in Kosovo, and the ensuing legal debate was split between those arguing that the resolutions provided implicit authorisation for NATO intervention,<sup>27</sup> those arguing that the explicit authorisation of the Security Council was needed<sup>28</sup> and a minority asserting a right of unilateral humanitarian intervention.<sup>29</sup> For the purposes of my broader argument, I do not need to resolve this legal debate. Rather I am interested in a particular view of the NATO intervention that, while candidly acknowledging its illegality, nevertheless defended its legitimacy. This view regarded the intervention as legitimate, in an immediate sense because it was thought to have halted the slaughter of Kosovar Albanians,<sup>30</sup> and in a more long-term sense because of its supposed contribution (in

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<sup>25</sup> The relevant Security Council resolutions are 688 (Iraq), 794 (Somalia), 929 (Rwanda) and 770 and 836 (Bosnia). For an analysis of the diversity of motivations that shaped voting behaviour in the Security Council in each of these episodes, see Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, 141-46 (Iraq), 182-87 (Somalia), 232 (Rwanda), 251-57 (Bosnia).

<sup>26</sup> It is sometimes argued that interventions by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) in the Liberian civil war in 1990 and in Sierra Leone in 1997 were precedents for intervention by a regional organisation without prior Security Council authorisation. In both cases the Council was seen to have given retrospective authorisation for intervention via resolutions 788 and 866 (Liberia) and resolution 1132 (Sierra Leone). For an account of why I think neither of these ECOWAS military actions deserve to be called 'interventions', see chapter 3, footnote 36.

<sup>27</sup> This appeared to be the view of the then NATO Secretary General Javier Solana who, in a letter to permanent representatives of NATO member-states dated 9 October 1998, sought to justify the legality of threatening or using force against the FRY with reference to the Security Council resolutions. However the letter also mentions the unlikelihood of obtaining explicit Security Council authorisation due to the threat of a Russian veto, thereby betraying a sense that such authorisation was desirable, if not strictly necessary (see Bruno Simma, 'NATO, the UN and the Use of Force: Legal Aspects', *European Journal of International Law* 10, no. 1 (1999): 1-22).

<sup>28</sup> For an argument that the Security Council must expressly determine that military measures are necessary, see Jules Lobel & Michael Ratner, 'Bypassing the Security Council: Ambiguous Authorisations to Use Force, Cease-fires and the Iraqi Inspection Regime', *American Journal of International Law* 93, no. 1 (1999): 128.

<sup>29</sup> Geoffrey Robertson, *Crimes Against Humanity: The Struggle for Global Justice* (London: Penguin Books, 2002), 431-32.

<sup>30</sup> This assumption has to be tempered by the finding that NATO's aerial bombardment did little to stop ethnic cleansing by Serb forces and that Milosevic's eventual surrender was a result, not only of losses suffered as a result of the air war, but also of diplomatic desertion by Russia and the threat of a ground offensive (Ivo H. Daalder & Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Winning Ugly: NATO's War to Save Kosovo*

the words of Allen Buchanan) ‘to the development of a new, morally progressive rule of international law according to which humanitarian intervention without Security Council authorisation is sometimes permissible’.<sup>31</sup> Buchanan’s view was in fact articulated by a minority of state elites associated with the intervention: Günter Verheugen, who would go on to become Minister of State in the German Foreign Ministry, is quoted as saying ‘one can imagine a situation in which the level of violence became so great that every decent person would say something had to be done to end the killing. If Russia...uses its Security Council veto one could say this was an abuse of the veto and argue the primacy of halting the slaughter is greater than formal respect of international law’.<sup>32</sup> In essence, this position sees existing institutional authorisation procedures as impediments to moral progress and the unilateral recourse to force by powerful states as morally preferable, given the urgency of the imperative of halting human rights abuse.<sup>33</sup>

This line of argument is a paradigmatic illustration of a move away from institutional cosmopolitanism (in the highly imperfect forms in which it already exists), and a preference for the pursuit of moral cosmopolitanism by states. It might be objected that the requirement of UN authorisation for the use of force (other than in self-defence) does not represent a meaningful form of institutional cosmopolitanism. The UN is, after all, an organisation of states and much of its Charter and practice in the first sixty years of its existence has vindicated the rights of states.<sup>34</sup> Yet if we understand institutional cosmopolitanism in the sense described by Beitz – ‘the distinctive common feature is some ideal of world political organisation in which states and state-like units have significantly diminished authority in comparison with the status quo and supranational institutions have more’<sup>35</sup> – then the UN Charter’s attempted monopolisation of the legitimate authorisation of coercion (other than in

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(Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2000), 200, 210; Stephen T. Hosmer, *The Conflict over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle when he did* (Santa Monica: RAND, 2001), 87).

<sup>31</sup> Allen Buchanan, ‘Reforming the international law of humanitarian intervention’, in *Humanitarian Intervention: Ethical, Legal, and Political Dilemmas*, eds. J. L. Holzgrefe & Robert O. Keohane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 132. See also Allen Buchanan, *Justice, Legitimacy, and Self-Determination: moral foundations for international law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), chapter 11; Michael J. Glennon, ‘The New Interventionism: The Search for a Just International Law’, *Foreign Affairs* 78, no. 3 (1999): 5, 7.

<sup>32</sup> Cited from Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, 277. Wheeler draws attention to the uniqueness of the German position, which – in contrast to other NATO governments – did not argue that there was a legal basis for the intervention.

<sup>33</sup> For a similar view, see the work of W. Michael Reisman, especially, ‘Coercion and Self-Determination: Construing Charter Article 2(4)’, *American Journal of International Law* 78, no. 3 (1984): 642; ‘Criteria for the Lawful Use of Force in International Law’, *Yale Journal of International Law* 10, no. 2 (1985): 279; ‘Sovereignty and Human Rights in Contemporary International Law’, *American Journal of International Law* 84, no.4 (1990): 875; ‘Kosovo’s Antinomies’, *American Journal of International Law* 93, no. 4 (1999): 860.

<sup>34</sup> But see Darrel Moellendorf, *Cosmopolitan Justice* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002), chapter 1, for a reading of the UN Charter as containing both statist and cosmopolitan commitments.

<sup>35</sup> Beitz, ‘Cosmopolitan liberalism and the states system’, 124.

self-defence) can be understood as a significant move in the direction of institutional cosmopolitanism. This already existing institutional cosmopolitanism has now fallen into disrepute, not because of the spectre of ‘tyranny’ often raised in more abstract discussions of institutional cosmopolitanism, but on grounds of illegitimacy, thanks to the casting – or threatened casting – of ‘illiberal’ and ‘unreasonable’ vetoes by states like Russia and China.<sup>36</sup>

My characterisation of Buchanan’s view as a paradigmatic illustration of the move from institutional cosmopolitanism towards the pursuit of moral cosmopolitanism by states, is subject to a further objection. It might be argued that Buchanan’s departure from existing UN authorisation procedures does not represent a wholesale jettisoning of institutional cosmopolitanism. Indeed, Buchanan is careful to clarify that the issue of whether NATO’s illegal intervention would bring about a moral improvement of the international system depends on the precise character of the norm that the intervention is likely to contribute to the establishment of: ‘There is all the difference in the world between regarding NATO’s intervention as an intervention by a military alliance and as an intervention by a military alliance of liberal-democratic states, with the accountability that this implies.’<sup>37</sup> Buchanan’s preference is for the latter reading – indeed his support for the illegal intervention is premised on the hope that the precedent it sets will be read in this fashion. Yet if the source of his comfort is the ‘accountability’ that NATO action implies, he is surely overlooking the US’s preference for working through this organisation because of the relatively greater latitude (and correspondingly less accountability) it has always enjoyed in this institutional arena as compared to, say, the UN.<sup>38</sup>

In any case, perhaps his position is better read as a severely pared-down institutional cosmopolitanism, with the circle of membership in deliberative structures being restricted to liberal-democratic states. Although representation in this attenuated form of institutional cosmopolitanism is less than universal, the institution continues to make decisions (presumably guided by the precepts of moral cosmopolitanism) that are universal in scope and effect. In this view, representatives of illiberal-undemocratic states may legitimately be

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<sup>36</sup> ‘Tyranny’ has connotations of hyper-potency; here the problem is seen as one of stagnation, paralysis, inaction.

<sup>37</sup> Buchanan, ‘Reforming the international law of humanitarian intervention’, 167.

<sup>38</sup> In a throwaway comment made in the entirely different context of NATO enlargement, former US Secretary of State Madeleine Albright nonetheless shines a light on US attitudes towards the organisation. Remarking on US diplomacy surrounding the enlargement process, she says ‘Since NATO acts by consensus, our declaration essentially settled the matter’ (Madeleine Albright, *Madam Secretary: A Memoir* (New York: Macmillan, 2003), 259).

ignored in this process because they cannot be regarded as agents of their people.<sup>39</sup> Yet the justification for this attenuated form of institutional cosmopolitanism rests on the additional premise that liberal states – guided by the precepts of moral cosmopolitanism – are better able to comprehend the interests of people living in illiberal states than the de jure representatives of the latter. This additional premise assumes that liberal vanguard states are better able to apprehend and further the interests of societies governed by illiberal elites, most of which are located in the Third World. I will take issue with this premise in section 2.3. Before that, I want to consider how the practice of economic conditionality is similarly underpinned by moral cosmopolitanism whilst demonstrating a disdain for institutional cosmopolitanism.

### *2.2.2 Economic conditionality*

The political story of economic conditionality begins with the oil shocks of 1973, when members of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) virtually quadrupled the world price of oil in an attempt to increase their leverage vis-à-vis oil companies. Commercial banks flush with petrodollars and looking for ways to profitably recycle this money, found ready customers in oil-importing developing countries, which now faced huge oil import bills. As a result, lending and debt soared through the 1970s. When the US Federal Reserve hiked interest rates in 1979 in an attempt to control inflation through contractionary monetary policies, debtors suddenly faced exponentially higher interest rates and found themselves unable to comply with repayment schedules. Creditor banks were unwilling to extend new loans and politically conservative administrations then in power in Western states (Reagan in the US, Thatcher in the UK and Kohl in Germany) were loath to extend economic assistance to developing countries. Yet the scale of the crisis, the extent to which large international commercial banks were overexposed and the consequent vulnerability of the international financial system as a whole made some sort of state intervention imperative.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) became the lead agency in managing the debt crisis. In return for providing credit (together with banks and Western governments) to enable debtors to meet their repayment schedules, it demanded that indebted countries undertake measures aimed at ‘stabilisation’. In the short-term, these were aimed at reversing acute balance of payments deficits by requiring governments to reduce public sector expenditure and investment, eliminate subsidies, increase taxes, increase interest rates to discourage capital flight and control inflation, and (often) devalue the national currency in order to boost exports and improve the trade balance. Concomitantly, the IMF’s sister institution – the

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<sup>39</sup> Buchanan, ‘Reforming the international law of humanitarian intervention’, 152; Teson, *Philosophy of International Law*, 25.

International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank) – recommended policies of ‘adjustment’, which were concerned with promoting longer-term economic recovery and institutionalising elements of the reform measures introduced as part of shorter-term IMF stabilisation efforts. Broadly, adjustment was intended to reduce and redirect state economic intervention and increase reliance on the market for the allocation of scarce resources and commodities. It typically comprised major fiscal policy reform, trade and financial sector liberalisation and privatisation. This package of policy measures would subsequently be labelled the ‘Washington Consensus’ by economist John Williamson.<sup>40</sup> Debt management has essentially been a bargaining process (still ongoing) in which borrower countries pursuing significant economic reform along the lines of the Washington Consensus, have been ‘rewarded’ – with debt rescheduling (1982-85), fresh inflows of money under the Baker Plan (1985-89), some degree of market-based writing down of debt under the Brady Plan (1989-96) and more comprehensive debt-forgiveness under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) initiative (1996 onwards).<sup>41</sup>

Since at least the signing of the Atlantic Charter in 1941, it has been the declared policy of the US, UK and their allies to create an open international trading system and to promote liberal capitalism more broadly as the best means of organising international economic relations. For much of their postcolonial history, most Third World countries resisted full incorporation into this system, attempting to pursue policies of import-substitution within protected economies with a view to reducing their vulnerability to external economic shocks. Yet their desperate need for funds and consequently diminished bargaining power during the debt crisis provided a window of opportunity for international financial institutions (IFIs), and the powerful states that dominate them, to globalise liberal capitalism. While public goods theorists have shed much light on why it might be in the rational interests of a liberal hegemon to provide a liberal international economic order,<sup>42</sup> there has always also been a moral dimension to the

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<sup>40</sup> For a pithy summary, see John Williamson, ‘In Search of a Manual for Technopols’ (Appendix), in *The Political Economy of Policy Reform*, ed. John Williamson (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1994), 26-28.

<sup>41</sup> For detailed analyses of these successive phases of the debt crisis, see Stephany Griffith-Jones ed., *Managing World Debt* (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988); Thomas J. Biersteker ed., *Dealing with Debt: International Financial Negotiations and Adjustment Bargaining* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993); Nancy Birdsall, John Williamson & Brian Deese, *Delivering on Debt Relief: From IMF Gold to a New Aid Architecture* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics & Centre for Global Development, 2002).

<sup>42</sup> See for example Charles Kindleberger, ‘Dominance and Leadership in the International Economy: Exploitation, Public Goods and Free Rides’, *International Studies Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (1981): 242-54; Robert O. Keohane, ‘The Theory of Hegemonic Stability and Changes in International Economic Regimes, 1967-77’, in *Change in the International System*, eds. Ole R. Holsti, Randolph M. Siverson & Alexander L. George (Boulder: Westview Press, 1980), 131-62.

public justification of such an order. It is here that we can begin to see how liberal cosmopolitanism underpins the contemporary practice of economic conditionality.

At a foundational level, proponents of liberal capitalism would argue that individual freedom, which is the core concern of liberalism as a political philosophy, entails the freedom to engage in economic exchange. The intellectual pedigree of this belief in the essential inseparability of political and economic freedom is traced to John Locke's affirmation of the natural rights of all men to life, liberty and property.<sup>43</sup> (Yet the normative assertion that these rights ought to be enjoyed in combination is distinct from the empirical observation that they have in fact been separable. There are so many instances of economic liberalisation without political liberalisation<sup>44</sup> and vice versa,<sup>45</sup> that even the staunchest proponents of liberal capitalist-democracy argue only that there is a high degree of correlation – but no causal relationship – between political and economic freedom.<sup>46</sup>) In addition, the moral defence of global liberal capitalism frequently invokes Immanuel Kant's observation that the interdependence fostered by the 'spirit of commerce' might reinforce perpetual peace amongst states.<sup>47</sup> (Yet Kant is an extraordinarily dubious authority to invoke in support of unrestricted economic globalisation. He is harshly critical of 'the *inhospitable* conduct of the civilised states...especially the commercial states, the injustice which they display in *visiting* foreign countries and peoples (which in their case is the same as *conquering* them)' and commends the behaviour of states resistant to being drawn into relations of unrestricted trade: 'China and Japan, having had experience of such guests, have wisely placed restrictions on them.'<sup>48</sup>)

Despite the evident contestability of the moral defence of global liberal capitalism, the assertion that free markets and free peoples go together has been a staple of US foreign policy ever since the signing of the Atlantic Charter. As the 2006 National Security Strategy proclaims: 'Promoting free and fair trade has long been a bedrock tenet of American foreign

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<sup>43</sup> For a contemporary invocation of the argument, see Martin Wolf, *Why Globalization Works: The Case for the Global Market Economy* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 25, who sees personal liberty as the strongest basis for argument in favour of capital mobility (82).

<sup>44</sup> For example, the economic liberalisation of Latin American states under military dictatorships and of East Asian states under various kinds of authoritarian rule.

<sup>45</sup> For example, India's largely Communist-ruled states of Kerala and West Bengal, which have been liberal democratic since 1947 but have experienced high degrees of state intervention in the economy including the most extensive land reform programmes that have been conducted anywhere in the country.

<sup>46</sup> Wolf, *Why Globalization Works*, 30; Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin, 1992), 125. See also my discussion at the end of section 3.3.1.

<sup>47</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 114.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, 106-07.

policy. Greater economic freedom is ultimately inseparable from political liberty. Economic freedom empowers individuals, and empowered individuals increasingly demand greater political freedom.<sup>49</sup> Whether or not there is a causal relationship between political and economic freedom and whatever the direction of that causality, the public justification for the global extension of liberal capitalism draws on liberal cosmopolitan foundations: namely, on the idea of guaranteeing individual freedom the world over. Like humanitarian intervention, economic conditionality – which is essentially a means of propagating liberal capitalist principles of economic organisation – can be seen as being underpinned by liberal cosmopolitanism. Admittedly, moral arguments are not foregrounded as starkly in the justification of liberal capitalism (which is usually advocated on grounds of efficiency, innovation, etc.) as they are in the advocacy of humanitarian intervention. But they are nevertheless always to be found hovering in the sidelines, pressed into service whenever appropriate.

Yet unlike the emerging practice of unilateral humanitarian intervention, economic conditionality is implemented by institutions (the IMF and the World Bank), so on the face of things, it does not seem appropriate for me to characterise the practice of economic conditionality as a case of moral cosmopolitanism without institutional cosmopolitanism. Although institutions are a more significant intervening variable in the practice of economic conditionality than they are in the case of humanitarian intervention, a closer analysis of deliberative structures within the IFIs suggests that in their current form, they are very far from what one might imagine a meaningful institutional cosmopolitanism to look like. As I have said earlier, detailed specifications of cosmopolitan institutional design are outside the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, I take ‘meaningful institutional cosmopolitanism’ to entail the institutionalisation of the liberal cosmopolitan premise that the claims of all individuals affected by a particular policy should be weighted equally.

There may be a variety of ways of doing this, but representation within the IFIs currently does not even approximate this guiding principle. Voting power in both institutions is unequal and weighted, in accordance with a country’s shareholding in the case of the Bank,<sup>50</sup> and its relative weight in the world economy in the case of the IMF.<sup>51</sup> This results in a situation where one country – the US – with 4.6% of the world’s population has a 17.1% voting share, giving it a veto over decisions requiring a majority of 85%. On the other hand, 44 of the 45

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<sup>49</sup> White House, ‘The National Security Strategy’, March 2006, section VI, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/sectionVI.html>.

<sup>50</sup> See <http://www.worldbank.org/>

<sup>51</sup> See <http://www.imf.org/external/np/exr/facts/quotas.htm>

Sub-Saharan African members of the IMF (with roughly 10% of the world's population) have a voting share of 4.4%. The 40 HIPC countries – which might be regarded as having the most 'intensive care' relationship with the IFIs – have a combined voting share of 2.29% in the IMF.<sup>52</sup> Three-quarters of the member states of each of the IMF and the World Bank are not directly represented on the Board of Executive Directors or in the senior management of either institution, and many have virtually no nationals even working on the staff.<sup>53</sup> As currently structured, the IFIs lack the mechanisms that might ensure that they took seriously the liberal cosmopolitan imperative that the claims of all individuals affected by their policies be weighted equally.

While drawing attention to the grossly unequal representation of the world's people within the IFIs, Ngaire Woods has cautioned against a view of these institutions that sees their work as being dictated by the preferences of their most powerful shareholders. She argues that the attitudes of borrowing Third World governments as well as the bureaucracy of the institutions themselves are crucial additional variables shaping their output. In her view, the IFIs are most effective in deploying coercive power to implement their technical advice when they are able to work with sympathetic interlocutors *within* borrowing countries who are willing and able to put conditionality into effect.<sup>54</sup> This is a view that appears to distribute agency for the implementation of conditionality more widely than I have suggested above, yet a closer look at the additional variables Woods highlights suggests that these might also be heavily shaped by the preferences of powerful states.

Looking first at the notion of 'sympathetic interlocutors', I would argue that it is important to ask, on a case-by-case basis, how 'sympathy' towards the Washington Consensus is produced. Our moral judgments of particular beliefs are surely influenced by a knowledge of the processes by which they were reached and the mechanisms by which they are sustained. Is sympathy towards the Washington Consensus the result of moral conviction, instrumental calculation or coercion that leaves no meaningful room for choice?<sup>55</sup> While economic conditionality is likely to have had sympathetic interlocutors in virtually every country in which it has been successfully implemented, the fact that it frequently takes an economic

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<sup>52</sup> Cyrus Rustomjee, 'Improving Southern Voice on the IMF Board: Quo Vadis Shareholders?', in *Accountability of the International Monetary Fund*, eds. Barry Carin & Angela Wood (Ashgate: IDRC, 2005), [http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-85017-201-1-DO\\_TOPIC.html](http://www.idrc.ca/en/ev-85017-201-1-DO_TOPIC.html)

<sup>53</sup> Ngaire Woods, *The Globalizers: The IMF, the World Bank and Their Borrowers* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2006), 190-93.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, 4, 82-83.

<sup>55</sup> For more on the significance of whether adherence to norms is ensured by belief, calculation or coercion, see Barry Buzan, *From International to World Society? English School Theory and the Social Structure of Globalisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 103-08, 130-31.

crisis of some magnitude for these interlocutors to obtain the political space within their own countries to implement desired reforms suggests, first, that prior to the crisis these interlocutors were in a political minority, and second, that circumstances of crisis were responsible for broadening consent for their views. Yet consent obtained under duress of harsh economic circumstances is surely dubious. One graphic illustration of the coercive production of ‘sympathy’ is provided by Brazilian President Lula da Silva’s departure from his more left-wing rhetoric in response to the depreciation of the Brazilian real during his 2002 presidential campaign. We might view this as a case where the threat of punishment by the market disciplines interlocutors into being more sympathetic than they might otherwise have been, to the views of actors who wield greatest agency in the market – foreign investors, rating agencies such as Moody and Standard & Poor, IFIs and their powerful shareholders.

Consider next the institutional culture of the IFIs, which is also said to affect the content and implementation of conditionality. Woods argues that institutional culture is powerfully shaped by the provenance and training of the IFIs’ staff. As of 1991, 80% of World Bank senior staff had been trained at institutions in the US or UK; as of 2002, 59% of IMF economists were graduates of North American universities.<sup>56</sup> More pointedly, a significant proportion of sympathetic interlocutors within borrowing countries have often been educated in similar institutions. Many have even moved from careers in the IFIs to crucial policymaking positions within their own countries. This is particularly true of the two countries I study in more detail in chapter 5 – Mexico and India.<sup>57</sup> British and North American universities are not purveyors of a uniform ideology – the best are often bastions of dissent, yet even these have to disseminate enough of what passes as the common sense of the day in their host countries to be taken seriously in influential circles and the market at large. The common intellectual provenance of IFI staff and sympathetic interlocutors within borrowing countries gives them roughly compatible worldviews and enables smoother working relationships. It also underscores the extent to which universities (and, by extension, the states in which they are located) occupy a gate-keeping position in regulating access to the IFIs – and, indeed, virtually all institutions of global governance.

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<sup>56</sup> Woods, *The Globalizers*, 53-54.

<sup>57</sup> Hailed by *The Economist* as ‘probably the most economically literate group that has ever governed any nation anywhere’, the administration of Mexican President Carlos Salinas de Gortari (himself a Harvard-trained economist), which implemented a key package of reforms in the wake of the 1982 debt crisis, featured a significant number of North American-trained economists. For an account emphasising the importance of intellectual background of the key figures behind India’s implementation of conditionality from 1991 onwards – most of whom had studied or worked in Britain or the US – see Vanita Shastri, ‘The politics of economic liberalisation in India’, *Contemporary South Asia* 6, no. 1 (1997): 27-56.

What I have been trying to suggest in the foregoing paragraphs is that the additional variables that Woods argues are vital to understanding the content and effectiveness of conditionality – the attitudes of key interlocutors in borrowing governments and the institutional culture of the IFIs – are not easily separable from the preferences of powerful shareholding countries. Thus, although institutions *are* a more significant intervening variable in the implementation of economic conditionality than they appear to be in the emerging practice of unilateral humanitarian intervention by states, a closer look at the working of the IFIs suggests that powerful states continue to have the decisive influence within them. This influence is most explicit where their interests are directly at stake, but is also exercised more subtly in the production of sympathetic interlocutors and in the gate-keeping role that these states play in regulating entry into the bureaucracy of the IFIs. Far from exemplifying a meaningful institutional cosmopolitanism, the IFIs are largely driven by the preferences of powerful states.

In the following section I suggest that when practices such as humanitarian intervention and economic conditionality that appear normatively compelling in their moral cosmopolitical foundations, are implemented by powerful states with little regard for institutional cosmopolitanism, they undergo severe distortions. The resulting dynamic is more appropriately described as coercive solidarism.

### **2.3 Coercive solidarism as distorted moral cosmopolitanism**

Evident in the practice of both humanitarian intervention and economic conditionality is a dynamic in which powerful states claim to advance the normative agenda of International Society, by acting either unilaterally or through institutions in which they wield disproportionate influence. This is, in effect, a drive to thicken the scope of consensus on the norms of International Society – a phenomenon that English School theorists would call ‘solidarism’. Having described the extent to which coercion is deployed in promoting the dissemination of norms via practices of humanitarian intervention and economic conditionality, I would argue that it is appropriate to describe them as cases of coercive solidarism.

Solidarism differs from the ‘pluralist’ account of International Society in the view it takes of the area of actual or potential agreement among states over the norms that govern that society.<sup>58</sup> Pluralism sees this agreement in minimalist terms, as guaranteeing only the

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<sup>58</sup> Hedley Bull, ‘The Grotian Conception of International Society’ (1966), in *Hedley Bull on International Society*, eds. Kai Alderson & Andrew Hurrell (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 97.

coexistence of states, which have the liberty to pursue their own ends subject to the minimal constraints necessary to guarantee this liberty to all. Solidarism is more concerned with the interests of International Society as a whole rather than the independence of the states of which it is made up. The norms of solidarist International Society are more ambitious in the scope and range of their concerns, reaching substantive conclusions on the purposes or ends that International Society ought to pursue. In addition, solidarism is more permissive about the sources of norms, refusing to see state consent as the sole basis of obligation. And it is concerned with the more effective implementation of norms, through coercive intervention if necessary.<sup>59</sup>

Thus liberal solidarism, as a particular species of solidarism,<sup>60</sup> views the implementation of liberal political and economic norms as a legitimate purpose of International Society. Crucially, solidarism does not claim to transcend organised particularity – it continues to accept states as the primary members of International Society.<sup>61</sup> By implication, liberal solidarism sees liberal states as the agents of implementation of liberal norms in International Society. Liberal solidarism is thus best viewed as a particular method of giving effect to liberal cosmopolitanism within the ‘organised particularity’ of the actually existing state system. In this section I will argue that it is a deeply flawed method, for when the imperatives of liberal cosmopolitanism are refracted through what Bull called the ‘distorting lens’ of the state system, they undergo severe distortions that have welfare-impairing consequences for Third World societies.

Solidarism has long been subject to critique on both prudential and moral grounds. The prudential critique argues that the increasing normative ambition of solidarism might rupture the fabric of international order, by disrupting those institutions that traditionally maintain order in International Society (sovereignty, non-intervention, balance of power, etc.).<sup>62</sup> The moral critique is that solidarism restricts the scope of permissible ends in International

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<sup>59</sup> Kai Alderson & Andrew Hurrell, ‘Bull’s Conception of International Society’, in *Hedley Bull on International Society*, eds. Kai Alderson & Andrew Hurrell (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 7-10.

<sup>60</sup> I agree with Barry Buzan’s reminder that different kinds of solidarism are possible. Solidarism entails a convergence in the norms, rules, institutions and goals of the states concerned, but it does not imply a particular content to those norms. The theoretical category ‘solidarism’ can accommodate the solidarity of communist and Islamic states as easily as that of liberal states (Buzan, *From International to World Society?*, 147). I disagree with Buzan’s reduction of ‘cosmopolitanism’ to ‘liberal cosmopolitanism’ (59, 139) for reasons set out in section 1.2.1. In any case, my discussion of different substantive conceptions of cosmopolitanism in section 1.2.1, of moral and institutional cosmopolitanism in section 2.1, and of pluralism and solidarism in section 2.3, should make it clear that I am not equating solidarism with cosmopolitanism. Liberal solidarism is a particular method of giving effect to liberal cosmopolitanism in the Society of states – one that I argue is deeply flawed.

<sup>61</sup> R. J. Vincent, *Human Rights and International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

<sup>62</sup> Bull, ‘The Grotian Conception of International Society’, 114.

Society, thereby curtailing the liberty of political communities. These problems become evident upon scrutiny of the process by which the area of normative agreement between states is to be expanded. It may be that states come to see solidarism as a necessary functional response to their increasing interdependence or the proliferation of ‘new’ threats with which humanity as a whole is faced, and thereby *consensually* move towards that end.<sup>63</sup> More likely, solidarist norms will have to be promoted by ‘norm entrepreneurs’ who attempt to persuade a critical mass of states to become norm leaders and adopt new norms.<sup>64</sup> Where liberal solidarist values are concerned, the critical states are likely to be liberal states, who both profess to hold these norms and have the power to implement them in states that do not already do so.<sup>65</sup> In order to justify this further step of implementation prior to universal acceptance by the Society of states, liberal states must claim ‘guardianship of human rights everywhere’<sup>66</sup> – a claim that implies an ability to apprehend the interests of humanity as a whole. This claim is viewed with extreme suspicion outside the solidarist vanguard for four reasons, which I describe below as the problems of interest, accountability, culpability and imperial continuity. I will discuss each of these in turn, in the contexts of both humanitarian intervention and economic conditionality.

### 2.3.1 *The problem of interests*

Humanitarian intervention by liberal ‘guardian’ states is premised on their claim to being better able to represent the interests of populations ‘orphaned’ in International Society by the unrepresentativeness of their own states. Yet ‘guardian’ states, even when professing humanitarian objectives, have rarely dropped the language of national interest. In a 1999 speech attempting to present the case for military intervention in Kosovo without UN authorisation, British Prime Minister Tony Blair stated that

...our actions are guided by a more subtle blend of mutual self-interest and moral purpose in defending the values we cherish. In the end, values and interests merge. If we can establish and spread the values of liberty, the rule of law, human rights and an open society then that is in our national interests too. The spread of our values makes us safer.<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Hedley Bull, ‘Justice in International Relations: The 1983 Hagey Lectures (1984)’, in *Hedley Bull on International Society*, eds. Kai Alderson & Andrew Hurrell (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), 219-22.

<sup>64</sup> Martha Finnemore & Kathryn Sikkink, ‘International Norm Dynamics and Political Change’, *International Organisation* 52, no. 4 (1994): 901.

<sup>65</sup> For an explicit call for liberal states to act as a vanguard, see Martin Shaw, *Global Society and International Relations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1994), 181; Fukuyama, *The End of History*, 276-84. For a survey of English School views on the desirability of relying on the Society of states to act as agent of moral progress, see Nicholas J. Wheeler, ‘Guardian Angel or Global Gangster: a Review of the Ethical Claims of International Society’, *Political Studies* 44, no. 1 (1996): 123-35.

<sup>66</sup> Bull, ‘The Grotian Conception of International Society’, 108.

<sup>67</sup> Tony Blair, ‘Doctrine of the International Community’, Address to the Economic Club of Chicago, 22 April 1999, <http://www.pm.gov.uk/output/Page1297.asp>.

Many normative theorists have argued that mixed motives (humanitarianism inflected with self-interest) do not detract from the legitimacy of an intervention, except insofar as they lead to bad consequences.<sup>68</sup> While a deontologist would have difficulty accepting this reasoning,<sup>69</sup> even a consequentialist must acknowledge the political impossibility of drawing a clean line between motives and consequences. Interventions that are motivated even partly by the desire to facilitate representative self-government in a currently illiberal-undemocratic state will inevitably require the cooperation of the people of that state in their own ‘liberation’. Such cooperation is unlikely to be forthcoming if the supposed beneficiaries of the intervention perceive the motives of the interveners to be malign, or so laden with self-interest as to render humanitarianism a cynically self-serving consideration.<sup>70</sup> It is highly likely that mixed motives will be viewed with suspicion and uncertainty, leaving considerable doubt in the minds of people about the extent to which their political objectives overlap with those of the interveners. Positive outcomes require local collaboration; collaboration requires trust; trust grows shakier as motives become murkier. Therefore, we should be extremely concerned about the mixed motives with which ‘guardian’ states virtually always intervene.<sup>71</sup>

The cavalier acceptance, by many normative theorists, of the acceptability of mixed motives has spilled over into an equally cavalier attitude towards issues of authorisation. In an extraordinarily myopic argument suggesting that multilateralism has little to recommend it over unilateralism, Michael Walzer argues that if individual governments have mixed motives then so too do coalitions of governments, so that the resulting mixture of motivations is as accidental with reference to the moral issues at hand as the political interests of a single state.<sup>72</sup> In contrast, the authors of the US Federalist papers offered wiser counsel when they

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<sup>68</sup> Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, 38; Teson, *Humanitarian Intervention*, 113, 254; Michael Ignatieff, ‘The Way We Live Now: The Year of Living Dangerously’, *The New York Times Magazine*, 14 March 2004; Michael Ignatieff, ‘Why Are We In Iraq? (And Liberia? And Afghanistan?)’, *The New York Times Magazine*, 7 September 2003.

<sup>69</sup> Kant makes a distinction between an action merely done *in accordance with* obligation and one done *for the sake of* obligation, arguing that only the latter has moral worth (Thomas Donaldson, ‘Kant’s Global Rationalism’, in *Traditions of International Ethics*, eds. Terry Nardin & David R. Mapel (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 137).

<sup>70</sup> For a more extended version of the argument see Rahul Rao, ‘The Empire Writes Back (to Michael Ignatieff)’, *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 1 (2004): 158-60.

<sup>71</sup> Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, 38, is wrong to argue that the requirement of primacy of humanitarian motivation as a defining test for humanitarian intervention takes the intervening state as the referent object for analysis rather than the victims. I have argued that from the perspective of the ‘victims’, the nature of the motivation of the interveners is a crucial consideration. Perhaps it is less of a consideration at the moment of rescue, when actors seem to operate on the realist calculation that the enemy of an enemy is a friend; but surely it becomes *the* primary consideration in the immediate aftermath of the intervention.

<sup>72</sup> Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations* (Cambridge: Basic Books, 1991), 107-08.

advised that ‘in doubtful cases, particularly where the national councils may be warped by some strong passion, or momentary interest, the presumed or known opinion of the impartial world, may be the best guide that can be followed’.<sup>73</sup> What makes this assertion remarkable is that in contrast to most contemporary defences of multilateralism which emphasise its instrumental benefits (procedural legitimacy lowers enforcement costs, promotes burden-sharing, etc.), the Federalist defence of multilateralism stresses its intrinsic value in enabling the reaching of substantively just conclusions. Philippe Sands’ account of the role of the UN in the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003 gives the argument a powerful contemporary resonance:

The simple fact is that the great majority of states who sat on the Security Council in March 2003 did not consider that the circumstances, as they were then known to be, could justify the use of force. History has shown that they were right and that the US and Britain were wrong. No WMD have been found. It could be said that the UN system worked.<sup>74</sup>

Institutional cosmopolitanism is not a panacea for the problem of interests – but that problem is certainly *exacerbated* when decisions surrounding the implementation of cosmopolitan norms are left to a few ‘guardian’ states.

Doubts about the motivations of ‘guardian’ states also manifest themselves in a concern over the selectivity of intervention. The failure of ‘guardian’ states to intervene to stop gross human right abuses in states that are strategic backwaters (Rwanda) or close allies (Israel and Saudi Arabia), as well as the enthusiasm for intervention in states where the level of abuse is not as great, are taken as evidence that ‘guardian’ states are guided more by domestic political imperatives and calculations of national interest in making decisions about whether, where and how to intervene. Selectivity is sometimes defended on the ground that it is necessitated by limited resources. Yet for triage of this sort to be morally justifiable, priority for intervention ought to be assigned to cases demonstrating the most acute need, tempered by an assessment of whether intervention is likely to meet those needs. In its original context, triage was devised as a moral calculus used to prioritise medical treatment in situations of mass casualties, whereby those most likely to benefit from treatment with the limited resources available were attended to first. The basis of prioritisation here is the *ability* of medical personnel to save a patient, taking into consideration the severity of the injury and the

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<sup>73</sup> Alexander Hamilton or James Madison, ‘Federalist No. 63’ (1788), in *The Federalist*, ed. Jacob E. Cooke (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1962), 423. The authors continue: ‘What has not America lost by her want of character with foreign nations; and how many errors and follies would she not have avoided, if the justice and propriety of her measures had, in every instance, been previously tried by the light in which they would probably appear to the unbiased part of mankind?’

<sup>74</sup> Philippe Sands, *Lawless World: Making and Breaking Global Rules* (London: Penguin, 2006), 202.

availability of treatment resources; triage requires doctors to remain impartial in their *willingness* to save patients. Triage necessarily entails ignoring claims that are equally compelling from a moral point of view, but that cannot be satisfied for reasons of inability, *not* unwillingness. It does not seem morally justifiable, therefore, for the national interests of ‘guardian’ states to weigh in on decisions about triage – yet they almost always do. Thus, Blair sets out a five-step test for triage in his ‘Doctrine of the International Community’ that asks, crucially, ‘do we have national interests involved?’<sup>75</sup>

Perhaps the most intractable problem with the ‘guardianship’ that coercive solidarism entails is that it almost inevitably invites conflicts of interest. ‘Guardianship’ places some states in a position of trusteeship over others. Trusteeship is publicly justified as a temporary measure necessary to establish or restore conditions of representative self-government in currently illiberal-undemocratic states. This justification of trusteeship implies that once such conditions are established, trustee and beneficiary states will revert to a position of juridical equality. Governments of erstwhile beneficiary states that have been successfully ‘rehabilitated’ will, presumably, be seen to be representative of their societies and will be expected to advance their interests in interactions with other states. Once this ‘normal’ method of relating to one another is assumed (or resumed), erstwhile beneficiaries become adversaries (not in the sense of being at war, but in the sense of having to advance the interests of their societies even if these conflict with those of the erstwhile trustees<sup>76</sup>). There are currently no checks in place to ensure that trustee states will not abuse their window of trusteeship to skew the playing field, with an eye to reaping benefits the morning after when ‘normal’ adversarial relations of competitive coexistence begin (or resume).<sup>77</sup> Advocates of ‘guardianship’ seem to operate on the questionable premise that some states can, for a limited period, assume positions of trusteeship over others and upon the successful fulfilment of this trusteeship, revert to being ‘like’, functionally-undifferentiated units that pursue their own interests. Yet trustees who *know* that they are soon to become adversaries of their

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<sup>75</sup> Blair, ‘Doctrine of the International Community’. The five steps are: (i) ‘are we sure of our case?’, (ii) ‘have we exhausted all diplomatic options?’, (iii) ‘on the basis of a practical assessment of the situation, are there military operations we can sensibly and prudently undertake?’, (iv) ‘are we prepared for the long term?’, (v) ‘do we have national interests involved?’ The test is usefully ambiguous in mingling considerations of ability and willingness. For instance, what does ‘are we prepared’ refer to?

<sup>76</sup> It is simply not the case, as Blair puts it, that ‘in the end, values and interests merge’. Conflicts of interest are inevitable over countless issues even among states that share the same values. There is no reason to suppose that if all states were liberal and democratic such conflicts would cease. States may no longer resolve such conflicts by going to war with one another, but they will continue to assume adversarial positions vis-à-vis each other over all kinds of issues.

<sup>77</sup> This is why commentators expressed concern over decrees passed by the US-led Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq in the immediate aftermath of the 2003 invasion, permitting up to 100% foreign ownership of enterprises in all sectors except natural resources (Naomi Klein, ‘Bring Halliburton Home’, *The Nation*, 6 November 2003).

beneficiaries – indeed whose policies are intended to restore ‘normal’ adversarial relations – are hardly likely to act in the best interests of beneficiaries.

Unsurprisingly, the problem of interests also taints the practice of economic conditionality. Because conditionality has typically been occasioned by crisis – debt in the 1980s and destabilising capital flows in the 1990s – it is appropriate to ask, first, how these crises are managed. Whose interests are best served by the crisis management policies adopted by the IFIs? There is a virtual consensus among commentators that the management of the debt crisis in the 1980s prioritised the stability and survival of private commercial banks, all of which were incorporated in wealthy First World countries.<sup>78</sup> While the debt crisis was over by 1985 from the perspective of the banks, Third World debt spiralled out of control as governments continued to borrow heavily in order to meet interest repayment schedules.<sup>79</sup> The result was a net negative transfer of resources from debtor to creditor countries, setting back growth by at least a decade.<sup>80</sup>

The criticism that the interests of foreign creditors were privileged over those of entire populations of countries in difficulty resurfaced in the wake of the East Asian financial crises in the late 1990s. Accusing the IMF of serving the interests of Wall Street rather than the broader global economic interest, former World Bank chief economist Joseph Stiglitz demonstrates how policies imposed by the IMF systematically prioritised the repayment of foreign creditors over all other considerations.<sup>81</sup> The IMF’s massive bailout packages to countries like South Korea enabled governments to provide money to firms that were in debt to Western banks. The IMF was, in effect, bailing out the banks, which were thereby relieved of having to assume responsibility for bad lending decisions that they had made. The bailouts also allowed countries to sustain artificially high exchange rates for a brief period, giving foreign investors and wealthy elites the opportunity to convert their money into dollars on favourable terms before whisking it abroad. The IMF prescription that countries build up financial reserves by cutting expenditure, increasing interest rates and reducing imports made

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<sup>78</sup> Thomas J. Biersteker, ‘International Financial Negotiations and Adjustment Bargaining: An Overview’, in *Dealing with Debt: International Financial Negotiations and Adjustment Bargaining*, ed. Thomas J. Biersteker (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 10; Woods, *The Globalizers*, 53.

<sup>79</sup> See Jubilee Debt Campaign, ‘Facts and figures’, <http://www.jubileedebtcampaign.org.uk/?lid=247>. Africa’s debt stock increased from \$11 billion in 1970 to \$295 billion in 2002.

<sup>80</sup> S. Griffith-Jones, ‘Debt Crisis Management, an Analytical Framework’, in *Managing World Debt*, ed. Stephany Griffith-Jones (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), 11.

<sup>81</sup> Joseph Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents* (London: Penguin, 2002), 95, 106-09, 207-13. Robert Wade, ‘Japan, the World Bank, and the Art of Paradigm Maintenance: The East Asian Miracle in Political Perspective’, *New Left Review* 1/217 (1996): 3-36, makes the same argument in respect of the World Bank: ‘the Bank’s ability to borrow at the best rates and to act as a country rating agency depends on its reputation among financial capitalists, which in turn depends on its manifest commitment to *their* version of “sound” public policies’.

sense from the perspective of repaying foreign creditors, but had the consequence of exacerbating domestic recession, increasing unemployment and exporting the economic downturn to trading partners. Lurking behind each of the IMF's prescriptions was a clear hierarchy of interests in which creditors (who, not coincidentally, were located in the IFIs' most powerful shareholding countries) came first.

This is not to suggest that countries in crisis have no leverage whatsoever vis-à-vis the IFIs and other creditors. Stephen Haggard and Robert Kaufman have enumerated three sources of bargaining leverage that states might employ in stabilisation and adjustment negotiations:<sup>82</sup> first, the size of the country's debt (or, more broadly, the magnitude of the threat posed by the country's potential collapse to the stability of the international financial system – the greater this magnitude, the greater the leverage); second, the strategic significance of the country *to the IFIs' most powerful shareholders*; and third, access of the country in question to other non-conditional sources of funds. States with leverage on one or more of these three counts tend to secure assistance on more lenient terms from the IFIs. In at least some cases, the stringency or leniency of economic conditionality has been a function of the interests of powerful states – this has been well documented in the cases of Mexico and Russia, both of which obtained IMF assistance on relatively favourable terms because of their strategic significance to the US.<sup>83</sup> Stiglitz argues that strategic considerations account for such inconsistencies as the IMF's termination of its rather small lending programme to Kenya on grounds of corruption, even as it continued to lend billions of dollars to Russia and Indonesia – as he colourfully puts it, 'while the Fund was overlooking grand larceny, it was taking a strong stand on petty theft'.<sup>84</sup> The allegation bears a striking resemblance to criticisms of the selectivity and arbitrariness of humanitarian intervention.

Even if the management of debt and financial crises typically prioritises the interests of the financial community in the short-term, does economic conditionality operate in the long-term interests of borrowing countries? If growth is the standard by which this evaluation is to be made, then the results have been worrying. One study reports that between 1960 and 1980 (a period during which most developing countries were highly protectionist and interventionist), GDP per capita grew by 75% in Latin America and 36% in sub-Saharan Africa; in the 1980-98 period, when stabilisation and adjustment policies were implemented in these countries,

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<sup>82</sup> Cited from Biersteker, 'International Financial Negotiations and Adjustment Bargaining', 6.

<sup>83</sup> Woods, *The Globalizers*, 86-87, 107.

<sup>84</sup> Stiglitz, *Globalization and its Discontents*, 47.

the corresponding figures were 6% and –15% respectively.<sup>85</sup> The only region that grew faster in the latter period was East Asia – but this was largely fuelled by growth in China, a country that has hardly been a practitioner of the Washington Consensus.

Indeed many have pointed out that East Asian success was not achieved via adherence to the orthodoxy that the IFIs currently preach. Far from being laissez-faire, governments in the region intervened actively and imaginatively, using a variety of policy instruments, to develop specific industries that they saw as having a high potential for growth and job creation.<sup>86</sup> Far from liberalising trade across the board, they were initially export-oriented and selectively protectionist (maintaining an openness to inputs but not imports per se and liberalising imports only after there had been a transition to high growth). The Washington Consensus, as it stands, barely acknowledges these heterodox routes out of marginality – in Dani Rodrik’s words, ‘today’s globalisers would be unable to replicate these experiences without running afoul of the IMF or the WTO’.<sup>87</sup> From a more historical perspective, Ha-Joon Chang demonstrates that today’s wealthy countries engaged in high levels of infant industry protection (using such instruments as tariffs, subsidies and public-private partnerships) during the early phases of their industrialisation. In his view, by prohibiting Third World countries from pursuing similar policies through the exercise of conditionality, they are in effect ‘kicking away the ladder’ that these countries hope to climb.<sup>88</sup>

While a comprehensive critique of economic conditionality is beyond the scope of this thesis, the evidence suggests powerfully that economic conditionality – in the form that is currently being imposed on borrower countries – is heavily skewed in favour of the IFIs’ most powerful shareholders, and more specifically in favour of powerful financial interests within them.

### 2.3.2 *The problem of accountability*

The problem of accountability, in the case of humanitarian intervention, can be pithily stated: who will guard those charged with the ‘guardianship of human rights everywhere’? Liberal vanguardist states have frequently pointed to the nobility of their purpose to justify a loosening of restraints on their power. Bull’s reading of the Grotian just war tradition anticipates this problem: ‘the tendency of the Grotian doctrine that war be waged only for a

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<sup>85</sup> Mark Weisbrot, Robert Naiman & Joyce Kim, ‘The Emperor Has No Growth: Declining Economic Growth Rates in the Era of Globalisation’ (Centre for Economic and Policy Research, 2000), [http://www.cepr.net/publications/econ\\_growth\\_2000\\_11\\_27.htm#\\_ednref23](http://www.cepr.net/publications/econ_growth_2000_11_27.htm#_ednref23)

<sup>86</sup> Albert Fishlow, Catherine Gwin, Stephan Haggard & Dani Rodrik, *Miracle or Design? Lessons from the East Asian Experience* (Washington, DC: Overseas Development Council, 1994).

<sup>87</sup> Dani Rodrik, ‘Trading in Illusions’, *Foreign Policy* 123 (2001): 59.

<sup>88</sup> Ha-Joon Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective* (London: Anthem Press, 2002),

just cause is to weaken the rules of customary and treaty law, requiring that it be conducted in a just way'.<sup>89</sup>

This can be seen particularly in US efforts to exempt itself from legal instruments that impose requirements of *jus in bello*, citing the 'unique responsibilities' entailed by its leadership of the liberal vanguard.<sup>90</sup> Justifying his refusal to sign the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, then US President Bill Clinton said: 'Our nation has unique responsibilities for preserving security and defending peace and freedom around the globe...As Commander-in-Chief, I will not send our soldiers to defend the freedom of our people and the freedom of others without doing everything we can to make them as secure as possible.'<sup>91</sup> Just cause has also been implicitly adduced as a ground for suspending the application of Geneva Convention III on the Treatment of Prisoners of War vis-à-vis individuals captured in the ongoing conflicts with al Qaeda and the Taliban. In a memorandum written in 2002, US Attorney General Alberto Gonzales advised President George W. Bush that the Convention 'does not apply to a conflict with terrorists, or with irregular forces, like the Taliban, who are armed militants that oppressed and terrorised the people of Afghanistan'.<sup>92</sup> Although the chief justifications for the suspension were the 'facts' that Afghanistan was a 'failed state' and the Taliban 'not a government, but a militant, terrorist-like group', if the mere 'irregularity' of al Qaeda and Taliban forces were justification enough for the suspension of the Conventions, there would be little need to emphasise how evil they were.

In a similar vein, attempting to explain the decision of the first George W. Bush administration not to become a party to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, Marc Grossman, then Under Secretary for Political Affairs said:

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<sup>89</sup> Bull, 'The Grotian Conception of International Society', 102.

<sup>90</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, 'Why is US Human Rights Policy so Unilateralist?', in *Multilateralism & US Foreign Policy: Ambivalent Engagement*, eds. Stewart Patrick & Shepard Forman (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2002), 345-376, provides four explanations for the unilateralism of US international human rights policy – sheer power, stability of domestic democracy, ideological conservatism, political decentralisation – but does not mention the vanguardist justification that the US frequently offers. See also Catherine Redgwell, 'US reservations to human rights treaties: all for one and none for all?', in *United States Hegemony and the Foundations of International Law*, eds. Michael Byers & Georg Nolte (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 392-415; Paul W. Kahn, 'Speaking Law to Power: Popular Sovereignty, Human Rights, and the New International Order', *Chicago Journal of International Law* 1, no. 1 (2000): 1-18.

<sup>91</sup> White House (Office of the Press Secretary), 'Remarks by the President on Landmines', 17 September 1997, <http://www.fas.org/asmp/resources/govern/withdrawal91797.html>. Clinton did, however, seem sympathetic to some of the objectives of the treaty and announced a number of alternative measures that the US would pursue unilaterally towards achieving those objectives.

<sup>92</sup> Alberto R. Gonzales, 'Decision Re Application of the Geneva Convention on Prisoners of War to the Conflict with Al Qaeda and the Taliban', 25 January 2002, [http://kbonline.typepad.com/random/files/gonzales\\_memo\\_on\\_gen\\_conv\\_january\\_25\\_2002\\_pt\\_1.pdf](http://kbonline.typepad.com/random/files/gonzales_memo_on_gen_conv_january_25_2002_pt_1.pdf)

The US has a unique role and responsibility to help preserve international peace and security. At any given time, US forces are located in close to 100 nations around the world conducting peacekeeping and humanitarian operations and fighting inhumanity. We must ensure that our soldiers and government officials are not exposed to the prospect of politicised prosecutions and investigations. Our President is committed to a robust American engagement in the world to defend freedom and defeat terror; we cannot permit the ICC to disrupt that vital mission.<sup>93</sup>

What ties these statements together is the self-perception of the US, remarkably consistent under different administrations, that it bears the ‘unique responsibility’ of leading the liberal vanguard in the international system and that it must be freed from all accountability in the interests of effectively discharging this role.<sup>94</sup> In effect, the US sees itself as the force that must stand outside of the law in order to uphold the law. Unrestrained by the constraints of institutional cosmopolitanism, it believes itself better able to promote moral cosmopolitanism.

Although institutions play a more significant role in the implementation of economic conditionality, scrutiny of their design and methods of functioning suggest that it is extremely difficult for borrowing governments to hold the IFIs accountable for the consequences of their policy prescriptions. As has already been noted, the paltry voting shares of borrowing governments mean that they do not have much of a voice in the running of the IFIs. In addition the practice of grouping countries into constituencies, each of which is represented by a single Executive Director, coupled with the fact that many borrowing countries find themselves in ‘mixed’ constituencies in which creditor governments hold the lion’s voting share, makes it difficult for borrowing governments to hold their ‘own’ Director accountable or to build coalitions with other borrowing governments across constituencies.<sup>95</sup> The lack of accountability of the IFIs to borrowing governments is troubling from a normative point of view, given their ever-increasing intrusiveness into the policy space of these states,<sup>96</sup> and from a prudential perspective, because it means that the very agents who will be required to

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<sup>93</sup> Marc Grossman, ‘American Foreign Policy and the International Criminal Court’, Address to the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, DC, 6 May 2002, <http://www.state.gov/p/9949.htm>. Grossman begins his remarks by saying ‘Here’s what America believes in... We believe that states, not international institutions are primarily responsible for ensuring justice in the international system.’ If his notion of ‘justice’ is informed by liberal cosmopolitan values, then this is a classic expression of a preference for moral cosmopolitanism without institutional cosmopolitanism.

<sup>94</sup> See also, White House, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html>: ‘...in exercising our leadership, we will respect the values, judgment, and interests of our friends and partners. Still, we will be prepared to act apart when our interests and unique responsibilities require.’

<sup>95</sup> Rustomjee, ‘Improving Southern Voice on the IMF Board’.

<sup>96</sup> Ngaire Woods, ‘Order, Justice, the IMF, and the World Bank’, in *Order and Justice in International Relations*, eds. Rosemary Foot, John Gaddis & Andrew Hurrell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 88-90.

implement conditionality are marginal to decision-making about its content, thereby increasing the likelihood of policy failure.<sup>97</sup>

Equally significant is the lack of accountability between borrowing governments and their own people. The empirical record suggests that the IFIs are most likely to get their way when economic decision-making is undertaken by the executive or an insulated technocratic elite at the apex of a government bureaucracy. Circumstances of economic crisis typically enable executives to justify the assumption of greater authority. The IFIs have broadly been supportive of this mode of decision-making, on the understanding that ‘rational’ economic policymaking requires insulation of the process from potential capture by rent-seeking interest groups. Yet as Woods points out, the very same conditions that facilitate supposedly rational policymaking, might enable unbalanced policy capture by interest groups.<sup>98</sup> In other words if the ‘sympathetic interlocutors’ are not accountable to their people, there is little to stop them from indulging in self-interested policy capture. Under pressure from critics in the donor community and civil society more generally, the IFIs have embraced a new rhetoric of ‘ownership’, requiring borrowing governments to consult more widely with their people. For example, eligibility for debt relief under the Enhanced-HIPC initiative is now conditional upon civil society participation in the drafting of a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Early indications suggest that accountability has widened only very slightly: where the IFIs once called the shots almost single-handedly, now Western NGOs and donors (and two Irish rock stars) have been drawn into the circle.

### 2.3.3 *The problem of culpability*

Attributions of blame for crises of governance are central to normative arguments about intervention, and often contain within them the kernel of a prescription. Liberal solidarist narratives of intervention are informed, with astonishing frequency, by a spatial allocation of responsibility in which problems are represented as arising from local dynamics *internal* to the putatively dysfunctional state that is the object of intervention,<sup>99</sup> solutions are seen as being provided from the *outside*, and human rights are conceived narrowly as justifying intervention from the outside in. Where postcolonial states are concerned, one also sometimes observes a temporal allocation of responsibility in which problems are understood as arising from failures of *postcolonial* governance, with the causal implication of colonial governance

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<sup>97</sup> Rustomjee, ‘Improving Southern Voice on the IMF Board’.

<sup>98</sup> Woods, *The Globalizers*, 182.

<sup>99</sup> Pogge refers to this tendency as ‘explanatory nationalism’ in *World Poverty and Human Rights*, 139.

being eclipsed or retrospectively whitewashed. These imaginative geographies and histories are a staple of much of the academic and popular literature on state failure and intervention.<sup>100</sup>

Both the spatial and temporal delimitations of culpability are evident in Robert Jackson's work on state failure, which views decolonisation as heralding a significant deterioration in the quality of governance experienced by people:

Decolonisation did not result in a corresponding extension of human rights protection as was originally expected when independence was in the offing – instead, it increased the opportunity for human rights violations...before that time most governments of the non-Western world were under the authority of a few Western constitutional democracies... although it was far from perfect and serious abuses did most certainly occur there nevertheless was an institutional framework to discourage offences against the human rights of colonial subjects...most colonies were peaceful, orderly, lawful places by and large...decolonisation was not only a liberation movement but also an enclosure movement: it confined populations within ex-colonial frontiers and subjected them to indigenous governments which often were not only untried and inexperienced but also unable or unwilling to operate in accordance with humanitarian standards.<sup>101</sup>

Similar spatial allocations of responsibility are evident in discussions of democracy promotion. Thomas Franck sees the most significant threats to democracy as internal to states, likely to come from coups, dictators and (internal) totalitarianism,<sup>102</sup> omitting any mention of the ways in which democratic processes may be thwarted by external agents such as powerful states and IFIs or structures such as capital markets. Writing about supposed US democracy-promotion efforts in Nicaragua, Max Boot argues that 'dictatorship was indigenous; democracy was a foreign transplant that did not take, in part because America would not stick around long enough to cultivate it'.<sup>103</sup> His view of US intervention in Hispaniola is remarkably similar: 'The marines had tried hard to plant constitutional government but found that it would not take root in the inhospitable soil of Hispaniola. The only thing that could have kept a Trujillo or Duvalier from seizing power was renewed US intervention...the only thing more unsavoury than US intervention, it turned out, was US non-intervention.'<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> For the importance of representational practices in shaping material relations between the First and Third Worlds, see Roxanne Lynn Doty, *Imperial Encounters* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

<sup>101</sup> Robert Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 140, 146-147, 151.

<sup>102</sup> Thomas M. Franck, 'The Emerging Right to Democratic Governance', *American Journal of International Law* 86, no. 1 (1992): 46-91.

<sup>103</sup> Max Boot, *The Savage Wars of Peace: Small Wars and the Rise of American Power* (New York: Basic Books, 2002), 251.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, 181. This is ironic in light of John F. Kennedy's admission that 'There are three possibilities, in descending order of preference: a decent democratic regime, a continuation of the Trujillo regime, or a Castro regime. We ought to aim at the first, *but we can't really renounce the second* until we are sure we can avoid the third.' (Cited from Abraham F. Lowenthal, 'The United States and Latin American Democracy: Learning from History', in *Exporting Democracy: The United States and Latin America*, ed. Abraham F. Lowenthal (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 388.)

The IFIs have tended to allocate spatial culpability for economic crises in a remarkably similar fashion. On the eve of the debt crisis, the World Bank published a study investigating the causes of ‘Africa’s disappointing economic performance’. Commonly known as the Berg report after its lead writer Elliot Berg and widely seen as a manifesto for the application of Washington Consensus policies in Africa, the report provided an overview of both internal and external factors responsible for low economic growth. However, it consistently discounted the significance of external factors,<sup>105</sup> its policy prescriptions focused exclusively on what African governments ought to be doing differently (with some genuflection in the direction of greater aid from the donor community) and it concluded that ‘African governments must lead the way because domestic policy issues are at the heart of the crisis’.<sup>106</sup> Yet if – as the report itself pointed out – Africa’s disappointing performance was in some measure a result of vulnerability to external shocks and constraints (declining terms of trade as a result of oil price hikes and a decline in demand for primary commodities, trade restrictions, etc.), it is difficult to see how African states could have taken the lead. Although the rhetoric of responsibility has changed, with an acceptance by both donor and recipient countries of their respective obligations,<sup>107</sup> the attitudes that underlay this initial spatial attribution of responsibility are still in evidence today.

This is clear when one examines the IMF’s management of financial crises. IMF-designed stabilisation packages focus almost exclusively on the domestic causes of balance of payments deficits, largely ignoring exogenous factors that make it difficult for countries to increase their export earnings such as short-term fluctuations in commodity prices, volatility among key currencies, etc. The institution incurred sharp criticism for its relative neglect of exogenous factors in its management of the East Asian financial crisis.<sup>108</sup> Woods argues that

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<sup>105</sup> World Bank, *Accelerated Development in Sub-Saharan Africa* (Washington, DC: World Bank, 1982) – see for example its conclusion that ‘on balance, protectionism by developed countries had little effect on African growth in the last decade’ (20) and its attribution of poor export performance purely to internal factors (21).

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, 121.

<sup>107</sup> See for example the United Nations Millennium Declaration, <http://www.un.org/millennium/declaration/ares552e.pdf>, clause 13: ‘Success in meeting these objectives depends, *inter alia*, on good governance within each country. It also depends on good governance at the international level and on transparency in the financial, monetary and trading systems. We are committed to an open, equitable, rule-based, predictable and non-discriminatory multilateral trading and financial system.’

<sup>108</sup> Paul Krugman, ‘Analytical Afterthoughts on the Asian Crisis’, <http://web.mit.edu/krugman/www/MINICRIS.htm> argues that the IMF ought to pay more attention to managing creditor panic through debt standstills and rollovers, instead of focusing solely on deep structural reform within debtor countries. The latter course has the effect of reinforcing creditor panic by conveying the impression that ‘things were out of control’ within these countries. See also Jeffrey D. Sachs, ‘Creditor Panics: Causes and Remedies’, Prepared for the Cato Institute’s 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Monetary Conference, 22 October 1998, <http://www.cato.org/events/monconf16/sachs.pdf>.

the IMF has tended to focus on factors internal to deficit countries for institutional reasons – it has the tools and the leverage to exact promises of policy reform from borrowing governments, but no such leverage over creditor governments in respect of their trade and macroeconomic policies and currency arrangements. Closely related to this is the power-political reality that if it were to turn its attention to exogenous factors, the IMF would run up against the preferences of its most powerful shareholders. For example, the US Treasury has pushed strongly for rapid capital account liberalisation despite criticism that premature liberalisation renders countries vulnerable to speculative attacks on their currencies and destabilising capital flight. It has also fought against such measures as short-term capital controls, despite their evident success in countries like Malaysia and Chile.<sup>109</sup> Proponents of the Washington Consensus would rather interpret the East Asian crisis as evidence of the rotten institutions and ‘crony capitalism’ of these countries and are loath to giving governments the instruments with which to defend themselves against destabilising external actors.<sup>110</sup>

One-sided allocations of culpability for state failure have incurred trenchant and compelling criticism in the political theoretic literature. Jackson’s work in particular has been fiercely criticised for attributing state failure mainly to a lack of readiness or capacity for self-governance and for its silencing of the historical and contemporary *global* relationships that contribute to state failure.<sup>111</sup> Naeem Inayatullah sheds considerable light on those relationships, pointing out that the capacity for effective self-governance (what Jackson calls ‘positive sovereignty’) requires wealth. Failing states (what Jackson calls ‘quasi states’), find it exceedingly difficult to generate that wealth because they remain mired in a global division of labour constructed during the colonial era to serve the needs of colonial powers. Upon decolonisation, ‘Third World states were required to graft their [political] sovereignty on to a productive structure historically constructed to deprive their economies of autonomy,

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<sup>109</sup> Woods, *The Globalizers*, 42-43.

<sup>110</sup> The internal / external imagery works only to the extent that the most destabilising actors in the market are in fact ‘external’ and not, say, domestic crony capitalists who are simply trying to flee the currency. This is an evaluation that can only be made on a case-by-case basis. It seems to have been the case that in the four front-line Asian crisis countries, and in the related speculative attack on Brazil, short-term debt to *international* banks was the dominant source of capital flight (Krugman, ‘Analytical Afterthoughts on the Asian Crisis’).

<sup>111</sup> Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 153-56; For a fascinating argument that draws attention to the role of external factors in shaping state success or failure, see Siba N. Grovogui, ‘Sovereignty in Africa: Quasi-Statehood and Other Myths in International Theory’, in *Africa’s Challenge to International Relations Theory*, eds. Kevin C. Dunn & Timothy M. Shaw (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2001), who argues that European ‘quasi-states’ such as Belgium and Switzerland did rather well for themselves because the European Powers ‘organise[d] moral solicitude [for different states] according to a combination of a number of subjective considerations: ethnic, racial, ideological, political and/or economic’. Belgium’s ‘quasi-ness’ did not preclude it from being recognised as a full member of the European Society of states and given a seat at the 1884-85 Berlin Conference devoted to carving up Africa.

diversity and robustness'.<sup>112</sup> The persistence of that productive structure means that autonomy over wealth-creation, and therefore the possibility of developing positive-sovereignty, continues to elude 'quasi-states'.<sup>113</sup> Inayatullah offers a more historically informed political economy approach to sovereignty, in which the 'inside' of Third World states cannot be easily disconnected from the 'outside' of the world system because of the persistence of dependent linkages between erstwhile metropolitan and colonial economies. Alexander Wendt and Michael Barnett complement this argument in important ways by demonstrating how dependent linkages between core and peripheral elites were nurtured in the postcolonial era by the superpowers, in accordance with Cold War geo-strategic imperatives. In their view, this external support for Third World elites obviated the need for such elites to seek legitimacy in the eyes of their people, thereby perpetuating oppressive relations between states and societies in these countries.<sup>114</sup> In these analyses, state-building is not exclusively an internal process and culpability for impoverishment and unrepresentativeness cannot be ascribed solely to internal incompetence or corruption.

One implication of the coercive solidarist pattern of attributing culpability for state failure is that the function of the international human rights regime is conceived in extremely narrow terms. If illiberality and a lack of democracy are invariably a result of local factors, then the purpose of the human rights regime must be that of justifying the importation of solutions from the outside to bear on problems inside the dysfunctional 'quasi-state'. Charles Beitz makes this premise explicit, arguing that 'the role of human rights in international political discourse has two aspects: first, human rights may serve to justify interference in the internal affairs of states or other local communities; second, they may argue for various external agents, such as international organisations and other states, to commit the resources required for effective interference.'<sup>115</sup> Similarly, the liberal international legal scholar Michael Reisman views the function of human rights as being 'the international control of the essential techniques by which governments manage and control their peoples internally'.<sup>116</sup> The notion that human rights could be threatened by international structures or by actors external to the

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<sup>112</sup> Naeem Inayatullah, 'Beyond the sovereignty dilemma: quasi-states as social construct', in *State sovereignty as social construct*, eds. Thomas J. Biersteker & Cynthia Weber (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

<sup>113</sup> While it might be argued that no state has perfect autonomy over wealth creation in an era of globalisation, the argument here is one of degree: namely, that Third World states enjoy very much less agency in this respect because their historical position of dependence persists.

<sup>114</sup> Alexander Wendt & Michael Barnett, 'Dependent State formation and Third World militarisation', *Review of International Studies* 19, no. 4 (1993): 321-47.

<sup>115</sup> Charles R. Beitz, 'Human Rights and the Law of Peoples', in *The Ethics of Assistance: Morality and the Distant Needy*, ed. Deen Chatterjee (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>116</sup> Reisman, 'Kosovo's Antimonies', 861.

Third World state and that international human rights regimes ought to protect against such deprivations does not even enter into these formulations.

Thinking about external culpability for state failure unsettles the imaginative geographies and histories of intervention, according to which the ‘international community’<sup>117</sup> intervenes as heroic saviour to rescue people from crises that are seen entirely as creatures of postcoloniality. It also unsettles the false dichotomy between intervention and inaction that is usually presented at the moment of crisis to justify the imperative that ‘something must be done’. If external actors (such as powerful states) or global structures (such as capitalism) have partially authored these crises, then the ‘international’ has *already* intervened in the ‘domestic’ and must bear some culpability for the conditions of unrepresentativeness and impoverishment that allegedly beseech intervention.<sup>118</sup> A recognition that the interveners do not have clean hands would suggest that they might best begin their engagement with crises of postcolonial state-building by addressing their own culpability in these crises.

It might be objected that the critique of culpability, adopting as it does a longer time-frame, offers no guidance on what is to be done at the moment of crisis. Surely at that point, a critic would argue, whatever one’s culpability in authoring the circumstances that led to the crisis, anyone with the ability to alleviate it should be permitted (even obligated) to do so. Anne Orford responds to this in the context of humanitarian intervention by drawing attention to the way in which much of the normative literature adopts a particularly narrow temporal focus, so that the period under analysis is always limited to the horrific moment in which circumstances of abuse become so severe that military intervention is the only credible foreign policy option. ‘The question that is produced by law’s focus on the moment of crisis is always “What would you suggest we do if we are in that situation again?”’<sup>119</sup> – not ‘why are we in this situation again and again?’ Orford has not responded to the critic’s question, but she has suggested that the critic is asking the wrong question. By continuing to ask the wrong question, coercive solidarism will only ever provide superficial solutions to crises of state-building. Worse, the powerful will continue to run the equivalent of a protection racket, by partially authoring the circumstances that allegedly beseech their coercive intervention.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> Ken Booth, ‘Human wrongs and international relations’, *International Affairs* 71, no. 1 (1995): 121: ‘for the most part the phrase “international community” is a platitude, trotted out by the powerful when they want to legitimise a particular action.’

<sup>118</sup> For a compelling empirical substantiation of the argument in the cases of the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda, see Anne Orford, *Reading Humanitarian Intervention: Human Rights and the Use of Force in International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), chapter 3.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>120</sup> This is an analogy at the international level, of the account of the state as a protection racket within the domestic realm. See V. Spike Peterson, ‘Security and Sovereign States: What is at Stake in Taking

### 2.3.4 *The problem of imperial continuity*

I have been arguing that in the absence of institutional cosmopolitanism, ideas with moral cosmopolitical foundations are vulnerable to appropriation and distortion by powerful states. I have demonstrated that their claim to be acting in the universal interest is belied by the enduring influence of their national interests, the constant danger of their abuse of power thanks to a lack of accountability, and the hypocrisy inherent in their failure to recognise their own culpability for the problems they claim to be solving. These are problems of power and interest that retain their relevance regardless of the *particular* states that are in the vanguard of coercive solidarism (i.e. these arguments would apply with equal force if, say, China or India led the solidarist vanguard). Yet in addition to these realist considerations, a constructivist explanation that took into account considerations of history and identity might help explain the depth of hostility and resistance that coercive solidarism arouses in Third World states and societies.

Moral argumentation over the contemporary practices of humanitarian intervention and economic conditionality – which I have selected as exemplars of coercive solidarism – bear a striking resemblance to the normative controversies that attended the practice of imperialism in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Writing in 1902, the British political economist J. A. Hobson commented on the extraordinary mixture of actors and interests that drove the imperialist impulse. He testified to the existence ‘in a considerable though not a large proportion of the British nation [of] a genuine desire to spread Christianity among the heathen, to diminish the cruelty and other sufferings which they believe exist in countries less fortunate than their own, and to do good work about the world in the cause of humanity’.<sup>121</sup> Alongside this, he wrote extensively about the self-interested motivations of imperialist politicians, soldiers and specific trading and financial sectors. He criticised the first group for their belief ‘that religion and other arts of civilisation are portable commodities which it is our duty to convey to the backward nations, and that a certain amount of compulsion is justified in pressing their benefits upon people too ignorant at once to recognise them’; but he was more scathing of the second group, who ‘simply and instinctively attach to themselves any strong, genuine elevated feeling which is of service, fan it and feed it until it assumes fervour, and utilise it for their ends’.<sup>122</sup> In a critique that continues to have a striking contemporary resonance, he says:

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Feminism Seriously?’, in *Gendered States: Feminist (Re)Visions of International Relations Theory* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1992), 49-54.

<sup>121</sup> J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (New York, Cosimo Classics, 2005), 196-97.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 197.

...politicians, in particular, acquire so strong a habit of setting their projects in the most favourable light that they soon convince themselves that the finest result which they think may conceivably accrue from any policy is the actual motive of that policy. As for the public, it is only natural that it should be deceived. All the purer and more elevated adjuncts of Imperialism are kept to the fore by religious and philanthropic agencies: patriotism appeals to the general lust of power within a people by suggestions of nobler uses, adopting the forms of self-sacrifice to cover domination and the love of adventure...It is precisely in this falsification of the real import of motives that the gravest vice and the most signal peril of Imperialism reside. When, out a medley of mixed motives, the least potent is selected for public prominence because it is the most presentable, when issues of a policy which was not present at all to the minds of those who formed this policy are treated as chief causes, the moral currency of the nation is debased. The whole policy of Imperialism is riddled with this deception.<sup>123</sup>

Like the ‘genuine desire to spread Christianity’ of 19<sup>th</sup> century missionaries, liberal cosmopolitanism today enables self-interested exercises of power to masquerade as fantasies of rescue. Critics of economic conditionality will find no less striking parallels in the work of the Italian political economist Achille Loria:

When a country which has contracted a debt is unable, on account of the slenderness of its income, to offer sufficient guarantee for the punctual payment of interest, what happens? Sometimes an out-and-out conquest of the debtor country follows. Thus France’s attempted conquest of Mexico during the second empire was undertaken solely with the view of guaranteeing the interest of French citizens holding Mexican securities. But more frequently the insufficient guarantee of an international loan gives rise to the appointment of a financial commission by the creditor countries in order to protest their rights and guard the fate of their invested capital. *The appointment of such a commission literally amounts in the end, however, to a veritable conquest.* We have examples of this in Egypt, which has to all practical purposes become a British province, and in Tunis, which has in like manner become a dependency of France, who supplied the greater part of the loan...<sup>124</sup>

There is a resonance between coercive solidarism and classical imperialism not only in the material practices that they entailed and the moral arguments that were used to buttress them, but also in the identity of the actors at the forefront of both developments. Solidarism is not a monolithic phenomenon. It is evident to varying extents in different issue-areas (of which I have discussed only two in this chapter), in each of which it is championed by different sets of states (including some non-Western ones).<sup>125</sup> Despite this variegated picture, states with

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid.

<sup>124</sup> Achille Loria, *The Economic Foundations of Politics* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1899), 273, cited in *ibid.*, 54-55, emphasis mine.

<sup>125</sup> For example, Kathryn Sikkink, ‘Explaining International Political and Civil Rights’, Global Economic Governance Research Seminar, University of Oxford, 26 May 2006, reports that Argentina has been at the forefront of a developing international norm of domestic criminal prosecutions of individual state officials. Argentina’s strong support for this norm most likely comes out of its historical experience of severe human rights abuse under military rule and a consequent desire on the part of liberal elites to lock the state into structures of international accountability that might make a relapse into authoritarianism less likely.

imperial pasts and those sharing close cultural affinities with them are prominent in the liberal solidarist vanguard. This is not surprising, given that these are the states that combine liberal solidarist purpose with the power to give effect to that purpose. I include within this characterisation not only the core states of the European Union, but also the United States which, despite its own foundation in an anti-colonial act of revolution and its frequent protestations of anti-colonialism, is justifiably seen as an imperial and colonial power. (One thinks here of its continent-wide expansion by means of conquest and extermination of native inhabitants, its highly unequal relations with its Latin American neighbours under the Monroe Doctrine, its practice of formal colonialism between 1898 and 1946, its rather consistent support to colonial powers attempting to suppress nationalist movements during the Cold War wherever these were perceived to be Communist-influenced, etc.)

The participation of ‘non-imperial’<sup>126</sup> states in the liberal solidarist coalition, such as the smaller powers of the EU, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and even Southern Cone states like Argentina and Chile, does little to weaken perceptions of continuity between historic imperialism and coercive solidarism. The incremental expansion of the solidarist vanguard to include mostly states that have strong cultural affinities with the former imperial powers at the core of International Society seems to underline the importance of common culture as a prerequisite to consensus over norms. The implicit message to those not included is that they must either undergo dramatic cultural revolutions of their own, or remain permanent outliers. This point is further reinforced by the fact that economic success does not appear a sufficient condition for entry into the solidarist vanguard. Witness the difficulties of Japan in persuading the Bank to modify its approach to economic conditionality, despite being one of its largest shareholders;<sup>127</sup> think also of the difficulties that East Asian countries as a group have faced in setting up the Asian Monetary Fund as an alternative to IMF stabilisation in the wake of the financial crisis in that region. Despite their impressive economic success, these states do not yet appear to be significant solidarist norm-entrepreneurs.

I do not want to push the point about continuity of identity too far – coercive solidarism would be morally problematic even if the vanguard were led by a different set of states. The problem of imperial *continuity* is a political rather than a moral one. The fact that moral justifications for coercive solidarism have been articulated before in the context of

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<sup>126</sup> The label is not unproblematic. From the point of view of the indigenous inhabitants of settler colonies (Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the Latin American republics, etc.), these countries are not ‘non-imperial’. There *are* significant variations between them – the Treaty of Waitangi leaves the Maoris of New Zealand significantly better off than the aboriginals of neighbouring Australia vis-à-vis their respective states – but these are differences in the degree of colonisation, not repudiations of the fact of it.

<sup>127</sup> Wade, ‘Japan, the World Bank, and the Art of Paradigm Maintenance’.

imperialism, often by the same actors, severely undermines the credibility of these justifications and explains the hostility with which they are received in postcolonial states and societies. There has been a considerable appreciation of the role of historical analogies as perceptual lenses through which agents interpret their reality. The ‘Munich analogy’, for example, has exercised a peculiar hold on Western policymakers since 1938, consistently being interpreted as underscoring the importance of swift and decisive action against bellicose leaders.<sup>128</sup> It should not be surprising that the ‘imperial analogy’ exercises a comparably powerful grip on non-Western states and societies alike, given the duration and depth of their imperial experience.<sup>129</sup>

## 2.4 The impoverishment of self-determination

This chapter has argued that despite its normatively appealing foundations, when moral cosmopolitanism is refracted through what Bull called the ‘distorting lens’ of the state system, it is deformed in ways that undermine its claim to be indicative of the universal interest. Without deliberative structures that institutionalise moral cosmopolitanism’s promise to weigh equally the claims of all individuals affected by a particular policy, eminently political questions about the content and application of norms are transformed into technical matters of ethics or economics resolvable by ‘experts’ or decided by powerful states acting unilaterally or through the institutions that they dominate. Third World states and societies find that the space for legitimate disagreement and the autonomous determination of policy on a number of issues has shrunk – the scope of the political is constrained.

Much of this chapter has been discussing the appropriations and distortions to which moral cosmopolitanism is vulnerable when it is unleashed in an institutionally unreformed state system. But why do liberal cosmopolitans accept these consequences despite their obviously damaging implications for Third World self-determination? This acceptance is the result not so much of a disrespect for self-determination, but of a particularly narrow conception of self-determination. Beitz’s account of self-determination is a case in point. He proposes that the right of self-determination should be understood not as an end in itself, but as a means of

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<sup>128</sup> Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992).

<sup>129</sup> The role of imperial analogies in shaping the perceptions of state elites seems to be relatively better appreciated in the case of China. Chinese elites’ perception of a ‘century of humiliation’ between 1840 and 1949 at the hands of Western powers and the need to recover an earlier importance on the world stage, is thought to constitute a key element of their ‘informal ideology’ or worldview. See Rosemary Foot, ‘The Study of China’s International Behaviour: International Relations Approaches’, in *Explaining International Relations Since 1945*, ed. Ngaire Woods (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Steven I. Levine, ‘Perception and Ideology in Chinese Foreign Policy’, in *Chinese Foreign Policy: Theory and Practice*, eds. Thomas W. Robinson & David Shambaugh (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

remedying the substantive injustices that tend to result from its denial (exploitation, distributive inequality, etc.).<sup>130</sup> This is a view that privileges good governance over self-governance (where ‘good’ is understood as ‘liberal’). Self-determination is understood in entirely substantive terms, with no procedural content whatsoever.

Beitz accords little importance to considerations of procedural legitimacy or consent in his account of self-determination on the grounds that ‘there are few, if any, governments to which all (or even some) of the governed have actually consented’.<sup>131</sup> He summarises a familiar litany of arguments about the inadequacy of consent as a basis of legitimation to support this point – governments are not like voluntary associations in the sense that people are free to join or leave them; people have no opportunity to consent to being born in particular states; even subsequent expressions of consent such as voting for a particular government or policy are insufficient to endow institutions with legitimacy because the mechanisms by which consent is given have themselves not been consented to. These points, taken together, are said to demonstrate that ‘few, if any, governments can be shown to be morally legitimate by appeal to considerations of actual or tacit consent’.<sup>132</sup> Since we clearly *do* consider some governments more legitimate than others, ‘standards of legitimacy are to be sought elsewhere than in the actual prior agreement of the governed’.<sup>133</sup> These standards Beitz ultimately locates in ‘principles of justice that would be agreed to by rational citizens...as expressing the terms of their association’.<sup>134</sup> In short, self-determination is enjoyed when governance approximates a substantive conception of justice defined from behind a Rawlsian veil of ignorance, regardless of whether or not that conception enjoys the actual consent of those governed in accordance with it.

While Beitz’s arguments rightly point to the incompleteness and insufficiency of consent as a basis for legitimation, they do not persuade me that consent is an *unnecessary* condition for legitimacy. Even if the *grundnorms* of political life (where we are born, rules about rules, etc.) have not been consented to, liberal democracies offer countless avenues for the expression or withdrawal of consent to the secondary, nested norms that regulate our lives. In (ideal) liberal democracies, people exercise consent-driven agency in innumerable ways even if they do so within structures that they do not – cannot – fully consent to. More broadly, we consider the institutions of liberal democracy legitimate not simply because they deliver ‘good’ governance, but because when the system works as it is meant to, it reflects our

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<sup>130</sup> Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations*, 92-105.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*, 78.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, 78-9.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, 79.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

choices. Governance is ‘good’, in part, because it is self-governance. Therefore although consent cannot provide a sufficient basis for legitimacy, it is a necessary component of legitimacy. This in turn means that self-determination cannot be understood entirely in substantive terms, but must have procedural content as well.

To appreciate how counter-intuitive Beitz’s account of self-determination is, it is worth considering his views on why colonialism ought to be opposed. In his view, ‘colonial rule cannot be opposed simply because it is not based on consent,’<sup>135</sup> but because ‘it violates principles of justice that would be agreed to by rational citizens of the colony as expressing the terms of their association, and independence is required to remedy the injustices of colonial rule’.<sup>136</sup> By this logic, had colonial rule been benevolent (i.e. substantively just), there would have been no justification for independence even if the inhabitants of a colony were overwhelmingly in favour of it. This not only seems counter-intuitive,<sup>137</sup> it also runs contrary to the histories and motivations of virtually all anti-colonial movements, which struggled both for better governance and for self-governance. Many made the mistake of conflating the two, assuming that good governance would inevitably follow from self-governance. One person who did not was Mohandas Gandhi, who in a letter written shortly before India gained independence chastised an unknown correspondent: ‘You are gravely mistaken in assuming that as soon as swaraj comes prosperity will flood the country...far greater sacrifices will be needed after the attainment of self-government to establish good government and raise the people than were required for the attainment of freedom by means of satyagraha.’<sup>138</sup> The comment suggests that Gandhi understood the difference between the substantive and procedural dimensions of self-determination, but that *both* were of value to him. This does not necessarily invalidate Beitz’s substantive account of self-determination, but it does show how sharply it diverges from the motivations and lived experiences of actually existing self-determination movements.

The tendency of liberal cosmopolitans to emphasise the primacy of moral cosmopolitanism and give short shrift to institutional cosmopolitanism therefore rests on an impoverished and counter-intuitive account of self-determination. Because self-determination is understood entirely in substantive terms, it does not matter very much who is doing the governing. Governance is legitimate so long as it is conducted in accordance with the precepts of moral

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<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, 96.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, 98.

<sup>137</sup> Beitz recognises this unpalatable and counter-intuitive implication of his argument, but rather than addressing it, suggests that it is an empirical unlikelihood (*ibid.*, 103).

<sup>138</sup> Mohandas Gandhi, ‘Self-Government and Good Government’ (1947), reprinted in *The Essential Writings of Mahatma Gandhi*, ed. Raghavan Iyer (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 360-1.

cosmopolitanism. In the absence of institutional cosmopolitanism, the political questions implicated in the interpretation and implementation of norms are decided by powerful states acting unilaterally or through the institutions that they dominate. Liberal cosmopolitans are sanguine about the detrimental consequences for Third World self-determination because they have, in effect, taken the 'self' out of 'self-determination'.

‘I think I should take the advantage of this forum to propound the new radicalism which I believe we should embrace.’ Applause of expectation. ‘First and foremost, this radicalism must be clear-eyed enough to see beyond the present claptrap that will heap all our problems on the doorstep of capitalism and imperialism...Please don’t get me wrong. I do not deny that external factors are still at the root of many of our problems. But I maintain that even if external factors were to be at the root of *all* our problems we still must be ready to distinguish for practical purposes between remote and immediate causes, as our history teachers used to say.’ Smiles of recognition. ‘May I remind you that our ancestors – by the way you must never underrate those guys; some of you seem too ready to do so, I’m afraid. Well, our ancestors made a fantastic proverb on remote and immediate causes. If you want to get at the root of murder, they said, you have to look for the blacksmith who made the matchet.’ Loud laughter. ‘Wonderful proverb, isn’t it? But it was only intended to enlarge the scope of our thinking not to guide policemen investigating an actual crime.’ Laughter.

- Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* (1988)

### *3. Communitarianism and the hostile inside*

The key claim of Part I of this thesis is that the exercise of self-determination by Third World societies is impeded by pressures from both within and outside their states. While the last chapter explored one half of this dynamic, analysing the ways in which self-determination is impeded by external pressures legitimated and reproduced by liberal cosmopolitanism, this chapter considers how internal pressures might challenge self-determination. At the suggestion of Achebe's protagonist Ikem Osodi, it focuses on the ways in which Third World states typically impede the self-determination of their own societies. Recall that a key characteristic of 'Third Worldness' is engagement in relatively early stages of state- and nation-building. In this chapter, I demonstrate how the supposed imperatives of community construction are used to justify particular exercises of power by Third World states vis-à-vis their own societies, creating an internal environment (circumscribed by the state boundary) that is hostile to the self-determination of Third World societies. In effect, this chapter demonstrates how communitarianism functions as a language of power that traps Third World societies within hostile state structures.

My point of entry into this discussion will be a consideration of 'pluralism' as a method of ordering relations between political communities that is frequently posited as a more feasible and normatively more desirable alternative to solidarism. Pluralism's proponents recommend it as a pattern of ordering international relations that is more conducive to the imperatives of community construction. Pluralism is underwritten by a communitarian logic that sees community as the source of political values and the construction and reproduction of community as a central goal of political life. I therefore understand pluralism as the device by which communitarianism is institutionalised in international relations.

This chapter attempts to do three things. First, it assesses the extent to which pluralism may be said to structure the international system and, in particular, the extent to which postcolonial states may be said to exhibit a preference for pluralism in their international relations. In keeping with the broader methodological approach of the thesis, the effort here is to understand the political context within which a pluralist preference may be said to have developed before examining the ethical content of pluralist norms. Second, it examines moral justifications for pluralism, focusing particularly on the ideas that pluralism (a) better enables effective community construction, which in turn is in the universal interest, and (b) better conserves the actual diversity of human values in the international system. Both claims are contested in the third section, which demonstrates how pluralism enables, even justifies, the

practice of authoritarianism (which I understand simply as ‘arbitrary, illegitimate authority’<sup>1</sup>). I am interested in the ways in which pluralism and authoritarianism are often (but not inevitably) yoked to one another. Whereas the previous chapter expressed scepticism of the ability and willingness of solidarist ‘guardian’ states to speak for Third World societies over the heads of their own elites, this chapter focuses more specifically on state-society relations in the Third World and on the implications of a pluralist view of International Society for such relations.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, English School theorists distinguish pluralism from solidarism on the basis of their views of the area of actual or potential agreement among states over the norms that govern International Society.<sup>2</sup> Pluralism sees this agreement in minimalist terms as guaranteeing only the coexistence of states, which have the liberty to pursue their own ends subject to the minimal constraints necessary to guarantee this liberty to all. This is a view of International Society as a ‘practical association’ that permits its members to pursue different and possibly incompatible goals and is underpinned only by a procedural consensus imposing restrictions on how each might pursue its distinctive project.<sup>3</sup> In contrast, the solidarist view of International Society sees it as a ‘purposive association’ held together by a substantive consensus on the value of jointly pursuing goals beyond that of coexistence.

Neither of these conceptions of International Society can be thought of in static and ahistorical terms. Although the pluralist procedural consensus is historically thought to have originated in a mutual acceptance of the rights of states to territorial integrity, sovereign equality, and non-intervention, it may be the case that in an era of planetary existential threats such as climate change, ‘mere’ coexistence requires agreement on more extensive rules than those contained in the current procedural consensus. Likewise, as argued in the previous chapter, solidarism entails a convergence in the norms, rules, institutions and goals of the states concerned, but does not imply a particular content to those norms. The theoretical category ‘solidarism’ can accommodate the solidarity of communist or Islamic states as easily as that of liberal states.<sup>4</sup> Thus, both ‘pluralism’ and ‘solidarism’ are inherently open-ended categories whose content cannot be specified a priori. More importantly for the purposes of

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<sup>1</sup> Juan J. Linz, ‘Authoritarianism’, in *The Oxford Companion to Politics of the World*, ed. Joel Krieger (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 60. In the literature, ‘authoritarianism’ is conceptualised as an intermediate category between competitive democracy and totalitarianism. In this chapter I will be interested, less formalistically, in authoritarian exercises of power (which I consider governments legitimated by competitive elections also to be capable of).

<sup>2</sup> Bull, ‘The Grotian Conception of International Society’, 97.

<sup>3</sup> Terry Nardin, *Law, Morality, and the Relations of States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), 9.

<sup>4</sup> Buzan, *From International to World Society?*, 147.

this chapter, pluralism and solidarism must be understood in a dynamic and historical fashion as political responses to each other. I will explain what I mean by this before commencing the three tasks outlined at the start of this chapter.

In the conventional historical narrative of International Society, the procedural consensus underwriting pluralist International Society derives from the practices that European states developed in their relations with one another. The Peace of Westphalia, concluded in 1648, is considered a symbolic ‘pluralist moment’ in this process, marking the transition from ‘a *universitas* based on the solidarist norms of Latin Christendom, to a *societas*, based on the pluralist norms of state sovereignty, on political independence’.<sup>5</sup> In Jackson’s view, pre-Westphalian medieval diplomacy in Europe was a quasi-domestic dialogue conducted between subjects of the same overall political community, conducted within the framework of *respublica Christiana* and subject to the papal monarchy – in principle, if not always in fact. The Peace of Westphalia recognised the territorial sovereignty of an assortment of three hundred states and statelets, the rights of these entities to enter into treaty relations with one another as well as the rights of their rulers to determine what particular variant of Christianity would be practiced within their realms in accordance with the principle *cujus regio ejus religio*.<sup>6</sup> In retrospect, this has come to be seen as the first explicit recognition of the rights of states to territorial integrity, sovereignty and non-intervention.

In Jackson’s view, International Society has been essentially pluralist from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. It has been subject to numerous (ultimately unsuccessful) solidarist challenges from the monarchical and imperial ambitions of Louis XIV and Napoleon respectively, the revolutionary aspirations of Lenin and Stalin, and the fascist agendas of Hitler, Mussolini and Hirohito. But each of these were either defeated or domesticated (i.e. socialised) into the rules of pluralist International Society.<sup>7</sup> The originally European Society of states was of course universalised into an International Society by the admission of non-Western states, but their entry is not seen as having disrupted the essential pluralism of that Society. Indeed, Jackson sees an enduring pluralism stretching unbroken from the Westphalian ‘pluralist moment’ to

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<sup>5</sup> Robert Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 165.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, 163.

<sup>7</sup> See David Armstrong, *Revolution and World Order: The Revolutionary State in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), ch. 4, for an account of the USSR’s movement towards ‘increasingly state-like behaviour’ as Lenin and others realised that worldwide proletarian revolution was not imminent.

the present day, tempered only very marginally by a reinvigoration of solidarist principles in Western states in a limited and voluntary fashion following the Second World War.<sup>8</sup>

I do not intend to take issue with Jackson's assessment of the extent or significance of solidarism in contemporary International Society as my views on this matter are amply expressed in the previous chapter. Instead, I want to focus on the addition of non-Western, and particularly Third World, states to what had hitherto been a largely European regional society, and consider how this development should be viewed in relation to the distinction between pluralism and solidarism. Virtually all International Society theorists writing about the entry of non-Western states have commented on the alacrity with which those states embraced pluralist norms of sovereignty, territoriality and non-intervention. Yet this view misses the extraordinarily bifurcated nature of the experience, for non-Western political communities, of entering the Society of states as *states*.

For non-Western political communities, the moment of entry into a Society of states whose relations were ordered in accordance with European practices marked a dramatic departure, not only from their established practices of ordering external relations with other political communities, but also from their particular forms of political subjectivity. Although Western and non-Western regional societies of political communities had interacted with one another for centuries, prior to the incorporation of the latter into Western-dominated Society on Western terms, each construed its relations with the other in accordance with its own notions of world ordering. For example, Onuma Yasuaki explains that the Ch'ing dynasty 'understood' the Treaty of Nanching that it was forced to conclude with European states after its defeat in the First Opium War within the terms of its Sinocentric worldview – consular jurisdiction for the Europeans was seen as a case of allowing the 'barbarians' to settle their own disputes, and most-favoured-nation status as an expression of the benevolent intent of the emperor to treat all subjects under Heaven as equal. Yasuaki traces how Chinese elites were forced to shed elements of this Sinocentric worldview and adopt the practices of European society, first in their relations with European states and subsequently in relations with states like Japan that had once been subsidiary members of the Sinocentric system, as a result of successive military defeats. It was only with the secession of Korea, hitherto China's most faithful tributary, from the Sinocentric tribute system following a war with Japan in 1894, that

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<sup>8</sup> Jackson, *Global Covenant*, 374, 385, 409: '...the pluralist ethic was already evident in Europe in the Westphalian accommodation of religious differences between Protestant rulers and Catholic rulers. The global expansion of international society from Europe to the rest of the world can be understood as the universalisation of that same ethic of accommodation.'

Chinese elites realised they could no longer delude themselves into thinking that Sinocentric notions of world ordering were still relevant.<sup>9</sup>

The creation of *International Society* was the result of a number of such interactions between the European Society of states and other regional societies (or individual political communities), in which the former emerged triumphant and imposed its methods of ordering inter-communal political relations on the latter. The creation of International Society entailed an extraordinary convergence of norms, in which multiple forms of political subjectivity were supplanted by one kind of political subject – the territorial state – and in which a plurality of forms of ordering inter-communal relations were swept aside by a particular set of ‘pluralist’ rules of Westphalian pedigree. In this sense, the creation of International Society must be seen as a *solidarist* moment.<sup>10</sup> Of course there is no founding ‘moment’ as such because the Society of states becomes international over an extended period of time. But for every non-Western political community entering the Society as a state, the moment of entry is a solidarist one in which the scope for constituting oneself politically in forms alternative to the Westphalian territorial state has been extinguished.

Upon entry into International Society, the creation of which I have suggested must be seen as a solidarist achievement, non-Western states – and more particularly weaker Third World states – seized upon those rules of International Society that seemed most conducive to bolstering their fragile autonomy. The pluralist norms of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention, which had developed as a functional response to a situation of stalemate between states enjoying rough parity in Western Europe, now seemed extraordinarily valuable to the weakest members of the International Society of states. In Hindu cosmology, the world is supposedly held aloft on the backs of four elephants, which in turn stand on a giant turtle (this may be the origin of the expression ‘turtles all the way down’). If the elephants represent the pluralist norms of contemporary International Society, then the turtle

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<sup>9</sup> Onuma Yasuaki, ‘When was the Law of International Society Born? – An Inquiry of the History of International Law from an Intercivilisational Perspective’, *Journal of the History of International Law* 2 (2000): 30-32, 51-54.

<sup>10</sup> This may strike some as a heretical assertion, yet if solidarism is understood as norm convergence it does not seem an unreasonable assertion given the extraordinary degree of norm convergence that an *International Society of states* entailed. See Hedley Bull, ‘The Emergence of a Universal International Society’, in *The Expansion of International Society*, eds. Hedley Bull & Adam Watson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), 121-22: ‘...the coming together of numerous and extremely diverse political entities to form a single international society presupposed that these entities *had come to resemble one another* at least to the extent that they were all, in some comparable sense, states...the process by which Asian and African political communities did come to enter into such reciprocal relations and to enjoy full rights as members of international society was inseparable from domestic processes of political and social reform *which narrowed the differences between them and the political communities of the West, and contributed to a process of convergence*’ (emphasis mine).

is the solidarist achievement of norm convergence whereby the territorial state becomes the only acceptable form of political subjectivity in International Society. Third World acceptance and affirmation of pluralist norms must be seen as riding on the back of a more fundamental solidarist norm convergence.

The entry of Third World states into International Society was an extraordinarily ambiguous moment for each of the new entrants. On the one hand there was a passionate embrace of juridical equality as something long overdue, on the other hand an awareness that the form in which one had finally been accorded equal recognition had not been entirely of one's choosing.<sup>11</sup> Third World adherence to, and advocacy of, pluralist norms of International Society has to be understood as a political response to the historical memory of the defeat, trauma and loss of self entailed by the solidarist achievements of European imperialism – achievements that, as I have argued above, made International Society possible. This relationship is important because, as I will demonstrate later in this chapter, Third World pluralism derives much of its political capital and legitimacy by setting itself up as a bulwark against a renewal of neo-imperialist solidarism – Third World pluralism is the postcolonial 'never again'.

But the dynamic interaction between solidarism and pluralism does not stop there. The phenomenon of coercive solidarism discussed in the previous chapter is itself justified as a response to the impairment of human security by the putative abuses of pluralism. And coercive solidarism in turn has generated apparently pluralist responses, some of which have taken the form of the so-called 'anti-globalisation movement' that I discuss in chapter 5. Thus, pluralism and solidarism cannot be understood as static alternative conceptions of International Society, but must be viewed in a dynamic, historical and mutually constitutive fashion as political responses to one another. The following section offers an empirical assessment of the extent to which Third World states may be said to have exhibited a preference for pluralism in the Cold War and post-Cold War eras. This provides the political context for a deeper engagement with the ethical content of pluralism as a method of ordering international relations, in sections 3.2 and 3.3.

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<sup>11</sup> The degree of choice or coercion must obviously be assessed on a case-by-case basis. Uncolonised 'middle power' states such as Japan and Turkey may be seen as having exercised a greater degree of choice in this matter, engaging in pre-emptive defensive modernisations (the Meiji Restoration in Japan, the Tanzimat reforms in the Ottoman Empire) so as to better resist the encroachments of Western Powers. Even in colonised territories, native elites were always divided over questions of political subjectivity – some embraced Western modes of subjectivity out of a genuine belief that these were superior to indigenous forms, others did so much more reluctantly and some not at all.

### 3.1 Pluralist rules, solidarist exceptions

Because solidarism entails purposive action, it is possible to identify solidarist ‘projects’ pursued by identifiable agents with particular interests. Even where the notion of a ‘project’ – with its implications of coherent and teleological agency – is misleading, solidarist norms usually operate at a higher degree of specificity than pluralist norms. Pluralism is not a ‘project’ – it is a permissive state of affairs, a licence for the pursuit of multiple projects taking a potentially infinite variety of forms. For the analyst of international affairs therefore, while solidarisms of different sorts may appear as tangible phenomena more easily amenable to identification and description, pluralist behaviour is rather more difficult to describe.

Nevertheless, it is possible to discern a concerted Third World effort from the very moment of their entry into International Society, to sustain and reinforce the norms that make pluralist behaviour possible – sovereign equality, non-intervention and territorial integrity. The Latin American republics were among the earliest states to advocate a norm of non-intervention in the form of the Calvo doctrine, formulated by the Argentinean jurist Carlos Calvo in 1868. Prompted partly by French intervention in Mexico to recover the pecuniary claims of French nationals in that country, the doctrine sought to protect Latin American states from diplomatic or armed intervention by other states (particularly European) to recover debts owed to their nationals. In 1902, in response to the German, Italian and British blockade of the Venezuelan coast, another Argentinean – Luis Drago – would formulate the Drago doctrine, prohibiting coercive intervention to induce a state to pay its public debt. Between 1826 and 1936, Latin American states struggled to enshrine an absolute norm of non-intervention within the inter-American system, against the US assumption of a prerogative to intervene in their affairs in order to maintain an exclusive sphere of influence in the Western hemisphere in accordance with the Monroe doctrine. With the progressive institutionalisation of the norm of non-intervention within their regional system, Latin American states were also at the forefront of the effort to elevate it to the status of a general principle of the United Nations, during the process of drafting its Charter.<sup>12</sup>

#### 3.1.1 Cold War

As decolonisation proceeded apace following the Second World War, the Latin Americans were joined in their support for the norms of sovereignty and non-intervention by the newly independent states of Africa and Asia. Taking advantage of strength afforded by numbers in fora such as the UN General Assembly, Third World states affirmed the centrality of these

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<sup>12</sup> Caroline Thomas, *New States, Sovereignty and Intervention* (Aldershot: Gower, 1985), 22-51.

norms repeatedly in landmark resolutions such as the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (1960)<sup>13</sup> and the Declaration on the Inadmissibility of Intervention in the Domestic Affairs of States and the Protection of their Independence and Sovereignty (1965).<sup>14</sup> Yet the implications of sovereignty and non-intervention would have remained unclear without agreement on the territorial limits within which these were to operate. Accordingly, we might view the frequently reiterated Third World insistence on respect for territorial integrity and the inviolability of existing territorial boundaries as a further manifestation of pluralist behaviour. African states played a leading role in the institutionalisation of this norm, pledging ‘to respect the borders existing on their achievement of national independence’ at one of the earliest meetings of the Organisation of African Unity held at Cairo in 1964.<sup>15</sup>

These collective affirmations of the bedrock norms of pluralism notwithstanding, it would be inaccurate to characterise Third World states as exclusively pluralist during the early postcolonial decades. A politics of Third World *solidarity* was clearly visible around the goals of ending colonialism and white minority rule in Africa and, to a lesser extent, Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories.<sup>16</sup> Article 3(6) of the OAU Charter explicitly pledged ‘absolute dedication to the total emancipation of the African territories which are still dependent’ and a Liberation Committee based in Dar-es-Salaam was set up to further this end. Although African states were in no position to provide effective military aid to liberation struggles, the ‘frontline states’ bordering white minority regimes provided bases and sanctuary for black movements operating across the border and training facilities were often hosted by states further afield.<sup>17</sup> Whilst recognising the *de jure* independence of apartheid South Africa, the fourteen east and central African signatories of the Lusaka Manifesto of April 1969 explicitly justified their disregard of pluralist norms of sovereignty and non-intervention in the following terms:

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<sup>13</sup> G. A. Res. 1514 (XV), U. N. Doc. A/4684 (1961).

<sup>14</sup> G. A. Res. 2131 (XX), U. N. Doc. A/6014 (1965).

<sup>15</sup> AHG/Res. 16(1), Resolutions adopted by the First Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government, Cairo, 17-21 July 1964. Christopher Clapham, *Africa and the International System: The Politics of State Survival* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 47, explains that the very artificiality of frontiers in most of Africa made them more, and not less, central to the identity of the state that lay within them. The fact that there was no ‘idea’ of, say, Mali or Zambia which preceded its frontiers and which could be invoked to challenge them, made African rulers more agreeable to the mutual recognition of existing frontiers. There were of course states where identity preceded frontiers – Somalia and Ethiopia – which were, not surprisingly, most vulnerable to ethnic secessionist and irredentist challenges.

<sup>16</sup> See G. A. Res. 3379 (XXX), U. N. Doc. A/Res/3379 (1975), which determined that ‘Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination’ and was passed by a vote of 72 to 35 with 32 abstentions. The resolution remained in force for 16 years and was revoked by G. A. Res. 4686 (1991).

<sup>17</sup> Clapham, *Africa and the International System*, 113, 209-10.

On every legal basis its internal affairs are a matter exclusively for the people of South Africa. Yet the purpose of law is people and we assert that the actions of the South African government are such that the rest of the world has a responsibility to take some action in defence of humanity, self-determination and non-racialism.<sup>18</sup>

Despite its apparent resonance with contemporary liberal solidarist notions of a ‘responsibility to protect’ devolving on the international community, this was an emphatically black solidarism premised on a racialised notion of self-determination. Once black majority rule was established, states were deemed to qualify for the absolutist protections of pluralist norms of International Society regardless of how governments treated their people. This accounted for the extraordinary tolerance that African and other states evinced for regimes that were known for their murderous and kleptocratic tendencies, such as those of Idi Amin in Uganda, Jean-Bédél Bokassa in the Central African Republic and Mobutu Sese Seko in what was then called Zaire.<sup>19</sup> As the Tanzanian government noted in an official statement protesting the hosting of the 1975 OAU Summit in Kampala, Uganda, ‘Africans lose their right to protest against state-organised brutality on the day that their country becomes independent through their efforts. For on all such matters the OAU acts like a trade union of the current Heads of State and Government, with solidarity reflected in silence if not in open support for each other...’<sup>20</sup> In a similar vein, Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere, in a speech delivered in December 1978 prior to Tanzania’s intervention in Uganda, observed:

...there is a strange habit in Africa: an African leader, so long as he is an African, can kill Africans just as he pleases, and you cannot say anything. If Amin was white, we would have passed many resolutions against him. But he is black, and blackness is a licence to kill Africans.<sup>21</sup>

Nyerere’s bitterness accurately summed up the dual standard then in operation, under which racial solidarism against white minority regimes was staged against the ‘normal’ backdrop of pluralist relations vis-à-vis all other states. Combinations of pluralist and solidarist behaviour were also evident in early Third World attempts to restructure international economic relations. Informed by economic theories of dependency and political strategies of non-alignment, in the early postcolonial decades many Third World countries used their pluralist space to experiment with various forms of economic nationalism (initially entailing simply the replacement of foreign with native proprietors, but later involving nationalisation of key

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<sup>18</sup> Cited from Thomas, *New States*, 66.

<sup>19</sup> I do not mean to suggest that such regimes were limited to Africa – think of ‘Papa Doc’ Duvalier in Haiti and Pol Pot in Cambodia, for example.

<sup>20</sup> Thomas, *New States*, 73.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 98. Despite his criticism of Amin’s treatment of the Ugandan people, Nyerere justified Tanzania’s intervention in Uganda in January 1979 on grounds of self-defence. He argued, somewhat disingenuously, that there was a second, parallel conflict – in which Tanzania was allegedly not involved – between the people of Uganda (including exile forces who had been organising on Tanzanian territory) and Amin’s regime.

industries), import substitution industrialisation, etc. The minimal success of these developmental strategies fuelled an uneasy realisation amongst Third World states that political independence did not necessarily imply economic autonomy and that they needed tangible assistance from the external environment. This prompted a move from non-alignment to what Robert Rothstein has called ‘international class war’.<sup>22</sup>

Third World states exhibited clear signs of solidarist behaviour in this interstate confrontation. Working in solidarity with one another through organisations such as the NAM and the G77 and converging around specific normative demands, their efforts to re-order their relations with powerful industrialised states carried all the hallmarks of a purposive project.<sup>23</sup> Yet a closer perusal of their demands reveals both pluralist and solidarist elements. Much of the 1974 Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, which, in retrospect, appears to have been the high-watermark of the ‘international class war’, has a strongly pluralist tenor. This is evident in the opening ritual affirmations of sovereign equality, territorial integrity and non-intervention, but also in more specific declarations of the ‘right of every country to adopt the economic and social system that it deems the most appropriate’, of the ‘full permanent sovereignty of every State over its natural resources and all economic activities...including the right to nationalisation’, and of the right to regulate and supervise the activities of transnational corporations. Alongside this, one sees a much more solidarist realisation of ‘the reality of interdependence’, of the fact that ‘the interests of the developed countries and those of the developing countries can no longer be isolated from each other, that there is a close interrelationship between the prosperity of the developed countries and the growth and development of the developing countries, and that the prosperity of the international community as a whole depends upon the prosperity of its constituent parts.’ In the politics of the NIEO, we might view the Third World as acting as a solidarist vanguard, seeking to promote a broader acceptance of new norms governing relations between industrialised countries and themselves. Note the demands for a just and equitable relationship between the prices of imports and exports and an improvement in unsatisfactory terms of trade, for ‘active assistance to developing countries...free of any political or military conditions’, for ‘preferential and non-reciprocal treatment for developing countries’, for transfers of financial resources, technology, etc.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Rothstein, *The Weak in the World of the Strong*, 110.

<sup>23</sup> Mortimer, *Third World Coalition*, chapters 2, 3 and 4.

<sup>24</sup> Declaration on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, G. A. Res. 3201 (S-VI), U. N. Doc. A/9559 (1974). See also Cox, ‘Ideologies and the NIEO’.

This combination of pluralism and solidarism in Third World interstate behaviour appears less puzzling when one realises that both tendencies operated to buttress the position of Third World state elites. Third World solidarism was intended to alter the interstate power balance in favour of Third World *states* (or, in the case of racial or anti-colonial solidarism, was intended to facilitate the logically prior step of bringing those states into existence). Third World pluralism was intended to preclude external scrutiny of, and interference in, state-society relations within the Third World – it was intended to give Third World state elites greater room for manoeuvre vis-à-vis their own societies. Of course both solidarist and pluralist politics were justified as being in the interests of ‘the people’, but whether or not they actually benefited Third World *societies* depended on the nature of the state-society compact that existed in individual states. Yet, crucially, the nature of that compact was also claimed by Third World states as a subject that legitimately belonged within the pluralist space, as a matter that remained ‘essentially within the domestic jurisdiction’ of states, in the language of art. 2(7) of the UN Charter.

It would not be an over-generalisation to suggest that for much of the duration of the Cold War, industrialised states of both blocs cared little about the nature of Third World state-society relations, subordinating such concerns to the larger geo-strategic imperatives of superpower conflict. Particularly in states that were of strategic interest to either of the superpowers, so long as Third World state elites were obedient clients, the nature of their relations with their own societies was of little concern to external patrons. Indeed as Wendt and Barnett note, the very fact of external patronage often obviated the need for Third World state elites to legitimate their positions by bargaining with their societies.<sup>25</sup> External patrons sometimes went to elaborate lengths to justify why *their* clients were more legitimate than those of their opponents – recall Jeanne Kirkpatrick’s Orwellian distinction between ‘traditional’ (i.e. right-wing) autocracies and ‘revolutionary’ (left-wing) autocracies<sup>26</sup> - yet the substance of those efforts conveyed the impression that the pliancy of clients was always more important than the welfare of their societies.<sup>27</sup>

This was illustrated, rather ironically, by the US’s willingness to work with the Afghan mujahideen and diverse elements of political Islam during its proxy war against the USSR in

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<sup>25</sup> Wendt & Barnett, ‘Dependent State formation and Third World militarisation’.

<sup>26</sup> Jeanne Kirkpatrick, ‘Dictatorships and Double Standards’, *Commentary* 68, no. 5 (1979): 44.

<sup>27</sup> See for example Laurence Whitehead, ‘The Imposition of Democracy’, in *Exporting Democracy*, ed. Lowenthal, 358; Steven W. Hook, ‘Inconsistent US Efforts to Promote Democracy Abroad’, in *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality*, ed. Peter J. Schraeder (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), 121-23, for the argument that where US democracy promotion efforts clashed with the imperatives of containment (during the Cold War), stability, or the maintenance of a business-friendly climate, democracy has almost always been given short shrift.

Afghanistan from 1979 to 1989, regardless of the moral and political beliefs of its clients and their involvement in such illegal activities as the narcotics trade.<sup>28</sup> It is also graphically illustrated by photographs of a certain Donald Rumsfeld (then special envoy of US President Reagan) shaking hands with Saddam Hussein (then Iraqi President) in December 1983, in full knowledge of the latter's use of chemical weapons against Kurdish communities and Iranian troops (indeed, it seems to have been the case that the US facilitated the more effective use of chemical weapons by providing the Iraqi regime with satellite imagery of Iranian troop positions).<sup>29</sup> As Ikem Osodi would well recognise, history teachers – and photographers – have sometimes been able to capture blacksmiths and murderers in transaction.

### 3.1.2 Post-Cold War

As I mentioned in the previous chapter, the end of the Cold War ushered in systemic and state-level changes, which resulted in a newfound ability and willingness on the part of Western states to legitimate interventions in the Third World on humanitarian grounds (i.e. in the interests of Third World *societies*). Yet their consistent subordination of these very same humanitarian considerations to their own national security interests has remained fresh in the historical memories of Third World state elites and societies. This might account for the fundamental lack of credibility that Western state protestations of humanitarian concern continue to have in large parts of the Third World.

NAM's consistently reiterated opposition to 'the so-called "right" of humanitarian intervention'<sup>30</sup> is symptomatic of this lack of trust in Western motives. The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (ICISS), charged with forging a consensus around the basic questions of principle and process involved in humanitarian intervention, has tried valiantly to shift the terms of the debate from that of a 'right to intervene' to one of a 'responsibility to protect' that lies, first, on individual states and only secondarily on the

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<sup>28</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: Islam, the USA, and the Global War Against Terror* (Delhi: Permanent Black 2005), especially chapters 3 and 4. See also Richard Halloran, 'US may establish Afghan rebel ties', *New York Times*, 18 June 1986, A8, which reports that the Reagan administration was only concerned that the various rebel factions take on the 'attributes of a government' by establishing greater cooperation among themselves and greater control over Afghan territory. The same day's issue of the *NYT* carries a story about the rebels' heavy reliance on opium cultivation as a means of financing the jihad against the Soviets (see Arthur Bonner, 'Afghan Rebels' Victory Garden: Opium', *New York Times*, 18 June 1986, A1).

<sup>29</sup> John J. Mearsheimer & Stephen Walt, 'An unnecessary war', *Foreign Policy* 134 (2003): 50-59.

<sup>30</sup> Final Document of the XIV Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, Durban, 17-19 August 2004, [http://www.e-nam.org.my/ministerial\\_conference/fdocument.php](http://www.e-nam.org.my/ministerial_conference/fdocument.php), para. 8, 295; Final Document of the XIII Conference of Heads of State or Government of the Non-Aligned Movement, Kuala Lumpur, 20-25 February 2003, <http://www.nam.gov.za/media/030227e.htm>, para. 16; Final Document of the XII Summit, Durban, 2-3 September 1998, <http://www.nam.gov.za/xiisummit/chap1.htm>, para. 7 (which, however, does not use the phrase 'humanitarian intervention').

international community.<sup>31</sup> Despite this, NAM has expressed concern at the ‘observed similarities between the new expression “responsibility to protect” and “humanitarian intervention”’. This suggests that Third World states, as a collectivity, remain deeply pluralist and are very far away indeed from accepting international intervention for human protection purposes.

Nevertheless, some analysts have argued that the differentiated responses of Third World states to particular instances of humanitarian intervention suggest that there is no unified Third World perspective on the issue.<sup>32</sup> Ramesh Thakur has observed that African states appear to have gone the farthest in rejecting an absolutist position on state sovereignty, Latin American states seem open to interventions based on universal principles and under regional or international authority, and Asian states continue to be the most stubbornly resistant to external interference.<sup>33</sup> In this section of the chapter, I attempt to assess the extent to which Third World pluralism of the Cold War era has persisted beyond the end of the Cold War. I argue that while analysts are right to point to variations in Third World attitudes towards intervention, it is still possible – and meaningful – to speak of a strong Third World preference for pluralism.

African specialists have noted the breaking of two postcolonial taboos in Africa after the Cold War. First, the inviolability of colonially-inherited boundaries has been undermined by military interventions in Lesotho, Liberia, Congo-Brazzaville and the Democratic Republic of Congo undertaken by regional organisations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), involving regional hegemony such as Nigeria and South Africa. Second, the secession of a group from a state through armed struggle, thwarted in the cases of Katanga and Biafra, succeeded in the creation of Eritrea from Ethiopia in April 1993.<sup>34</sup> Commentators have also noted the OAU’s strong stand against unconstitutional changes of government in Africa (evident, for example, in its refusal to permit the military regimes of Côte d’Ivoire and Comoros from attending its 2000 Lomé summit), and the new African Union’s institutionalisation of ‘the right of the Union to intervene in a Member state pursuant to a

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<sup>31</sup> International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty (hereafter ICISS), *The Responsibility to Protect: Research, Bibliography, Background* (Ottawa: International Development Research Centre, 2001), 16-18.

<sup>32</sup> Sarah L. Robinson, ‘A Southern Perspective on Humanitarian Intervention?: rhetoric and practice of developing states, 1992 – 2000’, M.Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 2004.

<sup>33</sup> Ramesh Thakur, ‘Developing Countries and the Intervention-Sovereignty Debate’, in *The United Nations and Global Security*, eds. Richard M. Price & Mark W. Zacher (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 204.

<sup>34</sup> Adekeye Adebajo & Chris Landsberg, ‘The Heirs of Nkrumah: Africa’s New Interventionists’, *Pugwash Occasional Papers* 2, no. 1 (2001), [http://www.pugwash.org/reports/rc/como\\_africa.htm](http://www.pugwash.org/reports/rc/como_africa.htm).

decision of the Assembly in respect of...war crimes, genocide and crimes against humanity' enshrined in art. 4(h) of its Constitutive Act.<sup>35</sup>

Yet *against* these signs of departure from absolutist pluralism, it should be pointed out that ECOWAS's actions in Liberia and Sierra Leone are susceptible to more conservative readings that suggest that they might not have been 'interventions' at all.<sup>36</sup> We should also take note of South Africa's denunciation of NATO's unilateral intervention in Kosovo, even as it condemned the ethnic cleansing policies of the Milosevic government.<sup>37</sup> More recently, attempts to institutionalise a global 'responsibility to protect' at the 2005 World Summit received enthusiastic support from only Botswana, Mauritius, Rwanda and Tanzania and more cautious endorsement from South Africa; Egypt and Zimbabwe were explicitly opposed, while all other African states remained non-committal.<sup>38</sup> This meagre level of support is surprising, given the relatively conservative position of the Summit's Outcome Document which places the responsibility to protect squarely on individual states in the first instance, and only secondarily on the international community working 'through the Security Council, in accordance with the Charter'.<sup>39</sup> (This wording seems to accord quite closely with the NAM position, which gives the Security Council primacy in the maintenance of international peace and security.) Finally, it is worth noting that the African Union's Constitutive Act licences intervention only by the Union itself in the affairs of its member states.<sup>40</sup> This is very much in consonance with its broader philosophy of African solutions to

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<sup>35</sup> African Union, The Constitutive Act, art. 4(h), [http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/AboutAu/Constitutive\\_Act\\_en.htm](http://www.africa-union.org/root/au/AboutAu/Constitutive_Act_en.htm).

<sup>36</sup> ECOWAS actions in the Liberian civil war in 1990 and in Sierra Leone in 1997 were both invited by the then *de jure* heads of those states. In the case of Liberia, a beleaguered President Doe appealed to ECOWAS to introduce a peacekeeping force into Liberia 'to forestall increasing terror and tension' following the attack on his government's forces by the National Patriotic Front of Liberia led by Charles Taylor. In the case of Sierra Leone, upon being deposed by a coup in May 1997, the democratically elected head of state – Ahmed Tijan Kabbah – requested Nigeria and ECOWAS to intervene to restore constitutional order (ICISS, *Responsibility to Protect*, 81, 105; see also Martin Griffiths, Iain Levine & Mark Weller, 'Sovereignty and Suffering', in *The Politics of Humanitarian Intervention*, ed. John Harriss (London: Pinter, 1995), 48.) On an understanding of 'intervention' as non-consensual, the ECOWAS actions do not qualify as interventions at all. For this reason, I disagree with the ICISS's conclusion that 'ECOWAS's intervention into Sierra Leone supports the argument that an international norm of 'prodemocratic *intervention* is developing' (119).

<sup>37</sup> Philip Nel, 'South Africa: The demand for legitimate multilateralism', in *Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention: Selective indignation, collective action, and international citizenship*, eds. Albert Schnabel & Ramesh Thakur (Tokyo: United Nations University Press, 2000), 257-58.

<sup>38</sup> See R2PCS, 'What Governments said about R2P at 2005 World Summit', 15 September 2005, [http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/government\\_statements/](http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/government_statements/), and 'Chart on Government Positions on R2P', 11 August 2005, [http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/civil\\_society\\_statements/294](http://www.responsibilitytoprotect.org/index.php/civil_society_statements/294).

<sup>39</sup> 2005 World Summit Outcome, 15 September 2005, A/Res/60/1, para. 139.

<sup>40</sup> But see 'The Common African Position on the Proposed Reform of the United Nations: "The Ezulwini Consensus"', 7<sup>th</sup> Extraordinary Session of the Executive Council of the African Union, Addis Ababa, 7-8 March 2005, Ext/EX.CL/2 (VII), para. B(i), which suggests a willingness to contemplate intervention by regional organisations with post hoc Security Council authorisation.

African problems, suggesting that African states are still extraordinarily sensitive to the problem of imperial continuity raised in the previous chapter. Nevertheless, if implemented, this would be a significant departure from the absolutist pluralism previously operating between independent black African states that Nyerere found so deeply frustrating.

The Latin American situation is also more differentiated than Thakur's broad generalisation implies. Monica Serrano argues that amongst Latin American countries, Mexico and to a lesser extent Brazil (and, one might add, Venezuela under Chavez and Bolivia under Morales) have been relatively more resistant to perceived intrusions into their domestic affairs. Conversely, Argentina and Chile have questioned absolutist interpretations of sovereignty and have strongly supported the international protection of democracy and human rights through regional and global institutional mechanisms. The foreign policy preferences of this latter camp arguably stem from a desire to consolidate their recent transitions to democracy from military rule by locking themselves into international structures of accountability. This is also true of Central American countries such as Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, where international involvement of different kinds has helped resolve intractable conflicts, leaving a legacy of more flexible attitudes towards sovereignty.<sup>41</sup> These intra-regional distinctions notwithstanding, Latin American states were prominent among those that embraced the notion of a responsibility to protect at the 2005 World Summit, although Cuba and Venezuela made statements in opposition.<sup>42</sup>

It is doubtful whether an Asian perspective can be identified on any issue, Asia being a sort of residual continent. Lacking the racial solidarism of Africa or the shared history and legacies of Latin colonisation in Central and South America, 'Asia' simply does not have a coherent regional identity at the continental level, although it does encompass a number of self-identifying regions.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, one prominent manifestation of pluralist behaviour at the continental level occurred in the run up to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights, when representatives of more than 40 Asian states met in Bangkok prior to the conference and drafted what came to be known as the Bangkok Declaration. The Declaration was widely seen as institutionalising what some of its signatories publicly proclaimed as 'Asian values', although it did not actually use this terminology anywhere. It expressed concerns about the

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<sup>41</sup> Monica Serrano, 'Latin America: The dilemmas of intervention', in *Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention*, eds. Schnabel & Thakur, 232.

<sup>42</sup> R2PCS, 'Chart on Government Positions on R2P', mentions Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Peru as having embraced the 'responsibility to protect', Brazil as having an unclear position, and Cuba and Venezuela as being opposed.

<sup>43</sup> On the definition of 'regions' see Andrew Hurrell, 'Regionalism in Theoretical Perspective', in *Regionalism in World Politics*, eds. Louise Fawcett & Andrew Hurrell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

unbalanced nature of the global rights agenda, which was seen to relate ‘mainly to one category of rights’ (civil and political); it warned against ‘confrontation and the imposition of incompatible values’ or the use of human rights ‘as a conditionality for extending development assistance’; most significantly, it ambiguously affirmed a culturally relativist notion of human rights in the following terms: ‘while human rights are universal in nature, they must be considered in the context of a dynamic and evolving process of international norm-setting, bearing in mind the significance of national and regional particularities and various historical, cultural and religious backgrounds’.<sup>44</sup>

I will return to the use of ‘culture’ and to the debate over ‘Asian values’ in a later section of this chapter. Here I only want to note that it is difficult to identify any enthusiastic proponents of humanitarian intervention in Asia.<sup>45</sup> India has been wedded to a rigid interpretation of the UN Charter, seeing the use of force without Security Council authorisation as illegal and unmitigated by any humanitarian considerations that might be present.<sup>46</sup> Even when Council authorisation has been solicited it has acquiesced rather grudgingly, in the case of Somalia because of the perceived exceptionality of a situation of a state without a sovereign,<sup>47</sup> and when UN involvement was sought in Liberia following the ECOWAS intervention because the Foreign Minister of Liberia himself had requested UN action.<sup>48</sup>

There is virtually no support amongst Islamic<sup>49</sup> states, for a right of humanitarian intervention in principle. In the wake of NATO’s intervention in Kosovo, a resolution co-sponsored by Russia, Belarus and India seeking to condemn the intervention was defeated by twelve votes to three (Russia, China and Namibia). Of the twelve votes supportive of the intervention, two came from Muslim countries – Bahrain and Malaysia. Given Malaysia’s credentials as a strong defender of pluralist norms, Wheeler speculates that it was a sense of Islamic solidarity with the Muslim Kosovar Albanian victims of Milosevic’s ethnic cleansing, rather than a

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<sup>44</sup> Final Declaration of the Regional Meeting for Asia of the World Conference on Human Rights, Bangkok, 29 March - 2 April 1993, <http://www.unhchr.ch/html/menu5/wcbangkm.htm>, para. 8.

<sup>45</sup> China’s opposition is well known but I shall not discuss it here because it falls outside the ‘Third World’ as defined in this thesis. China cannot be understood as ‘postcolonial’ in the same way as other Third World states, given the incompleteness of its colonisation. More importantly, it has arguably been regarded as a Great Power in its own right ever since its rapprochement with the Nixon administration in the early 1970s.

<sup>46</sup> See for example its very strong statements against the NATO intervention in Kosovo, quoted in Satish Nambiar, ‘India: An uneasy precedent’, in *Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention*, eds. Schnabel & Thakur, 263, 265, 267-68. See also Radha Kumar, ‘Sovereignty and Intervention: Opinions in South Asia’, *Pugwash Occasional Papers* 2, no. 1 (2001), [http://www.pugwash.org/reports/rc/como\\_india.htm](http://www.pugwash.org/reports/rc/como_india.htm).

<sup>47</sup> Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, 186.

<sup>48</sup> Griffiths et al., ‘Sovereignty and Suffering’, 48.

<sup>49</sup> This is not an Asian regional grouping – or indeed a regional group at all – but I discuss it here because some of the most powerful Islamic states are in Asia.

universalistic liberal solidarism, that elicited Malaysia's supportive vote.<sup>50</sup> Yet Islamic countries were themselves deeply ambivalent about the intervention, with some like Egypt and Jordan protesting Milosevic's persecution of Muslims and others such as Algeria, Iran, Iraq and Libya (perhaps fearing for their own security) more concerned with NATO's disregard of the role of the UN and norms of state sovereignty.<sup>51</sup> Among the few Asian countries to endorse the 'responsibility to protect' at the 2005 World Summit were Japan, South Korea and Singapore (suggesting that more flexible notions of sovereignty *may* be evolving in Southeast Asia, albeit only in the wealthiest states of the region) as well as Jordan and Sri Lanka; Indonesia offered qualified support, noting that the use of force had to be a last resort; Malaysia's individual position was ambiguous; and of the eight countries that explicitly rejected the 'responsibility to protect', four were Asian (China, Iran, Pakistan and Vietnam).<sup>52</sup>

The purpose of this overview has been to acknowledge the range of perspectives on humanitarian intervention that exist within the contemporary Third World, but also to insist that there is still a great deal of opposition to the institutionalisation of a responsibility to protect. Sarah Robinson explains the curious phenomenon of variegated individual positions on humanitarian intervention juxtaposed against a collective Third World opposition to the practice, in terms of a two-level game. *Collective* opposition impedes, or at least decelerates, the proposed institutionalisation of humanitarian intervention in the normative fabric of International Society, yet the variety of *individual* attitudes surveyed above leaves open the possibility for individual states to support the practice on a case-by-case basis (for example, where they feel a sense of solidarity with the victims, where their national interests so demand, etc.).<sup>53</sup> This suggests that Third World states continue to seek an international environment founded on pluralist norms, although they are willing to countenance a limited ad hoc solidarism in exceptional circumstances. Although my critique of coercive solidarism in the previous chapter was advanced from a Third World *societal* perspective,<sup>54</sup> it may be the case that the arguments advanced in that chapter offer a partial explanation for the pluralist

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<sup>50</sup> Wheeler, *Saving Strangers*, 280.

<sup>51</sup> Ibrahim A. Karawan, 'The Muslim world: Uneasy ambivalence', in *Kosovo and the Challenge of Humanitarian Intervention*, eds. Schnabel & Thakur, 219-20. It is surely no coincidence that Muslim countries that did support the intervention had relatively close relations with the US, while those that did not had reason to fear US intervention.

<sup>52</sup> R2PCS, 'Chart on Government Positions on R2P'.

<sup>53</sup> Robinson, 'A Southern Perspective', 71.

<sup>54</sup> To put it more accurately, the critique in the previous chapter aimed to cast doubt on the ability and willingness of powerful 'guardian' states to interpret and represent the interests of Third World societies over the heads of Third World state elites.

preferences of Third World *states* and are shared by those states.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless, there are additional reasons for this pluralist preference that are more closely tied to the power and agency of Third World state elites. Mohammed Ayob provides what has come to be acknowledged as the classic account in the International Society literature of the pluralist preferences of Third World state elites.<sup>56</sup> Accordingly, I provide an overview of his account in the following section, before offering a critique in section 3.3.

If I have said very little about economic pluralism in the post-Cold War era it is because the very success of liberal economic solidarism described in the previous chapter has shrunk the pluralist space on economic issues considerably. Many of the issues central to the NIEO continue to remain on the agenda of what today are more usually referred to as ‘North-South’ relations, attesting to the political failure of the NIEO effort. By 1982 when the debt crisis erupted, it was clear that the Third World coalition that had spearheaded the NIEO so vigorously no longer existed in any meaningful sense, although organisations such as NAM and the G77 lingered on. As conditionality began to be implemented in indebted countries, the scope for economic pluralism narrowed considerably. By the early 1990s, economists confidently proclaimed that socialism was no longer a viable alternative to the market economy; the need for fiscal discipline, broadened tax bases, unified exchange rates sufficiently competitive to encourage export-led growth, privatisation, deregulation and secure property rights were all declared to constitute the new economic common sense. This still leaves a great deal of room for controversy even amongst the purveyors of this hegemony, but much of it relates to the pacing and sequencing of trade and financial liberalisation and deregulation – not to the question of whether these are desirable ends in themselves.<sup>57</sup>

NAM statements now reflect a clear, if resigned, acceptance of these realities. The Final Document of the XIV Ministerial held in 2004 at Durban notes that ‘the increasing

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<sup>55</sup> Robinson, ‘A Southern Perspective’, performs a quantitative and qualitative analysis of the 1999 General Assembly debate that followed UN Secretary General Kofi Annan’s clarion call to address the tension between intervention in defence of humanity and adherence to procedure. Of the 111 NAM countries that addressed the Assembly, she classifies 8 as ‘outright rejectionists’ (they rejected humanitarian intervention under all circumstances). The vast majority were ‘unilateral rejectionists’ (they rejected unilateral intervention but were prepared to countenance intervention authorised by the Security Council). The position of the ‘unilateral rejectionists’ appears to be analogous to my critique of coercive solidarism: it is a discomfort with moral cosmopolitanism when unaccompanied by institutional cosmopolitanism.

<sup>56</sup> Jennifer M. Welsh, ‘From Right to Responsibility: Humanitarian Intervention and International Society’, *Global Governance* 8 (2002): 509.

<sup>57</sup> For a concise snapshot of what remained of the pluralist space in the early post-Cold War years, see John Williamson, ‘Democracy and the “Washington Consensus”’, *World Development* 21, no. 8 (1993): 1329-1336.

interdependence of national economies in a globalising world and the emergence of rule-based regimes for international economic relations have meant that the space for national economic policy...is now often framed by international disciplines, commitments and global market considerations.’ There is little in the document to suggest a desire to rollback these constraints or otherwise disengage from them. Rather, the thrust of the entire statement is in the direction of enabling Third World states to ‘participate in and benefit from globalisation’ and calling for special measures to draw into this process those who are most marginalized.<sup>58</sup> More radical pluralist voices, questioning both the ends and means of neoliberal economic policy now come increasingly from the non-state actors of the ‘anti-globalisation movement’ and less from states (although the rhetoric of left-wing populist leaders such as Chavez and Morales serve as reminders that they *could* still come from states). I will have more to say about the economic pluralism espoused by non-state actors in chapter 5.

### 3.2 A justification of pluralism

This section provides an overview of one particular defence of Third World pluralism. It focuses on the work of Ayoob because, in contrast with defences of pluralism from a systemic perspective,<sup>59</sup> Ayoob purports to justify pluralism from the point of view of Third World states. This is a perspective that he labels ‘subaltern realism’ and explains as drawing upon ‘the experiences of the subalterns in the international system that are largely ignored by the elitist historiography of the system popularised by both neorealists and neoliberals as a result of their concentration on the dynamics of interaction among the Great Powers and the industrialised states of the global North’.<sup>60</sup> Given my own commitment to scholarship from a Third World perspective I think it appropriate to focus on Ayoob’s defence of pluralism. Nevertheless, as should be clear from my discussion of the term ‘subaltern’ in the introduction to this thesis, I think Ayoob’s use of this term to describe the views of state elites is a travesty of its usage in the disciplinary field of subaltern studies.

Ayoob’s justification of pluralism rests largely on its contribution to enabling the construction of political community (state- and nation-building) in the Third World, and on the value of such community-construction to the maintenance of order and pursuit of justice in the

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<sup>58</sup> Final Document of the XIV Ministerial Conference of the Non-Aligned Movement, para. 214-18.

<sup>59</sup> For example, Jackson, *Global Covenant*, ch. 15, who defends pluralism as a via medium between universalism and relativism that provides the best institutional mechanism for accommodating human diversity without being paternalistic.

<sup>60</sup> Mohammed Ayoob, ‘Subaltern Realism: International Relations Theory Meets the Third World’, in *International Relations and the Third World*, ed. Stephanie G. Neuman (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1998), 44. Ayoob’s use of the term ‘subaltern’ to describe the perspective of Third World state elites is a gross perversion of its long-standing connotations in subaltern studies more generally (see my discussion in chapter 1).

international system. His argument throws into stark relief the communitarian logic underpinning pluralism and reveals clearly how communitarianism functions as a language of state power. His account may be regarded as offering both an analytical explanation and a normative justification for the pluralist preferences of Third World states: I believe it to be analytically useful, but normatively objectionable.

Ayoob is concerned most immediately with explaining the high level of internal conflict within Third World states. He attributes this to the relatively early stages of state- and nation-building in which most Third World sovereign entities are engaged, and to their relatively late entry into the international system.<sup>61</sup> This ‘security predicament’, he argues, is by no means historically unprecedented. Like the Third World states of today, ‘most European political entities had to endure the precarious balance between success and failure for centuries before their statehood was assured’. During this period of flux, ‘their state makers were constantly preoccupied with the problem of consolidating their power and control within the territories they aspired to dominate.’<sup>62</sup> Nevertheless, despite following essentially the same historical trajectory as European states, the process of state- and nation-building in the Third World is allegedly made more difficult by three sets of factors.

First, Third World elites are compelled to accomplish these tasks much more rapidly. In contrast to their European counterparts who took three to four centuries to consolidate their power and monopolise the instruments of coercion within their territories, Ayoob argues that Third World political elites do not have the luxury of time: ‘The demands of competition with established modern states and the demonstrated effectiveness of socially cohesive, politically responsive, and administratively effective states in the industrialised world make it almost obligatory for Third World states to reach their goal within the shortest time possible or risk international ridicule and permanent marginalisation within the system of states.’<sup>63</sup> This forces elites to telescope what would ideally be sequential phases of state- and nation-building, into a combined and drastically shortened process – one that must be accomplished in a matter of decades rather than centuries. The imperative of speed intensifies the sense of disruption, dislocation and trauma that inevitably accompanies the twin processes of state- and nation-building.

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<sup>61</sup> Ayoob, *Third World Security Predicament*, 4.

<sup>62</sup> Mohammed Ayoob, ‘The Security Problematic of the Third World’, *World Politics* 43, no. 2 (1991): 266.

<sup>63</sup> Ayoob, *Third World Security Predicament*, 30.

Second, nation-state building in the Third World is complicated by a set of colonial legacies.<sup>64</sup> Virtually all Third World states have retained boundaries that might be considered arbitrary in the sense that they were drawn by colonial administrators for purposes of administrative convenience rather than with reference to the identities of the populations that they enclosed. As a result, many Third World states have inherited ethnically heterogeneous societies, with significant sections of their populations engaged in secessionist or irredentist struggles with a view to bringing boundaries into line with politically resonant identities. Colonialism also produced economic distortions of various kinds that continue to impede the economic viability of many Third World states. Economic integration with the metropolitan country on terms favourable to the latter produced dependent, monocultural economies in the Third World. It disarticulated colonial economies into traditional and modern sectors; the latter were more closely integrated with the metropolis and managed by an elite who sometimes enjoyed a greater identity of interests with the metropolitan elite than with the subalterns of their own societies. This had the effect of reinforcing oppressive class structures and, sometimes, politicising ethnic or communal divisions that existed in these societies.<sup>65</sup>

Third, postcolonial state- and nation-building have been constrained by entirely novel factors that did not confront European elites during the formative periods of their nation-states. Chief among these are the advent of mass politics and democratisation and the post-war emphasis on individual human rights. As Ayoob explains, while European state-makers ‘could single-mindedly pursue their goals of accumulating power and extracting resources without being distracted by demands for economic redistribution and political participation’, Third World state-makers have had to operate in the shadow of the example set by already established and successfully functioning liberal-democratic welfare states. The existence of these states exerts a sort of teleological pull, compelling Third World elites to conduct their state- and nation-building processes in as humane, ‘civilised’ and consensual a fashion as possible. But ‘satisfying popular demands can frequently run counter to the imperatives of state making, because state making, as the European experience has demonstrated, is a rather unsavoury task and often involves levels of coercion that are bound to be unacceptable to populations

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 34.

<sup>65</sup> See Wendt & Barnett, ‘Dependent State formation and Third World militarisation’; See also Inayatullah, ‘Beyond the sovereignty dilemma’, 64, for an account of how despite Haiti’s achievement of independence in 1804, in order to remain a viable state it needed to continue doing what it was designed for, namely producing and selling sugar, coffee and other primary products. This obliged its leader Toussaint L’Ouverture to maintain the existing latifundian system of plantations. As Inayatullah puts it, ‘without the wealth to make sovereignty real, Toussaint had to regress to the “slave type plantation regime” from which workers were emancipated from slavery only in a formal way.’

that have been influenced by notions of human rights, political participation, and social justice.’<sup>66</sup>

These three sets of factors – drastically abbreviated timeframes, debilitating colonial legacies, and new post-war norms of civility and democracy – combine to make state- and nation-building vastly more difficult in the Third World than they were in Europe. As Ayoob repeatedly stresses, the conjunction of these factors has ‘overloaded’ the political capacities of Third World states thereby exacerbating disorder within and outside them. From an analytical point of view, Ayoob’s argument has two merits. First, by placing Third World state formation in historical perspective and demonstrating the common rationales underpinning state formation in Europe and the Third World, his work challenges the arguments of those who attribute Third World disorder to a putative lack of readiness for self-government in the more ‘backward’ parts of the world.<sup>67</sup> Further, by demonstrating the complex interplay of internal and external factors in generating Third World insecurity, Ayoob destabilises the explanatory nationalism of coercive solidarists and complicates the rather simplistic geographies of culpability that they tend to work with. We can begin to see that the apparently ‘internal’ processes of state- and nation-building are powerfully shaped by their interactions with colonialism, imperialism and globalisation.

Nevertheless, the prescriptive dimension of Ayoob’s argument is deeply discomfiting from a perspective that takes seriously the welfare of Third World *societies*. In order to successfully replicate the European experience of state-building, Ayoob argues that Third World state-makers need ‘lots of time and a relatively free hand to persuade and coerce the disparate populations under their nominal rule to accept the legitimacy of state boundaries and institutions, to accept the right of the state to extract resources from them, and to let the state regulate important aspects of their lives.’<sup>68</sup> This is essentially a demand for an expansion of the pluralist space and for the withdrawal of whatever surveillance and disciplinary mechanisms the contemporary human rights regime is able to wield. As he speculates acerbically, ‘One wonders if West European and North American states would have successfully completed their state-building endeavours and eventually emerged as liberal, democratic states, if they had the United Nations Human Rights Commission, Amnesty

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<sup>66</sup> Ayoob, *Third World Security Predicament*, 39, 40.

<sup>67</sup> Lack of readiness is a prominent theme in Jackson’s explanation for why ‘quasi-states’ have failed to develop the requisites for positive sovereignty (Jackson, *Quasi-States*, chapter 7).

<sup>68</sup> Ayoob, *Third World Security Predicament*, 29.

International and now the UN Security Council breathing down their necks during the crucial early phases of their state making endeavours.’<sup>69</sup>

Ayoob’s argument for a relaxation of human rights norms and a moratorium on the practice of humanitarian intervention is built on two kinds of narratives: first, a historical-sociological narrative that underscores the inevitability of violence and coercion during the state-making process, as evidenced by the European experience; second, a moral narrative that justifies the (presumably temporary) relaxation of human rights norms in the interests of state-building, on the ground that the protection of human rights itself presupposes relatively well-functioning, viable states. Writing in 1995, he characterises state failure as the worst fate that human beings could suffer:

The recent Lebanese and the current Somali, Afghan, Liberian, and Zairean experiences demonstrate clearly that the failure of the state in the Third World is a much greater source of human tragedy than the repression of their own people by even the most autocratic but functioning states such as Iraq and Syria.<sup>70</sup>

I will return to this thoroughly unpersuasive ranking of suffering below. Here I only want to highlight that the essential import of Ayoob’s argument is that order – even of the kind provided by Saddam Hussein’s Iraq – is a precondition for justice. More specifically, domestic order must have priority over international order because the former ‘is an essential ingredient on which the foundations of international order are based...a well ordered international system is constituted by well-ordered states where sovereigns are both powerful and legitimate because this prevents the exportation of domestic anarchy to interstate relations and vice versa.’<sup>71</sup> ‘Powerful *and* legitimate’ of course elides the difficult questions, yet the thrust of Ayoob’s entire argument is that legitimacy must *follow* the monopolisation of power. In sum, domestic state- and nation-building (using all necessary means) must have chronological as well as normative priority over international intervention for the protection of human rights.

### 3.3 A critique of pluralism

One of the more striking features of Ayoob’s defence of pluralism is its curious Eurocentricity.<sup>72</sup> Although it purports to offer a view from a supposedly marginalized

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<sup>69</sup> Mohammed Ayoob, ‘Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty’, *International Journal of Human Rights* 6, no. 1 (2002): 94.

<sup>70</sup> Ayoob, *Third World Security Predicament*, 173.

<sup>71</sup> Ayoob, ‘Subaltern Realism’, 40.

<sup>72</sup> Although the previous chapter described a coercive solidarism spearheaded by the liberal ‘West’, I use the term ‘Eurocentricity’ here because Ayoob compares Third World nation-state building to a specifically *European* experience.

perspective (that of Third World state elites), the argument essentially takes the form of a demand that Third World states be given the pluralist space within which they might successfully replicate the European experience of state-building. At least one critic has attacked the assumptions inherent in this line of thought, arguing that there is

...no reason to presume that because Western state formation was violent, Third World state formation also must be so. It is one thing to argue that some amount of violence and repression accompanies most state-formation projects, but quite another to insist that any level is functionally necessary and therefore normatively justifiable. Not only is this morally objectionable, but it also represents historical determinism at its teleological and simplest...Third World state formation will be different from Western state formation precisely because Third World state formation is occurring in a different historical context...there is no historically invariant path toward state formation, and Third World state formation might demonstrate distinctively violent and pathological tendencies as a consequence.<sup>73</sup>

Indeed although Ayoob relies on Charles Tilly's celebrated aphorism that war makes states and states make war, Tilly himself is keen to stress the 'great contingency of European state formation [and] of the national state's ultimate triumph over other forms of political organisation'.<sup>74</sup> In fact, Tilly is at pains to point out that Third World states are *not* replicating the European experience. A key paradox of that experience, as he sees it, was that the 'pursuit of war and military capacity, after having created national states as a sort of by-product, led to a civilianisation of government and domestic politics'. Writing in 1990, Tilly observed a contrary tendency – a growing militarisation of politics – in the Third World and attributed this to superpower competition for Third World allegiance, which he saw as strengthening military organisations within these states at the expense of other interest groups.<sup>75</sup> Ayoob of course recognises that Third World state-building is occurring in a fundamentally different historical context – indeed he is keen to point out the particular features of that context that make contemporary state-building more difficult and to call for a restoration of those conditions (particularly non-interference) that would more closely replicate the international context in which European state-building proceeded. Yet such a response misses Tilly's larger and more significant point about historical contingency, which, in the context of European state-building refers to the kinds of wars that called European national states into being, and to the specific combinations of capital and coercion that made them possible. In the absence

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<sup>73</sup> Michael Barnett, 'Radical Chic? Subaltern Realism: A Rejoinder', *International Studies Review* 4, no. 3 (2002): 61. Barnett also calls into question Ayoob's realist credentials because of his extensive reliance on state-level variables. For an argument emphasising the moral dimension of this objection, see Samuel M. Makinda, 'The Global Covenant as an Evolving Institution', *International Journal of Human Rights* 6, no. 1 (2002): 113, 120.

<sup>74</sup> Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990 – 1990* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 224.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 16, 206, 211, 220.

of such conditions, it seems futile to expect that something like European nation-states will, or can, be built in the contemporary Third World.

### 3.3.1 *The problem of elite (il)legitimacy*

Even accepting Ayoob's apparent assumption that something like European nation-states *ought* to be constructed in the Third World, Michael Barnett is rightly sceptical of our ability to distinguish between 'state repression for the purposes of consolidation of state authority' and predatory behaviour.<sup>76</sup> This is surely a matter of perspective: what appears to some as gratuitous predatory violence is, from the point of view of the putative state builders, a 'legitimate' attempt to coerce or persuade 'recalcitrant' groups to acknowledge their authority. Yet the legitimacy of this use of violence is contested precisely because actors differ over definitions of state and national identity, membership and inclusion – often in ways that are not amenable to third party arbitration or judgment.

The issue of legitimacy is crucial, but extraordinarily difficult to discuss in the abstract because the determinants of legitimacy are always multifarious, contextual and historical. One staggering blindspot in Ayoob's work is his failure to consider the sources of legitimacy of actors driving the state-building effort in the Third World. His writing is full of references to 'Third World state makers', 'Third World state elites' and 'leaders of Third World states', but *who are these people?* What gives *them* the authority to build states and nations, as opposed to the 'recalcitrants' they seek to bring in line? In most accounts of political legitimacy, the monopolisation of the means of coercion by the state is legitimised by a social contract. This is of course a fictional construct that one never sees in practice in the chaotic transition from state-of-nature to full-fledged-state, yet it must still be possible to locate functional analogues of the social contract that give one or another set of actors less or more legitimacy to manage the state-building process. In the context of decolonisation for example, we might think that mass participation in a national liberation struggle gives the leadership of that movement some legitimacy to claim the mantle of state- and nation-building. This is of course an inchoate and unstable sort of legitimacy, but it may suffice for the duration of a transition period in which mechanisms and institutions for the explicit legitimisation of power are created.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Barnett, 'Radical Chic?', 61.

<sup>77</sup> See Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars*, 98, who suggests that legitimacy criteria should become more stringent after a 'period of grace': 'What is the test of popular support in a country where democracy is unknown and elections are routinely managed? The test, for governments as for insurgents, is self-help...one assumes the legitimacy of new regimes; there is, so to speak, a period of grace, a time to build support.'

Because Ayooob's work lacks any account of elite legitimacy, one is left with the impression that he would have the Society of states recognise whichever strongman has seized the initiative of state- and nation-building, grateful that someone – anyone – has taken on this unpleasant but necessary task. In effect, Ayooob is asking International Society *not* to enquire too deeply into the legitimacy of state-builders since, whatever their methods and whomever they may be, they are laying the foundations for domestic, and in turn international, order and indeed for the eventual protection of human rights. International Society is asked to facilitate the work of these allegedly beleaguered state elites by expanding the pluralist space within which they may more effectively accomplish the state-building process.

Ayooob adds to the urgency of this imperative by raising the spectre of state failure, which, he argues, is 'a much greater source of human tragedy than the repression of their own people by even the most autocratic but functioning states such as Iraq'.<sup>78</sup> This ranking of suffering says a great deal about Ayooob's perspective and priorities. The insecurity of failed states tends to be generalised and dispersed, while the repression of predatory states is often precise and targeted at specific communities or individuals. From a systemic utilitarian perspective, the former may certainly be more destabilising than the latter; from a deontological perspective that treats individuals as ends in themselves, this is less clear. I am not sure how a Kurd faced with the prospect of extermination in Saddam Hussein's Iraq could have thought of the state as 'autocratic but functioning', even if it collected taxes, provided municipal services, built palaces and maintained bagpiper regiments. In any case, by raising the spectre of state failure as the most likely outcome if authoritarian state elites are not given the pluralist space they demand, Ayooob presents us with a false choice. Just as the defence of coercive solidarity revolves around a false choice between the tyranny of world government and the pursuit of moral cosmopolitanism by self-interested states, the defence of authoritarian pluralism relies on a false choice between predatory states and state failure.

Perhaps most ominously, Ayooob seeks to insulate Third World elites not only from the external interference of other states, but also from the internal demands of Third World societies. His work betrays a nostalgia for the environment in which European state builders 'could single-mindedly pursue their goals of accumulating power and extracting resources without being distracted by demands for economic redistribution and political participation', and an exasperation with the new imperatives of mass politics, democratisation and human rights because 'satisfying popular demands can frequently run counter to the imperatives of

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<sup>78</sup> Ayooob, *Third World Security Predicament*, 173.

state making'.<sup>79</sup> A more specific manifestation of this view can be found in the literature on development, where an influential current of thought argues that authoritarianism is more conducive to rapid economic development than democracy. As Pranab Bardhan summarises it, the claim is that while democracies are susceptible to pressures for immediate consumption and other particularistic demands that may hamper long-run investment, authoritarian leaders are better insulated from the ravages of short-term pork-barrel politics.<sup>80</sup> Authoritarianism is said to increase the government's ability to extract resources, provide public goods (solving collective action problems by administrative fiat), and impose the short-term costs associated with efficient economic adjustment.<sup>81</sup>

Although this view describes the role of authoritarianism in enabling 'adjustment' to the imperatives of the world market economy, it should be noted that the defence of authoritarian planning has tended to be promiscuous as to the ideological content of the plan. It has featured in both socialist propaganda about the necessity for sacrifices for a 'common good' specified from above, as well as in the economic conditionality of the capitalist IFIs counselling the virtues of insulating 'rational' economic policymaking from capture by rent-seeking groups. In fact it is better viewed as a characteristic of what James Scott has called 'high-modernist ideology' – a worldview that fuses a supreme self-confidence in continued linear 'scientific' progress, an optimism about the possibility of the rational design of social order and a conviction that 'political interests can only frustrate the social solutions devised by specialists with scientific tools adequate to their analysis'.<sup>82</sup>

The defence of authoritarian planning has acquired respectability from the developmental successes of East Asian states, where a number of significant reforms were made possible by labour repression and other authoritarian exercises of power. While he is candid about the relationship between authoritarianism and high growth rates in East Asia, Stephan Haggard is sceptical of the possibility and/or likelihood of this example being successfully emulated

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 39, 40.

<sup>80</sup> Pranab Bardhan, 'Symposium on Democracy and Development', *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7, no. 3 (1993): 45, 46.

<sup>81</sup> Stephan Haggard, *Pathways from the Periphery: The Politics of Growth in the Newly Industrialising Countries* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1994), 262. Haggard mentions a number of policy reforms that could be modelled as collective action problems, which authoritarian elites are able to solve by command. These include stabilisation, devaluation, trade liberalisation, opening to foreign direct investment, rationalisation of fiscal incentives, tax reform, financial market reform, shifts in the composition of government spending, etc.

<sup>82</sup> James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998), 94.

elsewhere.<sup>83</sup> He writes that high-performing Asian economies enjoyed dictatorships that were relatively enlightened, at least in respect of economic policy, and that such rule is generally in short supply. Autocratic rule notwithstanding, East Asian political elites delegated important authority to relatively insulated technocratic agencies, in order to signal to business elites a willingness to make policy decisions on the basis of economic criteria. Further, they sought to stabilise their rule by guaranteeing that the poorer social strata shared in the benefits of growth and thus provided at least tacit support to the government. This was accomplished through land reform in Korea and Taiwan, the provision of low-cost housing in Singapore and Hong Kong, and policies favouring indigenous ethnic groups in Malaysia and Indonesia. Although state-society bargaining characteristic of democratic polities was absent in these countries, the state was nonetheless attentive to the interests of various groups.

The notion of ‘enlightened dictatorship’ does not negate the strong element of coercion in East Asian authoritarianism, but it does suggest that the category of ‘authoritarianism’ is a broad one encompassing significant variations. Authoritarianisms vary in the levels of coercion used, but also in the purposes for which coercion is employed. Here one might distinguish between dictatorships for purely personalised ends and those where power is employed no less coercively, but for more generalised goals over and above that of personal survival and enrichment.<sup>84</sup> Whether the latter are preferable depends of course on the nature of those goals and on how widely they are endorsed. The point I am trying to make is that the centralisation of power and the insulation of political elites from their societies leaves the field wide open for dictatorships of both the developmental and predatory varieties and there is no guarantee that a society will be ‘blessed’ with the former rather than the latter.

More significantly, while authoritarian rule *of a particular kind* may have been a crucial element in boosting East Asian growth rates, scholars have failed to detect any consistent correlation between political regime type and economic growth.<sup>85</sup> The authors of one quantitative study of the relationship between these variables over the period 1950 – 1990 reported that they ‘did not find a shred of evidence that democracy need be sacrificed on the altar of development’, and noted also that ‘the few countries that had developed spectacularly

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<sup>83</sup> Stephan Haggard, ‘Politics and Institutions in the World Bank’s East Asia’, in *Miracle or Design? Lessons from the East Asian Experience* (Washington, DC: Overseas Development Council, 1994), 104.

<sup>84</sup> Clapham, *Africa and the International System*, 58, writes that ‘in terms of their willingness to use coercion, there was little to choose between Samuel Doe of Liberia and Mengitsu Haile-Mariam of Ethiopia, but whereas Doe’s was merely a personal dictatorship, Mengitsu sought through Marxism-Leninism (however counter-productively) to establish a powerful and centralised Ethiopian state and a planned economy.’

<sup>85</sup> Adam Przeworski & Fernando Limongi, ‘Political Regimes and Economic Growth’, *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 7, no. 3 (1993): 64.

during the past fifty years were as likely to achieve that feat under democracy as under dictatorship'.<sup>86</sup>

Ayoob's assumptions about the prerequisites for successful state-building are therefore clearly contradicted by a wealth of evidence to the contrary. In seeking to insulate Third World elites from both the external interference of the Society of states and the internal demands of Third World societies, he effectively justifies absolutist and unaccountable concentrations of power in the hands of those elites. The central problem with Ayoob's defence of pluralism lies in the way it defers state-society bargaining to a vaguely specified time horizon when the 'crucial early phase of state making' has been completed.<sup>87</sup> A more legitimate form of pluralism (from the perspective of Third World societies) might have recognised that such bargaining has often been hindered by external linkages between elites of powerful and client states. It might have objected more specifically to those forms of external intervention or linkage that have prevented, delayed or otherwise skewed state-society bargaining in ways that favour the interests of state elites.

### 3.3.2 *The anti-pluralism of pluralism*

If Ayoob defends pluralist norms on the basis of the role that they play in enabling the construction of viable and well-ordered political communities, the emphasis in Jackson's work is on pluralism's ability to better accommodate the diversity of human values in International Society. He sees International Society as being pluralist in two important respects: first, in the sense that it is an association of multiple political authorities – a condition that he labels jurisdictional pluralism; and second, in the sense that it is an arrangement in which states and societies are free to compose their own domestic values and orchestrate them in their own way – a condition that he labels value pluralism. It is this second implication that Jackson sees as 'the deeper pluralism of world politics that the *societas* of states exists to uphold'.<sup>88</sup> For Jackson, the existence of multiple jurisdictions is not an end in itself – rather, it is a means to the end of conserving the actual diversity of values that exist in humanity. In this section I argue that closer observation of the process of community construction (i.e. of the manner in which these multiple jurisdictions are produced) renders the very label 'pluralist' as a description of the end product, deeply ironic.

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<sup>86</sup> Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, José Antonio Cheibub & Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 271.

<sup>87</sup> Ayoob, *Third World Security Predicament*, 195; Ayoob, 'Humanitarian Intervention and State Sovereignty', 94.

<sup>88</sup> Jackson, *Global Covenant*, 179.

It is probably correct to suppose that value-diversity in International Society is better ensured by a multiplicity of political communities, yet the construction of community itself invariably entails the (internal) elimination of value-pluralism. As Ernest Gellner reminds us in his study of nations and nationalism,

[N]ationalism is, essentially, the general imposition of a high culture on society, where previously low cultures had taken up the lives of the majority, and in some cases of the totality, of the population. It means that generalised diffusion of a school-mediated, academy-supervised idiom, codified for the requirements of reasonably precise bureaucratic and technological communication. It is the establishment of an anonymous, impersonal society, with mutually substitutable atomised individuals, held together above all by a shared culture of this kind, in place of a previous complex structure of local groups, sustained by folk cultures reproduced locally and idiosyncratically by the micro-groups themselves. This is what *really* happens.<sup>89</sup>

What really happens can be contrasted with the narrative that nationalisms and nationalists construct for themselves: namely, that *they* are the authentic bearers of a putative folk culture, struggling to overthrow an alien yoke. This is not inaccurate, particularly in imperial and colonial settings. The crucial point is that upon eliminating the alien high culture, successful nationalisms do not usually replace this with a plurality of primordial local low cultures, but tend to revive or invent a local high culture of their own, though admittedly using pre-existing local folk styles and dialects as their raw material.<sup>90</sup> Particular groups that have dominated nationalist movements (Ayoob's nation-building elites), tend to be disproportionately represented in the newly invented high vernacular culture. They take on the status of the 'core' model citizen, while other groups tend to be relegated to a sort of deviant, hyphenated form of belonging, if they are incorporated within the nationalist narrative at all.<sup>91</sup>

No single story can be told about how and why the new high vernaculars tended to edge out the variety of low vernaculars on which they were parasitic. In Benedict Anderson's account, print capitalism plays a central role in the rise of the linguistic nationalisms of 18<sup>th</sup> century Europe. While the actual diversity of spoken languages was immense, Anderson points out that if print capitalism had sought to exploit each potential oral vernacular market, it would have remained a capitalism of petty proportions.<sup>92</sup> Because it did not, the imagined (solidarist) community of Latin Christendom was eventually fragmented (pluralized) into a

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<sup>89</sup> Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 57.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>91</sup> I do not use 'citizen' here in a legal sense. Formal legal equality is often a veneer for a more differentiated experience of belonging in which the membership of dominant groups is not in question, but marginalized groups must bend over backwards to demonstrate their fealty to the nation.

<sup>92</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1991), 43.

limited number of communities each based on a print-language. These print-languages laid the bases for national consciousnesses, most importantly by creating unified fields of exchange and communication below Latin and above the spoken vernaculars, thereby enabling mutual comprehension, communication and the beginnings of solidarity amongst millions of people – but also clearly demarcating the outer limits of such solidarity. Dialects that were closer to the ‘languages-of-power’ created by print-capitalism tended to dominate their final forms; those more distant ‘lost caste...because they were unsuccessful in insisting on their own print-form’.<sup>93</sup> Which dialects were elevated by print-capitalism to the status of languages-of-power often had less to do with numerical than political weight. As Eric Hobsbawm points out, although French was essential to the concept of France, only 50% of Frenchmen spoke the language in 1789 and only 12-13% spoke it ‘correctly’; and although the Italian language was the only basis for Italian unification, at the moment of unification in 1860 only 2.5% of the population used the language for everyday communication.<sup>94</sup> If language is read as a metaphor for culture more broadly, the successful ‘nationalisation’ of high vernaculars at the expense of low vernaculars should serve as a reminder of the significant loss of value pluralism entailed by nation-building.

If this particular account of the interaction between print capitalism and political elites suggests one route for the disappearance of low vernaculars, we also need to consider the conscious elimination of low vernaculars as a result of state policy. This sometimes took the form of conservative, reactionary policies by dynastic states anticipating and pre-empting popular nationalist identification by re-imagining themselves as nations - by ‘stretching the short, tight, skin of the nation over the gigantic body of the empire’ in Anderson’s evocative phrase<sup>95</sup> – through such coercive (and obviously anti-pluralist) policies as the Tsarist empire’s Russification of its domains (analogues of which might be found in a great many polyglot, multinational states today). As state interests (particularly with regard to success in warfare) came to depend increasingly on the participation and sacrifices of their citizens, states extended rights to citizens but also sought to hold them captive by attempting to formulate and inculcate new forms of civic loyalty and striving to ensure that these would trump other sorts of political identification. Nationalisms independent of the state (most likely to come from unauthorised low cultures) were potentially powerful assets if they could be integrated

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 44, 45.

<sup>94</sup> E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 60. Eugen Weber has suggested in the case of France, that the imposition of a single official language should be viewed as a process of domestic colonisation in which various foreign provinces such as Brittany and Occitanie are linguistically subdued and culturally incorporated (cited from Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 72).

<sup>95</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*, 86.

into state patriotism, but potentially subversive – and therefore best eliminated – if they were not.<sup>96</sup>

States tend to eliminate pluralities of low cultures not only in the course of crafting official nationalisms to give themselves legitimacy, but also – as Scott has shown – simply in the business of *being* states. All states – colonial and postcolonial and ruled by whatever stripe of government – have had certain fundamental objectives: appropriation of resources (through extraction, taxation and sometimes conscription), political control of their subjects and manipulation (not necessarily in a pejorative sense). With the move from tribute and indirect rule to taxation and direct rule, the effective pursuit of these objectives entailed not only an enormous expansion in state capacity and power, but also in knowledge. It became imperative for states to understand their societies better, to render them legible. Towards this end, states devise schemes of simplification, abstraction and standardisation that enable them to apprehend the complex realities of their societies by filtering out those aspects of reality that are not of immediate interest to them. But crucially, states have also continually attempted to create a terrain and population that correspond to these abstractions and simplifications, making them easier to count, assess, monitor and manage. As Scott puts it,

The utopian, immanent and continually frustrated goal of the modern state is to reduce the chaotic, disorderly, constantly changing social reality beneath it to something more closely resembling the administrative grid of its observations...The aspiration to such uniformity and order alerts us to the fact that modern statecraft is largely a project of internal colonisation, often glossed, as it is in imperial rhetoric, as a ‘civilising mission’. The builders of the modern nation-state do not merely describe, observe and map; they strive to shape a people and landscape that will fit their techniques of observation.<sup>97</sup>

The continual reshaping of complex social realities to better approximate simplified cognitive frameworks has radically anti-pluralist implications. Scott provides fascinating glimpses of these – in the austere urban environments that residents of high-modernist planned cities such as Brasilia are condemned to, in the destruction of the plurality of cultivation techniques traditionally practised by peasants in the Soviet Union and Tanzania as a result of collectivisation schemes pursued by those states, etc. He attributes the enthusiasm for such state schemes to ‘high-modernist’ thinking (discussed earlier) – a mindset that postcolonial elites, who perceive in the moment of liberation an opportunity to drag their ‘backward’ societies out of stagnation, are particularly prone to.

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<sup>96</sup> Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, 90.

<sup>97</sup> Scott, *Seeing Like a State*, 81, 82.

In describing the anti-pluralist tendencies of nation- and state-building, I am not trying to make a moral case against either of these processes (although our knowledge of what they typically entail should surely lead us to think about ways in which they can be humanised). Rather, I have been trying to suggest that defences of pluralist International Society that emphasise its ability to accommodate human diversity (Jackson) rest on philosophically incoherent foundations. Jackson can of course offer the, I think weak, response that pluralist International Society accommodates *more* diversity than a universal liberal solidarist International Society would. But it would be impossible to defend the *content* of the plurality that characterises contemporary International Society, which is nothing but the sum-total of high vernaculars that have triumphed over pluralities of low vernaculars in the multiple jurisdictions that comprise the Society of states. Without norms of International Society that determine how these intra-state contests are to be managed, the outcomes of these contests are largely a function of the power of the various contestants. It is not clear why one should celebrate the diversity – or ‘pluralism’ – that results from such outcomes. A pluralist International Society of states emphatically does not conserve the actual diversity of values that characterise humanity.

### 3.3.3 *The selectivity of pluralism*

Pluralist International Society pays little heed to the legitimacy of state elites. It also gives free reign to the anti-pluralist practices of those elites so long as these are limited to their territorial jurisdictions. Here I want to look at the highly selective ways in which elites *do* express their pluralism (not internally within their jurisdictions, but externally vis-à-vis International Society). Earlier, I presented a brief overview of combinations of pluralism and solidarism in the behaviour of Third World states, suggesting that they have historically been committed to foundational pluralist norms of sovereignty, territorial integrity and non-intervention, although they have occasionally come together in solidarist coalitions to pursue specific projects. I argued that these two arrangements for the ordering of International Society could not be spoken of in the same way – solidarism entails a purposive project of some kind, while pluralism is better thought of as licensing a space in which states are free to order relations with their own societies and with other states as they see fit.

Pluralism gives state elites room for manoeuvre, which can be used in a variety of ways. We have come to think of pluralism as enabling the assertion of difference and particularity; but equally, nothing prevents elites from using the pluralist space to mimic, borrow from the outside, or accede to norms promulgated by external norm entrepreneurs. Although it is impossible to generalise about the ways in which Third World state elites have used the

pluralist space available to them, it may be possible to discern certain patterns in their tendencies to hungrily appropriate from the outside in some respects, while maintaining a detached particularity in others. We might consider cultural relativism an appropriate proxy for pluralist particularism and make a stab at discerning these patterns by thinking about the issue areas in which cultural relativist arguments are most frequently voiced.<sup>98</sup>

I mentioned earlier that Third World political elites embraced the Westphalian nation-state, albeit with varying degrees of enthusiasm, despite its obviously *European* provenance. Indeed, anti-colonial nationalist and liberation movements aspired to mimic within their countries the political institutions of the very colonial oppressors they were seeking to overthrow. For virtually all of their postcolonial existence, Third World elites have perceived their developmental choices through the prisms of two *Western* modes of economic organisation: capitalism and communism. Today, one rarely hears these elites articulate cultural relativist objections to the spread of *Western* medicine or banking practices (in those countries where Islamic banking is available, it tends to operate in parallel with the ‘conventional’ (read: western) banking system).<sup>99</sup> Both the ‘today’ and ‘elites’ in the previous sentence deserve emphasis: we cannot forget that contemporary elite acceptance of these ubiquities is, to a large extent, a legacy of colonial exercises of power; we cannot also ignore contemporary non-elite resistance to the spread of these norms. Nonetheless since I am interested in contemporary Third World state elite behaviour, I believe I can safely make the observation that cultural relativist objections – while they may have been articulated historically in a great many issue areas – are today most frequently raised in opposition to human rights.

Even within the area of human rights, the cultural relativist objection is selectively deployed. It is not seen to have any relevance to the issue of racial discrimination, for example, but is most frequently articulated in the inter-state conversation over gender discrimination. As a result, the norm against gender discrimination has had a much bumpier ride in International Society than that against racial discrimination. Both the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD) and the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) were initially promulgated as declarations and acquired the status of binding conventions upon receiving the required number of

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<sup>98</sup> For a critique of cultural relativism, see Ken Booth, ‘Three tyrannies’, in *Human Rights in Global Politics*, eds. Tim Dunne & Nicholas J. Wheeler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

<sup>99</sup> See for example, Bank Negara Malaysia, ‘Overview of Islamic Banking in Malaysia’, <http://www.bnm.gov.my/index.php?ch=174&pg=467&ac=367>.

ratifications. While CERD became a convention within 2 years, CEDAW took 13.<sup>100</sup> One analysis of reservations to the two conventions concluded that while 3.1% of states parties to CERD had entered what were classified as ‘substantive’ reservations to the convention, the corresponding figure for CEDAW was 22%.<sup>101</sup> Even a quick perusal of the reservations is sufficient to reveal that some of the most fundamental objections to CEDAW are advanced on grounds of religion or tradition.<sup>102</sup> A comparison of the legislative progress of the two norms (both prohibiting discrimination on the basis of an unchosen characteristic) demonstrates strikingly that while there has been a remarkable convergence around a norm against racial discrimination, states continue to remain stubbornly pluralist on the issue of gender discrimination. As feminist legal scholars have commented, the privileged status of *jus cogens* norms ‘is reserved for a very limited, male-centred category’ and reflects ‘a male perspective of what is fundamental to international society that may not be shared by women or supported by women’s experience of life’.<sup>103</sup>

Battles over culture within Third World states further illuminate the state’s highly selective preferences for cultural pluralism. The efforts of queer rights campaigners in India to challenge the constitutionality of the law criminalizing homosexuality in that country have been opposed by the government on cultural grounds (specifically citing ‘the current societal context and opinion’ and ‘public morality’).<sup>104</sup> Yet the use of arguments about cultural patrimony by adivasi communities protesting their displacement from the Narmada valley, due to the construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam, has fallen on deaf ears. Indeed in this latter case, cultural arguments received a particularly unsympathetic hearing from the state. Overruling objections to the construction of the dam, a senior judge of the Supreme Court of India noted that

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<sup>100</sup> Laura Reanda, ‘The Commission on the Status of Women’, in *The United Nations and Human Rights*, ed. Philip Alston (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 286.

<sup>101</sup> Belinda Clark, ‘The Vienna Convention Reservations Regime and the Convention on Discrimination Against Women’, *American Journal of International Law* 85, no. 2 (1991): 283.

<sup>102</sup> Compare reservations to the CERD, <http://www.ohchr.org/english/countries/ratification/2.htm#reservations>, with those to CEDAW, <http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/cedaw/reservations-country.htm>. Among the latter, see especially those of Bahrain, Brunei Darussalam, Bangladesh, Egypt, India, Iraq, Israel, Kuwait, Libya, Maldives, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Syrian Arab Republic.

<sup>103</sup> Hilary Charlesworth & Christine Chinkin, ‘The Gender of Jus Cogens’, *Human Rights Quarterly* 15, no. 1 (1993): 67. The appropriate test of a norm’s ‘jus cogens’ status is universal acceptance ‘as a legal rule by states and recognition of it as a rule of jus cogens by an overwhelming majority of states, crossing ideological and political divides’ (Malcolm N. Shaw, *International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 97).

<sup>104</sup> Affidavit filed by the Government of India in Special Leave Petition (Civil) No. 7217-7218 of 2005, in the matter of *Naz Foundation v. Government of Delhi*, [http://humanrights-india.blogspot.com/2005\\_10\\_01\\_humanrights-india\\_archive.html](http://humanrights-india.blogspot.com/2005_10_01_humanrights-india_archive.html). The objection from ‘culture’ is a longstanding one and has prompted activist responses in cultural studies such as Ruth Vanita & Saleem M. Kidwai, *Same-Sex love in India: readings from literature and history* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); Ruth Vanita, *Love’s Rite: Same-Sex Marriage in India and the West* (London: Penguin, 2005).

The displacement of the tribals [sic]...would not *per se* result in the violation of their fundamental or other rights...At the rehabilitation sites they will have more and better amenities than which they enjoyed in their tribal hamlets. The gradual assimilation in the mainstream of the society will lead to betterment and progress.<sup>105</sup>

Confronted with demands for the recognition of queer rights, the Indian state hides behind the cultural bogey; yet it launches an explicit attack on the culture of adivasis using a *universalist* modernist narrative of 'betterment and progress'. How do we understand these highly selective preferences for cultural pluralism? One explanation would stress contingency – the state simply reaches for whatever arguments it can use in confrontations with different constellations of interests, no matter how inconsistent those arguments appear when juxtaposed against one other. A more convincing explanation, I would argue, is that the postcolonial state continues to work with frameworks for the selective appropriation of Western modernity that were developed in the course of anti-colonial nationalist politics.

Partha Chatterjee offers a compelling account of the construction of this framework. Although illustrated with reference to anti-colonial politics in India, he argues that it has been a fundamental feature of anti-colonial nationalisms in Asia and Africa. Briefly, the argument is that the encounter between the colonial state and the nationalist elite produced a perception (in the minds of both) of an essential cultural difference between East and West.<sup>106</sup> The nationalist response to this encounter was one of mimicry *and* rejection, corresponding to a division between the material and the spiritual. The material was the domain of the 'outside', of the economy and of statecraft, of science and technology. It was in these domains that the West was thought to be superior to the East and therefore most worthy of emulation. Overcoming Western domination was thought to necessitate an appropriation of superior Western knowledges and techniques and an erasure of difference between colonisers and colonised in the external, material sphere. Yet wholesale mimicry risked a complete loss of identity; moreover, it was unnecessary. The nationalist compensated for his (and we are mostly talking about men here) impotence in the material domain with an assertion of Eastern superiority in the 'inner' spiritual domain, which bore the 'essential' marks of cultural identity. This was the domain of language, literature and art, of education and – above all – the family. 'What was necessary was to cultivate the material techniques of modern Western

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<sup>105</sup> *Narmada Bachao Andolan v. Union of India*, (2000) 10 SCC 664, per Justice Kirpal.

<sup>106</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 50.

civilisation while retaining and strengthening the distinctive spiritual essence of the national culture.<sup>107</sup>

In matters of practical quotidian existence, the inner/outer distinction translated into the social spaces of the home and the world, typically seen as female and male domains respectively. The world was a treacherous terrain of competitive, material pursuits, in which men had to learn to imitate the West in order to beat it at its own game. Indeed in the world outside, men made every effort to erase the markers of their difference with the West, attacking with particular ferocity that most odious and galling of distinctions: race. But at home, women were to function as repositories and transmitters of cultural distinctiveness.<sup>108</sup> Prior even to their political struggle against the colonial state, nationalists claimed the ‘spiritual’ domain as their sovereign territory, resisting all encroachments of the state in these areas.<sup>109</sup> This did not mean that the ‘spiritual’ was left unchanged – on the contrary, there was a ferment of nationalist activity directed towards the goal of fashioning a culture that was distinctly modern without being Western. Women had to be educated, yes, but in a way that ensured that they did not become ‘Westernised’. The point was that in matters ‘spiritual’, reform was the prerogative of the nationalists, to be undertaken at their initiative and on their terms. The intervention of outsiders – and of course the colonial state was perceived as an ‘outsider’ – would not be tolerated.

I would argue that the filters through which anti-colonial nationalist elites engaged with Western modernity continue to structure their relations with postcolonial International Society. With decolonisation, the boundary in the nationalist imagination between the self and the colonialist other acquires the tangible fixity of a state boundary, reinforced by the protections that pluralist International Society affords. Yesterday’s anti-colonial nationalist elites as today’s postcolonial state elites remain enthusiastic mimic men<sup>110</sup> in the domain of the ‘material’ – in this respect they have long been Western modernity’s sympathetic interlocutors in the Third World, seeing themselves as midwives to their societies’ painful transitions to *Western material* modernity. Culture – whether in the guise of indigenous groups resisting displacement or traditional peasants resisting the collectivisation or

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<sup>107</sup> Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 6, 119-20.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, 120, 126, 130.

<sup>109</sup> The colonial state no doubt intervened heavily in areas that nationalists regarded as part of the ‘spiritual’ domain, but when these interventions threatened the ‘essence’ of national identity, the nationalist response often took the form of establishing institutions in parallel with those created by the state (one thinks of educational institutions in particular here).

<sup>110</sup> The phrase is borrowed from V. S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men* (London: Penguin, 1969).

commodification of agriculture – cannot be allowed to become an obstacle in this venture: it must be reformed, modernised or battered down.

Yet in the domain of the ‘spiritual’ (understood, cynics might argue, as those residual domains of life that have no bearing on the economic growth rate), ‘culture’ (understood in a highly selective, reified fashion) must be preserved as a mark of distinctiveness – indeed, a distinctive culture is the very rationale for existence as an independent political community. In any case, reform in this domain is the prerogative of the postcolonial state:<sup>111</sup> the intervention of International Society is unwelcome. This persistence in the postcolonial era of frameworks for the selective appropriation of Western modernity that were crafted in the course of anti-colonial resistance, helps explain the highly selective manner – including the choice of particular issue areas – in which Third World state elites speak the language of cultural relativism. When the fact of selectivity (3.3.3) is conjoined with the problem of elite illegitimacy (3.3.1), Third World societies might justifiably ask what authority their states have to make these choices for them.

#### 3.3.4 *Power or resistance?*

One of the most interesting observations that Chatterjee makes is that the greater the success in imitating Western skills in the material domain, the greater seemed to be the nationalists’ need to preserve the distinctiveness of their spiritual culture.<sup>112</sup> This suggests that as norms converge in the materialist sphere, we might expect to see elites emphasise pluralist cultural differences *more*, not less, strongly. It should come as no surprise then that one of the most emphatic recent articulations of cultural relativism has come from states whose (material) modernising credentials are widely acknowledged: I refer to the ‘Asian values’ thesis disputing the universality of Western conceptions of human rights, advanced by countries such as Singapore,<sup>113</sup> Malaysia and Indonesia.<sup>114</sup> While these countries suggest potentially fertile contexts in which to study Chatterjee’s material/spiritual tensions, I want to make a slightly different point here using three vignettes, of which the first concerns ‘Asian values’. I

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<sup>111</sup> Yet the story is not that simple, for even the postcolonial state faces difficulty in entering this domain. Because, for so long in the nationalist imagination, it was conceived as a domain off limits to the colonial state, the ‘spiritual’ gradually begins to be seen as off limits to states *per se*, so that postcolonial states attempting reform in these areas now encounter the hostility and resistance of their own societies, or at least elements thereof.

<sup>112</sup> Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 6.

<sup>113</sup> Fareed Zakaria, ‘Culture is Destiny: A Conversation with Lee Kuan Yew’, *Foreign Affairs* 73, no. 6 (1994): ‘We have left the past behind, and there is an underlying unease that there will be nothing left of us which is part of the old.’

<sup>114</sup> The thesis was most forcefully articulated at the time of the Bangkok Declaration prior to the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights; the debate had waned by the end of the 1990s, with the onset of the Asian financial crisis.

lack the space in which to contextualise these vignettes adequately, but I shall attempt to draw a singular point from all three, which I hope will shed some light on the nature of authoritarian discourse.

*Vignette 1:* Karen Engle reads ‘culture’ as functioning as a proxy for many different ideas in Asian values advocacy. In part, it was a synonym for sovereignty and a protest against conditionality.<sup>115</sup> At other times, it referred to particular, local values and knowledges that were seen to be integral to East Asian identity and success (former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew was fond of emphasising the importance of a putative East Asian preference for communal order over individual freedom in promoting development).<sup>116</sup> ‘Culture’ was employed to argue for a relatively greater emphasis on economic and social rights as a corrective to the West’s obsession with a narrow libertarian conception of civil and political rights, for a ‘right’ to development, for the elimination of poverty and a closing of the wealth gap between rich and poor countries.<sup>117</sup> Yet amidst the din of these arguably legitimate concerns, the ‘Asian values’ thesis was also an assault on individual freedom and a defence of East Asian state authoritarianism. If Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad was one of the most forceful advocates of ‘Asian values’, this is how Anwar Ibrahim (then still Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia, but soon to fall from grace) viewed the idea:

It is altogether shameful, if ingenious, to cite Asian values as an excuse for autocratic practices and denial of basic rights and civil liberties. To say that freedom is Western or un-Asian is to offend our own traditions as well as our forefathers who gave their lives against tyranny and injustices. It is true that Asians place greater emphasis on order and societal stability. But it is certainly wrong to regard society as a kind of false god upon whose altar the individual must constantly be sacrificed. No Asian tradition can be cited to support the proposition that in Asia the individual must melt into the faceless community.<sup>118</sup>

*Vignette 2:* In Zimbabwe, President Robert Mugabe has located his offensive against domestic opponents such as the Movement for Democratic Change within a broader anti-imperialist and pan-African discourse. The regime has been able to place land and economic redistribution at the centre of the crisis of governance that has engulfed that country, representing land seizures as a legitimate redress for colonial injustice and enduring racially stratified property relations. This language has resonated strongly in Africa and the Third

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<sup>115</sup> See for example Final Declaration of the Regional Meeting for Asia of the World Conference on Human Rights, para. 5.

<sup>116</sup> This complicates Chatterjee’s materialist/spiritual dichotomy in interesting ways: Western-style late capitalism is still the telos, but the path might well be culturally particular.

<sup>117</sup> Karen Engle, ‘Culture and Human Rights: The Asian Values Debate in Context’, *New York University Journal of International Law and Politics* 32, no. 2 (2000): 329.

<sup>118</sup> Anwar Ibrahim, ‘Media and Society in Asia’, Keynote speech to the Asian Press Forum, Hong Kong, 2 December 1994, cited from Sarah Pritchard, ‘The Jurisprudence of Human Rights: Some Critical Thought and Developments in Practice’, *Australian Journal of Human Rights* 2, no. 1 (1995).

World more generally, winning the Mugabe regime the enthusiastic backing of the governments of South Africa and Namibia, and more cautious support from Nigeria. Some commentators have pointed out that Mugabe's efforts to clothe the actions of his government in anti-colonial liberationist garb have been assisted – no doubt unwillingly – by the Blair government's 1997 disavowal of any responsibility for colonial injustices in Zimbabwe as well as its pursuit, in other parts of the world, of policies that are widely regarded as neo-imperialist. Behind the rhetorical shield of anti-imperialism, they claim, 'the Zanu-PF government has effectively suspended the rule of law as it attempts to bludgeon its opponents into silence.'<sup>119</sup>

*Vignette 3:* In a study of political rhetoric in Syria, Lisa Wedeen points to the curious disjunction between the cult of mass deference that surrounded former President Hafiz al-Asad and the reality of an absence of belief in, or emotional commitment to, the regime amongst a significant section of the population. She argues that Asad's cult operated as a disciplinary device, generating a politics of public dissimulation in which citizens acted *as if* they revered their leader even though they did not actually do so. In her analysis, one of the ways in which the official vocabulary functioned as a mechanism of political control despite broadcasting patently absurd falsehoods was by blending consensual understandings with obviously false statements, or by representing widely shared convictions about political life (such as the view of Zionism as a neo-colonial enterprise or the need to wrest the Golan Heights back from Israel), but in stark Manichean terms that simplified the range of complex and differentiated visions expressed by Syrians in private.<sup>120</sup>

At the start of this chapter, I described Third World pluralism as the postcolonial 'never again'. I suggested that pluralism and solidarism have to be seen in a dynamic and mutually constitutive fashion, with pluralism deriving much of its political capital and legitimacy from setting itself up as a bulwark against renewed solidarist incursions. Although a great deal differentiates the three vignettes outlined above, one common feature is that in all, authoritarian claims to power are embedded within popular discourses of resistance. In the guise of contesting one hegemony, another hegemony is established. The regime succeeds in setting itself up as the authentic agent of resistance against a hostile external force. The state boundary is cast as the primary axis of confrontation between the postcolonial state and its hostile 'outside', while attention is deflected from confrontations between the state and its

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<sup>119</sup> Ian Phimister & Brian Raftopoulos, 'Mugabe, Mbeki & the Politics of Anti-Imperialism', *Review of African Political Economy* 31, no. 101 (2004): 385. See also the exchange in Stephen Chan & Hasu Patel, 'Zimbabwe's Foreign Policy: A Conversation', *The Round Table* 95, no. 384 (2006).

<sup>120</sup> Lisa Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, & Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999), 7, 41, 43.

own society, from the ugly realities of the hostile 'inside'. To the extent that the regime is able to re-present its crisis of legitimacy in this fashion, it might succeed in obtaining the solidarity of other states (as Zimbabwe has done so effectively); it might also succeed in branding internal dissidents as stooges or agents of the hostile 'outside'. Yet to the extent that there *is* a bone to pick with the hostile 'outside', the regime's claim to be the appropriate vehicle for resistance retains vestiges of credibility in the eyes of its people, despite its self-evident brutality and authoritarianism.

The pluralism of Third World states in International Society functions in something of a similar manner, albeit not always in the extreme forms outlined above. Pluralism traps Third World societies in multiple jurisdictions that seek to (re)produce themselves through flagrantly arbitrary and illegitimate exercises of power. Yet the oppression inherent in these processes is frequently justified as a means of preventing a repetition of historical incursions and/or as resistance against continuing incursions from hostile external actors – whether in the form of coercive solidarisms with proselytising agendas or actors with less sophisticated, more nakedly self-interested claims. This points to the excruciating difficulty of distinguishing power from resistance – resistance is itself a form of power, capable of analogous tyrannies and exclusions. Yet the recognition that coercive solidarism and authoritarian pluralism are their own best friends might provide the basis for a critique of both. This would be a simultaneous critique of the hostile outside and inside from a Third World societal perspective.

‘But what about the purges? Here: in this very university?’ whispered a quiet voice in her head. ‘What about the concentration camps? The torture of both the leftists and the Muslim Brotherhood?’ I don’t know. I don’t know. Maybe he never knew of it. How can one man know everything? ‘What about Salah Nasr and the Mukhabarat, the huge intelligence organisation that has been turned against the people?’ What do I know of government? How do I know what he knows? He nationalised the Canal, he got rid of the British Occupation, he gave us back our dignity – and at home, what about the clinics he’s building everywhere? What about the High Dam? What about electricity for the peasants and land reform and education? He has to be a good man.

- Ahdaf Soueif, *In The Eye of the Sun* (1992)

## *Intermezzo: Resistance in the condition of postcoloniality*

The previous two chapters have tried to show how the exercise of self-determination by Third World societies is impeded by pressures emanating from both outside and within their states. The hierarchical insertion of Third World states in International Society leaves them vulnerable to intervention by powerful external actors. Justified on liberal cosmopolitan grounds, a number of these interventions have the consequence of constraining the scope of the political and thereby infringing the self-determination of Third World societies. Conversely, the supposed imperatives of completing state- and nation-building are frequently used to justify the exercise of power by Third World states vis-à-vis their own societies in ways that are equally detrimental to the self-determination of many in those societies. Indeed, these multiple pressures on self-determination are constitutive of the very condition of postcoloniality itself. Part II of the thesis asks how Third World societies ought to respond to the multiple sources from which self-determination appears to be under threat. How ought societies to resist encroachments on self-determination from outside their states but also *by* their states? What should resistance in the condition of postcoloniality look like?

I adopt an inductive approach to this question, out of a preliminary intuition that no single story can be told about how the prospects for self-determination within a particular society might be enhanced. Every case of resistance is different and must be so if it is to successfully grapple with the particular constellations of power and interest that it confronts. Part II therefore listens to four voices of resistance located in quite different geographical, socio-political and historical contexts. All four are ‘theorists’ in the sense that they abstract a more general view of resistance out of their particular experiences, but also ‘practitioners’ in the sense that they are closely associated with – in two cases, leaders of – actually existing resistance movements. For all their differences, they share a common perception of self-determination being under threat from outside *and* within – from both foreign and national actors – and of consequently having to manoeuvre between hostile external and internal environments. The targets of their resistance are located both outside and within the political communities whose self-determination they strive to defend.

I ask the same questions of all four cases. First, how do they grapple with the problem of simultaneity? How do they manage to be critical of both the outside and the inside – of both ‘other’ and ‘self’ – at the same time? How do they understand and represent the relationship between hostile external and internal actors? Second, how is the scope of resistance represented? Is resistance framed in the language of universal humanity or communal

particularity? Is it underwritten by a cosmopolitan or communitarian logic? Third, what is their attitude towards the postcolonial state? Is their critique anti-statist, reflecting a fundamental scepticism of the institution of statehood, or is it better understood as a critique of the regime in power? Do they see states as irredeemable or is there hope for the postcolonial state? It is worth foregrounding my findings on these questions in order to suggest what these four stories of resistance might have in common.

The differences between the cases are probably deepest on the issue of simultaneity. All four have to confront the problem of simultaneous struggle against outsiders and insiders, but they do so in different ways. These differences are a function of the varied formations of power that they confront. The voices studied in chapter 4 (Tagore and Said) are associated with movements resisting colonial occupation in India and Palestine respectively. Here, the hostile 'other' is the colonial occupier, but the hostile 'self' is the resistance movement itself, which seeks to impose a new hegemony on the body politic, using the supposed imperatives of community-construction to justify infringements of liberty. Self and other are construed as engaged in a Manichean confrontation with one another, which the thinkers studied attempt to transcend by indicating alternative priorities for resistance. The voices studied in chapter 5 (Marcos and Nanjundaswamy) are leaders in the field of 'anti-globalisation' protest. Here, self/other distinctions are not drawn on national lines. The key target of contention is the new liberal economic solidarism, whereby a particular model of capitalism is said to be disseminated by a set of hostile external actors (powerful states, IFIs, private sector interest groups) in collaboration with hostile internal actors (Woods's 'sympathetic interlocutors'). Self/other distinctions are drawn on class rather than national lines ('the working men have no country'<sup>1</sup>). But despite making this quintessentially cosmopolitan move, resistance continues to draw heavily on nationalist tropes of struggle against neo-colonial encroachments on self-determination.

In framing the scope of resistance, all four voices speak in mixed registers. Addressing the problem of simultaneity seems to necessitate a resort to the language of universalism, common humanity and cosmopolitanism on the one hand, as well as that of difference, particularity and communitarianism on the other. Yet these vocabularies of cosmopolitanism and nationalism perform different functions in the two kinds of resistance studied. In chapter 4, nationalism is the weapon of choice against the colonial occupier, but the thinkers studied insist that only a cosmopolitan humanist consciousness can provide critical perspective on the injustice and oppression perpetrated by otherwise legitimate resistance movements. In chapter

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<sup>1</sup> Marx & Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*, 29.

5, cosmopolitanism is the language in which transnational resistance is mobilised against global targets of contention. But resistance against the postcolonial state on account of its alleged complicity in neo-liberal economic solidarism, tends to be mobilised in a deeply nationalist vocabulary – one that seeks to resurrect the old heroes and forgotten ideals of arrested national revolutions, accusing that state of having betrayed the historic promises on the basis of which it came into existence.

Given the polarisation of cosmopolitanism and nationalism in the literature of international normative theory, the finding that they tend to be combined in the actual practice of resistance is significant in itself. But it raises further questions: does the centre of gravity of resistance in each case lie in one or the other of these registers? For example, might recourse to the language of common humanity be a purely instrumental move in what is *really* a nationalist movement? Might it be simply a means of obtaining allies in a struggle intended ultimately to defend particular values against universalist dilution? Can such voices of resistance legitimately be called cosmopolitan? And more fundamentally, what kind of cosmopolitanism is possible in the condition of postcoloniality?

It is difficult to generalise about attitudes towards the postcolonial state across the four cases studied, except to note that in all cases that attitude is one of deep ambivalence. On the one hand, all four thinkers are relentless critics of political elites and regimes in power. Some go further, deconstructing the state and nationalism but offering little by way of alternative methods of organising political power within communities. Yet in all four cases, there seems to be a commitment to the sovereignty of the political community and to the defence of that sovereignty against hostile incursions from the outside. None of the voices studied offers an alternative to the state as a means of assuring such sovereignty, so that even when deep disappointment is expressed with the behaviour of particular states, there is little talk of transcending the institution of statehood itself. One sees instead, an ever-frustrated but constantly reiterated faith in the immanent but unrealised potential of the postcolonial state to represent its nations.

One of the most acute representations of this ambivalence in literature can be found in Ahdaf Soueif's novel *In The Eye of the Sun*, in a brief passage in which the protagonist – Asya al-Ulema – struggles to come to terms with her conflicted emotions towards Gamal Abdel Nasser as he strides into her university auditorium. 'He has to be a good man',<sup>2</sup> she concludes, but it is more in the nature of an effort to convince herself about something of

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<sup>2</sup> Ahdaf Soueif, *In the Eye of the Sun* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 63.

which she is not quite sure. What she *is* sure about is that the nationalisation of the Canal and the termination of British Occupation have restored her sense of dignity – not just hers, but ‘ours’ including that of the leftist and Muslim Brotherhood prisoners rotting in Nasser’s jails. In Asya’s imagined community, even Nasser’s most bitter opponents acknowledge the indispensability of postcolonial sovereignty towards the end of restoring their tattered dignity. The trouble is that the very institution that restored dignity and continues to be partly constitutive of it, now also tramples over it.

Before commencing Part II, it is vital that the reader grasp the relationship between Parts I and II of the thesis. Part II does not answer the problems opened up by Part I in any obvious way. Instead, it is concerned with understanding the kind of resistance sensibility that might be required to grapple with the configurations of power outlined in Part I. The four stories of resistance told here are highly contextual; the power formations that they confront are not microcosms of the larger antagonism between coercive solidarism and authoritarian pluralism described in Part I.<sup>3</sup> Yet by studying their simultaneous resistance between external and internal threats to self-determination and, more specifically, by exploring their use of cosmopolitanism in this bifocal endeavour, I hope to demonstrate how cosmopolitanism might be relevant to resistance in the condition of postcoloniality as defined in Part I. To avoid confusion and to emphasise the separation between Parts I and II, I do not employ the categories coercive solidarism and authoritarian pluralism in Part II, but use the rather more open-ended inside/outside distinction to distinguish between various sources of threat to self-determination.

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<sup>3</sup> For example, it makes no sense to understand continuing Israeli sovereignty over the Palestinian Occupied Territories as an instance of coercive solidarism. It is a denial of self-determination by an agent external to the Palestinian nation, but it can hardly be described as ‘solidarist’.

- Now that you have signed the petition for universal peace, said Stephen, I suppose you will burn that little copybook I saw in your room.  
As Davin did not answer, Stephen began to quote:
- Long pace, fianna! Right incline, fianna! Fianna, by numbers, salute, one, two!
- That's a different question, said Davin. I'm an Irish nationalist, first and foremost. But that's you all out. You're a born sneerer, Stevie.
- When you make the next rebellion with hurleysticks, said Stephen, and want the indispensable informer, tell me. I can find you a few in this college.
- I can't understand you, said Davin. One time I hear you talk against English literature. Now you talk against the Irish informers. What with your name and your ideas...Are you Irish at all?
- Come with me now to the office of arms and I will show you the tree of my family, said Stephen.
- Then be one of us, said Davin. Why don't you learn Irish? Why did you drop out of the league class after the first lesson?

[...]

A tide began to surge beneath the calm surface of Stephen's friendliness.

- This race and this country and this life produced me, he said. I shall express myself as I am.
- Try to be one of us, repeated Davin. In heart you are an Irishman but your pride is too powerful.
- My ancestors threw off their language and took another, Stephen said. They allowed a handful of foreigners to subject them. Do you fancy I am going to pay in my own life and person debts they made? What for?
- For our freedom, said Davin.
- No honourable and sincere man, said Stephen, has given up to you his life and his youth and his affections from the days of Tone to those of Parnell, but you sold him to the enemy or failed him in need or reviled him and left him for another. And you invite me to be one of you. I'd see you damned first.
- They died for their ideals, Stevie, said Davin. Our day will come yet, believe me.

Stephen, following his own thought, was silent for an instant.

- The soul is born, he said vaguely, first in those moments I told you of. It has a slow and dark birth, more mysterious than the birth of the body. When the soul of a man is born in this country there are nets flung at it to hold it back from flight. You talk to me of nationality, language, religion. I shall try to fly by those nets.

Davin knocked the ashes from his pipe.

- Too deep for me, Stevie, he said. But a man's country comes first. Ireland first, Stevie. You can be a poet or a mystic after.
- Do you know what Ireland is? asked Stephen with cold violence. Ireland is the old sow that eats her farrow.

- James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916)

#### *4. Born Sneerers or Ironic Nationalists? Rabindranath Tagore and Edward Said*

In the same year that *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* was first published in book form (1916), another literary modernist in another British colony published a novel called *Ghare Baire*,<sup>1</sup> in which – like Stephen Dedalus – the autobiographical protagonist bemoaned the filicidal character of anti-colonial resistance. Just as Dedalus vowed to fly by the nets of nationality, language and religion that threatened to stifle the soul, halfway across the world in Swadeshi-era Bengal, this other character – Nikhilesh – spoke in uncannily similar language of the need ‘to save the country from the thousand-and-one snares – of religion, custom and selfishness’<sup>2</sup> which nationalist agitators were busy laying amongst the people. James Joyce and Rabindranath Tagore, creators of Dedalus and Nikhilesh, suffered a similar ironic fate: despite a critical, ambivalent, sometimes tortured engagement with nationalist movements, each would, paradoxically, become firmly ensconced within the pantheons of those movements. Scathing as their critiques of nationalism may have been, the fictional universes that Joyce and Tagore wrote into existence, firmly anchored in specific locales – Dublin and Bengal – contributed magnificently to the goal towards which nationalist movements were also striving: the production of a national identity.

It is telling that two novelists from Ireland and India crafted these fictional kindred spirits contemporaneously. Ireland and India were the two British colonies that already had relatively well developed independence movements by the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These were similar in their resemblance to the bourgeois nationalism of Garibaldi and Mazzini and their relative distance from Marxist tendencies. Irish nationalists had been impressed by the Indian revolt of 1857 and they perceived in the Bengal famine of 1874 a repetition of their own imperial history of the 1840s. In the year that *Portrait* and *Ghare Baire* were published, the Indian nationalist movement was radicalised by the Irish theosophist Annie Besant’s creation of the Indian Home Rule League, with demands based on Irish models. Her arrest in 1917 by the British authorities in India became a cause célèbre, precipitating the convergence of different factions of the nationalist movement. Following her release, Besant became president of the Indian National Congress. Later, Gandhi borrowed

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<sup>1</sup> *Ghare Baire* appeared serially in the Bengali journal *Sabuj Patra* from May 1915 to February 1916, and in book form in 1916. It was published in English translation serially as *At Home and Outside* in the Calcutta monthly *Modern Review* over 1918-19 and as a book called *The Home and the World* by Macmillan in 1919. All references here are from the English book translation, so I use this last title.

<sup>2</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *The Home and the World*, tr. Surendranath Tagore (London: Penguin, 2005), 136.

from the Irish example of combining Home Rule agitation with cultural revival, making cultural nationalism a major component of anti-colonial resistance.

The geographical and historical locations of *Portrait* and *Ghare Baire* in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Ireland and Bengal reveal a remarkably similar mixture of distinct strands of anti-colonial resistance: constitutional agitation, a vigorous and articulate cultural nationalism, mass-based passive resistance in the form of strikes and boycotts, punctuated by more sporadic acts of revolutionary terrorism and insurrection.<sup>3</sup> Given their location in comparable discursive fields characterised by similar sorts of conversations between different modes of resistance, it is unsurprising that Joyce and Tagore responded by creating fictional characters with remarkably resonant sensibilities. I shall not say much more about Joyce or the subsequent development of Dedalus in *Ulysses*, in this chapter. I only raise the comparison<sup>4</sup> to suggest that in 1916, the central dilemmas animating *Ghare Baire* were felt well beyond the confines of its spatial location. Indeed, W. B. Yeats once remarked that the novel was reminiscent of Irish society and would have stirred up strong feelings in Ireland – as it had in Bengal – had it been written by an Irish writer.<sup>5</sup>

#### 4.1 Rabindranath Tagore

Tagore was a veritable modern da Vinci – a poet, painter and educationist, a Nobel Prize-winning author of novels, short stories, plays, essays and songs. By one estimate he is said to have composed over two thousand songs and nearly a thousand poems, and created almost three thousand paintings, most in the last ten years of his life.<sup>6</sup> As a public intellectual he was omnivorous in his interests, which encompassed literature, politics, the fine arts, religion, education, social reform and philosophy. My interest in Tagore here is highly selective. I focus on his explicitly political writings on nationalism and the Indian national movement in particular, and on his broader reflections on the construction of political and cultural identities. I use *The Home and the World* (the title under which *Ghare Baire* was published in English) as a point of entry because I believe that Tagore achieved a complexity and subtlety in his fiction that is less evident in some of his more overtly didactic writing. Yet this strategy presents its own challenges. As Tagore biographers Krishna Dutta and Andrew Robinson

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<sup>3</sup> Young, *Postcolonialism*, 168, 302, 313, 318. Sumit Sarkar, *The Swadeshi Movement in Bengal: 1903-1908* (New Delhi: People's Publishing House, 1973), ch. 2.

<sup>4</sup> I have found it surprisingly difficult to locate comparative work on Joyce and Tagore – for one example see Rick Livingstone, 'Global Tropes/Worldly Readings: Narratives of Cosmopolitanism in Joyce, Rich, and Tagore', *Narrative* 5, no. 2 (1997): 121-34.

<sup>5</sup> Krishna Dutta & Andrew Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore: The myriad-minded man* (New Delhi: Rupa, 2005), 225.

<sup>6</sup> Humayun Kabir, 'Introduction', in *Towards Universal Man* (hereafter *TUM*) (London: Asia Publishing House, 1962), 7.

note, ‘he was not an analytical thinker, always an intuitive one who preferred a poetic analogy to a prosaic argument’,<sup>7</sup> making it challenging to read him as a political theorist.

Reading Tagore in English (as I do) poses further problems. Bilingual Bengali scholars have frequently commented on the quality of Tagore translations and their impact on his international reputation. Tagore defied Bengali literary conventions of his day – *Ghare Baire* is said to have been the first Bengali novel written in *chalit* (colloquial) Bengali prose as opposed to the more Sanskritised, high-vernacular *sadhu bhasha*.<sup>8</sup> Yet readers of the English translation have commented that the ‘rococo elaboration’ of the language makes the novel seem ‘like an ornate edifice of Victorianism’.<sup>9</sup> It would appear that in terms of literary style, Tagore in Bengali sounds emphatically modern whereas he comes across as somewhat Victorian in English translation (this may be why Tagore and Joyce have not been compared enough). The implications of reading Tagore in translation are, however, of tangential relevance to my work, since I am interested in his political theoretic rather than literary innovations. These are not always separable – the shift from *sadhu bhasha* to *chalit bhasha*, for example, has to be seen as a democratising move. Nonetheless, Tagore’s political ideas and commitments continue to shine through in translation, permitting a fruitful engagement with them. A focus on ideas rather than literary form also leaves little doubt about Tagore’s credentials as a thinker grappling with problems of modernity and, more particularly, postcolonial modernity. This may seem a peculiar observation, since India remained a British colony for all of Tagore’s life (1861-1941). Yet if we understand postcolonial thought, following Edward Said, as reflection about ‘what we will do when the last white policeman leaves’,<sup>10</sup> then Tagore emerges as one of the earliest and most penetrating postcolonial thinkers in South Asia.

In the first half of this chapter, I propose to read Tagore as a thinker concerned with impediments to freedom and self-determination emanating from both within and outside the political community he played a central role in imagining. In other words, I read him as a simultaneous critic of the hostile outside and inside. This section begins with a reading of *The Home and the World*, which fictionalises many of the political dilemmas that Tagore would grapple with. It attempts to contextualise the novel in light of Tagore’s ambivalent relationship with the Swadeshi movement in Bengal, of which he was initially a leading inspiration and later a severe critic. His disillusionment with the Swadeshi movement

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<sup>7</sup> Dutta & Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 13.

<sup>8</sup> William Radice, ‘Preface’, in *The Home and the World*, x.

<sup>9</sup> Anita Desai, ‘Introduction’, in *The Home and the World*, xxvi.

<sup>10</sup> Edward W. Said, *Representations of the Intellectual: The 1993 Reith Lectures* (London: Vintage, 1994), 30.

manifested itself not only in the novel, but also in his blistering critique of nationalism in a series of lectures delivered in Japan and the US in 1916-17. The implications of this critique for political praxis in India became clearer in a number of highly public arguments with Gandhi in the 1920s and 30s. Yet, alongside his critique of nationalism, Tagore resolutely opposed British imperialism in India. I am particularly interested in how he sustains this simultaneous opposition to both imperialism (the hostile outside) and nationalist agitation (the hostile inside). I believe we might understand this simultaneity by paying attention to his extensive meditations on the construction of cultural and political identity and particularly to his normative thinking on relations between those gigantic politico-cultural essentialisations – ‘East’ and ‘West’ – that structured so much of public discourse in his day.

#### 4.1.1 The Home and the World

*The Home and the World* is set against the backdrop of the Swadeshi<sup>11</sup> movement that convulsed Bengal from 1903 to 1908. The movement was provoked by the British government’s announcement of its intention to partition Bengal into two provinces, one of which was to have a Hindu majority and the other a Muslim majority. Although justified as being necessary to improve the administration of a large and unwieldy province, the proposal was widely interpreted (particularly in the western half) as an insidious British ploy to divide and rule. The anti-partition movement began rather meekly: bhadralok<sup>12</sup> politicians responded in conventional ‘mendicant’ fashion with prayers and petitions to colonial authorities. Yet by 1905, when the partition came into effect, the movement had radicalised to an unprecedented degree. There arose a perception of irreconcilable conflict between British and Indian interests, which could only be resolved by swaraj (self-rule). For the first time in the history of anti-colonial resistance in India, bhadralok nationalists made a conscious effort to identify with the masses and mobilise them around a programme of ‘passive resistance’ involving an economic boycott of foreign goods and a political boycott of colonial educational and governmental institutions. The boycott was accompanied by a constructive agenda aimed at nurturing indigenous alternatives to foreign goods and institutions. By 1908 it was clear that mass mobilisation had failed, and participants in the movement either lapsed back into mendicancy or expressed their protest in individualised acts of revolutionary terrorism. Yet despite its inability to bridge the elite-mass divide, the Swadeshi movement anticipated many

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<sup>11</sup> Literally, ‘of one’s own country’, i.e. indigenous.

<sup>12</sup> Literally, ‘respectable folk’ – a term that the emerging middle class in colonial Bengal used to refer to itself. In scholarship, it is used interchangeably with ‘middle class’, ‘literati’, ‘intelligentsia’, and ‘petty bourgeoisie’ (see Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 35).

of the political tactics and idioms that Gandhi later deployed much more successfully on a mass scale.<sup>13</sup>

*The Home and the World* is narrated by three central characters. The action takes place on the estates of Nikhil, a wealthy but progressive zamindar (landlord) who bears a strong resemblance to Tagore and is widely read as an autobiographical character. We first glimpse Nikhil through the eyes of his wife Bimala, who sees her husband as ‘absolutely modern’ thanks to his transgression of household custom.<sup>14</sup> Nikhil believes that ‘man and wife are equal in love because of their equal claim on each other’.<sup>15</sup> In sharp contrast to the conventional bhadrakok conception of the home/world dichotomy, in which the world was a masculine, materialist domain and the home a feminine, spiritual domain,<sup>16</sup> Nikhil wants to draw Bimala out of her purdah-encumbered<sup>17</sup> existence. As he explains to her:

I would have you come into the heart of the outer world and meet reality. Merely going on with your household duties, living all your life in the world of household conventions and the drudgery of household tasks – you were not made for that! If we meet, and recognise each other, in the real world, then only will our love be true.<sup>18</sup>

In addition, Nikhil wants Bimala to be educated and hires a British governess – one Miss Gilby – to teach her and be her companion. Bimala is initially disoriented and vexed by the modernist, egalitarian ethos of her marital home – she wants to continue touching her husband’s feet in the traditional mark of respect, for example, much as he dislikes this custom. (‘I had my seat by his side’, she says. ‘But my real joy was, that my true place was at his feet.’ And later, ‘my necessity was more for giving than receiving’.<sup>19</sup>) But she understands her husband’s unorthodox demands as an idiosyncratic manifestation of his deep love. The other aspect of Nikhil’s progressivism introduced early in the narrative is his profound commitment to the welfare of the tenants living on his estate. We are told of his considerable investments of time and money in schemes to uplift the rural poor.

This tranquil idyll is shattered by a visit from Nikhil’s friend Sandip, an impassioned political activist gripped by Swadeshi fervour. Sandip is a sort of Nietzschean figure who will stop at nothing to ensure the success of the Swadeshi movement. The political and philosophical

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<sup>13</sup> I have relied heavily on Sarkar, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, ch. 2, for this overview of the trajectories of the movement, and on Sarkar’s other work on this period to contextualise the development of Tagore’s thought.

<sup>14</sup> Tagore, *The Home and the World*, 18.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

<sup>16</sup> See section 3.3.3.

<sup>17</sup> Literally, ‘screen’. The term is used to designate the practices that secluded women of rank from men, both within the home and outside.

<sup>18</sup> Tagore, *The Home and the World*, 23.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 19, 20.

disagreements that open up between Nikhil and Sandip constitute one of the central themes of the novel, with Nikhil voicing many of Tagore's criticisms of the Swadeshi movement in Bengal and, later, the independence movement led by Gandhi. Crucially, Nikhil is not opposed to Swadeshi. At the very start of the novel, Bimala says 'from the time my husband had been a college student he had been trying to get the things required by our people produced in our own country',<sup>20</sup> with greater enthusiasm than business acumen: 'he would assist to the bitter end of utter failure anyone who wanted to invent a new loom or rice-husking machine'.<sup>21</sup> Nikhil apparently was a believer in swadeshi long before it became fashionable to be one. But he is resolutely opposed to the Swadeshi activists' coercive enforcement of the boycott.

Unlike many of his fellow zamindars, Nikhil refuses to use his authority to enforce the nationalist boycott of foreign goods, believing that compliance with the boycott ought to be an act of conscience. He is acutely aware that the boycott's impact will fall hardest on poorer consumers, who tended to purchase cheap foreign imports in preference to expensive indigenous substitutes.<sup>22</sup> While Sandip is busy rousing the rabble to punitive violence against those violating the boycott, Nikhil throws himself into rescuing those crushed by it. In a crucial sub-plot, Panchu – the destitute tenant of a neighbouring landlord – begins peddling foreign cloth to pay for the customary rituals following his wife's funeral. When Panchu is evicted by his nationalist landlord as punishment, Nikhil offers to buy his landholding to keep a roof over his head. Nikhil is enraged by reports of nationalist coercion, and even more so by demands that he enforce the boycott coercively on his own estate. As he remarks to Bimala, 'Those who make sacrifices for their country's sake are indeed her servants...but those who compel others to make them in her name are her enemies. They would cut freedom at the root, to gain it at the top';<sup>23</sup> and elsewhere, 'To tyrannise for the country is to tyrannise over the country'.<sup>24</sup>

This conviction brings him into direct conflict with Sandip, for whom the national interest is the supreme obligation, and tactical effectiveness in safeguarding that interest, the touchstone on which all political action is judged. ('Deliverance is based upon injustice...Whenever an individual or nation becomes incapable of perpetrating injustice it is swept into the dust-bin of

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<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>22</sup> Foreign goods were often cheaper than indigenous substitutes because of the colonial government's tariff and industrial policies, which ensured that colonies functioned as sources of raw material and markets for finished goods.

<sup>23</sup> Tagore, *The Home and the World*, 94.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 109.

the world.’<sup>25</sup>) Nikhil cannot accept that duties to the nation supersede all other moral considerations. (‘I am willing...to serve my country; but my worship I reserve for Right which is far greater than my country’.<sup>26</sup>) Indeed, he is deeply uncomfortable with the tactical conflation of nationalism and religious devotion recommended by Sandip, who speaks passionately of the need to use myths, illusions and symbols to mobilise nationalist sentiment:

True patriotism will never be roused in our countrymen unless they can visualise the motherland. We must make a goddess of her. My colleagues saw the point at once. ‘Let us devise an appropriate image!’ they exclaimed. ‘It will not do if you devise it,’ I admonished them. ‘We must get one of the current images accepted as representing the country – the worship of the people must flow towards it along the deep-cut grooves of custom.’<sup>27</sup>

Sandip knows that nationalist subjectivities must be painstakingly constructed, but like all good nationalists he also knows that the fact of their construction must be obscured. Identities must be primordialised if they are to arouse the reverence and allegiance of the people. Nikhil is pained by Sandip’s use of myth and illusion, but Sandip insists that ‘illusions are necessary for lesser minds’.<sup>28</sup> More worryingly, seeking ‘current images’ into which patriotic devotion might be channelled, Sandip ultimately chooses a sectarian, divisive symbol, sowing the seeds of an eventual fracture of the national body politic: ‘I can swear that Durga is a political goddess and was conceived as the image of the *Shakti* of patriotism in the days when Bengal was praying to be delivered from Mussulman domination.’<sup>29</sup> Predictably, the explicitly religious basis of Sandip’s nationalist mobilisation alienates the Muslim minority. Moreover, the commercial burden of the boycott is disproportionately borne by Muslims, as petty traders selling foreign cloth or as poor tenants of Hindu nationalist zamindars. Sandip ruthlessly urges his followers to bring ‘obdurate’ Muslims into line. (‘...though we have shouted ourselves hoarse, proclaiming the Mussalmans to be our brethren, we have come to realise that we shall never be able to bring them wholly round to our side. So they must be suppressed altogether and made to understand that we are the masters.’<sup>30</sup>)

Bimala occupies a pivotal position in the novel. Tagore, utilising a common literary trope of the time, casts her as a personification of Bengal, torn between the values espoused by Nikhil and Sandip. As the historian Tanika Sarkar writes, the nation occupied a traditionally female space in both its nationalist and imperialist envisionings, as glorious Mother or land of the

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 79.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 120.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 121.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 122-3.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 120.

effeminate Indians.<sup>31</sup> Sandwiched between the two men, Bimala functions sometimes as their audience, sometimes as an interlocutor, and always as their motivation. She is the terrain on which the two men duel, and the prize for whose affections they compete. But more importantly, she is the arbiter of the novel. Her modulating feelings towards the two men reveal who is more persuasive, more attuned to the nation. Bimala becomes increasingly enamoured with the fiery rhetoric and flamboyance of Sandip, who offers a form of political agency that is more virile, potent and immediately gratifying in its apparent ability to deliver the nation from imperialist subjugation. The eroticisation of their relationship serves as a metaphor for the seductiveness of Swadeshi nationalism in the political arena. Conversely, Bimala becomes intellectually and sexually estranged from Nikhil, whose less heroic political activity, geared towards long-term social transformation and almost oblivious to the imperialist presence, seems less promising.

As the narrative hurtles towards its violent denouement, Bimala is increasingly assailed by doubt. Sandip has persuaded her to steal money from her husband's safe for the nationalist cause – an action that she regrets almost immediately, as it vitiates all her relationships inside the home. Outside, the pernicious consequences of Sandip's rhetoric are beginning to unfold – Swadeshi activists have been punishing those found violating the boycott and inflaming tensions to the point where the Muslims riot in protest. But Bimala's second thoughts come too late to save her relationship with Nikhil, who is wounded – possibly fatally<sup>32</sup> – in the course of trying to quell a communal riot. In Bimala's anguish and remorse at the end of the novel we find a vindication of Nikhil's position, but it is a Pyrrhic victory, shot through with the deeply pessimistic sentiment that Sandip's views hold greater sway in the world.

Martha Nussbaum has read *The Home and the World* as the 'tragic story of the defeat of a reasonable and principled cosmopolitanism by the forces of nationalism and ethnocentrism'.<sup>33</sup> It is certainly plausible to read the novel as a depiction of the struggle between eternal dualities of political life – reason v. passion, consent v. coercion, cosmopolitanism v. nationalism, ethics v. politics. But I would caution against a reading that privileges one side of these dichotomies in an easy or uncritical fashion. Such a reading flies in the face of Tagore's didactic pronouncements, in which he explicitly distances himself from such polarities. For example, in a (now) celebrated essay on nationalism published a year after

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<sup>31</sup> Tanika Sarkar, 'Many Faces of Love: Country, Woman and God in *The Home and the World*', in *Rabindranath Tagore's The Home and the World: A Critical Companion*, ed. P. K. Datta (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003), 34.

<sup>32</sup> We are left in some doubt as to his fate in the novel, but in the film adaptation of the book by Satyajit Ray, it is very clear that Nikhil has died.

<sup>33</sup> Martha Nussbaum, 'Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism', in *For Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism*, ed. Joshua Cohen (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996).

*Ghare Baire*, he declared that ‘neither the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism, nor the fierce self-idolatory of nation-worship, is the goal of human history’.<sup>34</sup> Elsewhere, he concludes a reflection on identity politics in education with the hope that ‘the institutions we are setting up today express both our national and our cosmopolitan consciousness’.<sup>35</sup>

Nussbaum’s cosmopolitan reading of the novel does not adequately do justice to the complexity of its principal characters. For all his individualism and universalism, Nikhil is also a patriot – indeed, for him, these are not mutually exclusive concepts. If Bimala is a personification of Bengal, then Nikhil’s unflagging devotion to her (even in moments of frustration, misunderstanding and betrayal) can be read as a metaphor for patriotic love. But Nikhil’s patriotism is not expressed simply in metaphorical terms – of the three protagonists, it is Nikhil who evinces the greatest concern for the harsh quotidian realities of ‘ordinary’ people and works to alleviate them. More to the point, Nikhil is undoubtedly an anti-imperialist. He was long an enthusiastic proponent of Swadeshi activity, even when this threatened to bankrupt him. Despite their differences of temperament and politics he and Sandip are friends – indeed, we learn early in the narrative of the crucial and increasingly ironic fact that Sandip’s political activity is financially underwritten by Nikhil.<sup>36</sup> Finally, when a smear campaign in the local press brands Nikhil a collaborationist because of his refusal to enforce the boycott, he attempts to redefine rather than cede the patriotic space:

Our country...has been brought to death’s door through sheer fear – from fear of the gods down to fear of the police; and if you set up, in the name of freedom, the fear of some other bogey, whatever it may be called; if you would raise your victorious standard on the cowardice of the country by means of downright oppression, *then no true lover of the country can bow to your decision.*<sup>37</sup>

If Nikhil is also a patriot, then *The Home and the World* is more plausibly read as a conflict between two different forms of patriotism, as suggested by Ashis Nandy<sup>38</sup> – one that is unreasoned, authoritarian and demagogic, and another that is critical, reflective and uncoerced. To return to the categories employed earlier in this thesis, if we regard British imperialism as the hostile ‘outside’ (external to the nationalist subjectivities constructed in opposition to it), it is a shadowy, off-stage presence in the novel. This in no way diminishes its importance to the narrative – the novel operates in a discursive field created by the fact of British imperialism. Yet the action takes place wholly on the ‘inside’ and the novel is chiefly

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<sup>34</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, *Nationalism*, tr. Surendranath Tagore (London: Macmillan, 1917), 5.

<sup>35</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, ‘Hindu University’ (1911), in *TUM*, 156.

<sup>36</sup> Tagore, *The Home and the World*, 27.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 129, emphasis mine.

<sup>38</sup> Ashis Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism: Rabindranath Tagore and the Politics of Self* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994), 13-14.

concerned with threats to freedom and self-determination that emanate from within the political community as a result of specific modes of constructing subjectivity.

Despite reading it as a conflict between two forms of patriotism, Nandy, like Nussbaum, reads *The Home and the World* as basically a critique of the politics of Sandip. Yet this fails to acknowledge the problematic portrayal of Nikhil and the values *he* represents. I am not sure that Tagore wished that Nikhil had ‘won’, for in incapacitating (or killing?) him, he may have been trying to say something about Nikhil’s failings. Indeed, in having both male protagonists exit the scene (one through injury and the other, presumably, to continue his demagoguery), Tagore repudiates both polarities – ‘neither the colourless vagueness of cosmopolitanism, nor the fierce self-idolatory of nation-worship’<sup>39</sup> - leaving Bimala alone at the end to reconsider the future trajectory of her self-assertion. In silencing both the male characters at the end, Tagore was recommending neither of them. It is worth considering how the critique of Nikhil (the ostensibly autobiographical character) may have been a kind of auto-critique, Tagore’s recognition of his own limitations.

Michael Sprinkler has read the dichotomy represented by the two male protagonists as one between ‘the honourable but ineffectual Nikhilesh and the powerful but unprincipled Sandip’.<sup>40</sup> Yet ineffectual is too weak an indictment – there is something deeply unattractive about Nikhil’s politics. As Sprinkler himself notes, Nikhil’s proposed liberation is not some Kantian kingdom of ends, where all are equally empowered to realise their freedom, but instead the thoroughly paternalist notion of the enlightened and benevolent patriarch bestowing *his* conception of freedom on others.<sup>41</sup> Nikhil recognises this briefly in a moment of self-flagellating introspection about his growing estrangement from Bimala:

I have begun to suspect that there has all along been a vein of tyranny in me. There was a despotism in my desire to mould my relations with Bimala in a hard, clear-cut, perfect form. But man’s life was not meant to be cast in a mould. And if we try to shape the good, as so much mere material, it takes a terrible revenge by losing its life...I did not realise all this while that it must have been this unconscious tyranny of mine which made us gradually drift apart... she could not be open with me, because she felt that, in certain things, I despotically differed from her.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Tagore, *Nationalism*, 5.

<sup>40</sup> Michael Sprinkler, ‘Homeboys: Nationalism, Colonialism, and Gender in *The Home and the World*’, in *Rabindranath Tagore’s The Home and the World: A Critical Companion*, ed. P. K. Datta (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003), 114, 120.

<sup>41</sup> See also Sumit Sarkar, ‘*Ghare Baire* in its Times’, in *Rabindranath Tagore’s The Home and the World: A Critical Companion*, ed. P. K. Datta (Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003), 164-5.

<sup>42</sup> Tagore, *The Home and the World*, 197-8.

Nikhil realises that his efforts to educate, modernise and ‘civilise’ Bimala have failed to respect her autonomy and have alienated her. (Elsewhere, writing about the importance of autonomous self-development, Tagore noted: ‘I have learnt to fear the menace of the good-that-comes-in-the-form-of-improving-others more than evil itself.’<sup>43</sup>) The novel is thus a critique not only of nationalism, but also of the benevolent, civilising pretensions of imperial modernisation.

There is no corresponding moment of self-awareness in Nikhil’s relationship with Panchu, whom he has saved from the violence of the Swadeshi activists, but from whom he remains separated by the yawning gulf of class. As Tanika Sarkar reminds us, Panchu remains the passive object of social engineering or of political manipulation. Unlike the three bhadralok characters, *he* does not write his autobiography – the novel denies him a subjectivity of his own.<sup>44</sup> Tagore seems to criticise Nikhil for failing to respect Bimala’s subjectivity, but the critique does not extend to the limits of his paternalist reformism vis-à-vis the lower classes. Panchu is rescued so that he can live out the rest of his days as the tenant of another zamindar. The novel contrasts the good zamindar (Nikhil) with the bad zamindar (Harish Kundu), but zamindari per se is not under attack.<sup>45</sup> Sarkar sees this not as a failure of imagination, but as a deliberate choice: Panchu’s autonomous development of his subjectivity might have radically destabilised the class position of Nikhil (and his author). So the critique of Nikhil is deafeningly silent on the issue of class; but even in this attenuated form, Nikhil’s auto-critique makes it difficult to read *The Home and the World* as recommending a thoroughgoing universalist modernisation in place of nationalism. In the following sections, I consider how Tagore’s rejection of these polarities manifested itself in his attitudes towards the politics of his time.

#### 4.1.2 Tagore and the Swadeshi movement

Tagore’s relationship with the Swadeshi movement is vital to understanding the subsequent trajectory of his political thought. Sumit Sarkar’s identification of four different strands of political opinion in Swadeshi-era Bengal provides a useful framework for understanding this

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<sup>43</sup> Cited from Nandy, *The Illegitimacy of Nationalism*, 75.

<sup>44</sup> Sarkar, ‘Many Faces of Love’, 41.

<sup>45</sup> But see Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, 43, who might defend this as an internalist – and for that reason more effective – form of critique. Walzer writes that the critique of aristocratic hierarchy in medieval Europe begins not by attacking hierarchy per se, but by pointing out that aristocrats were not doing what they were obliged to do in order to justify their privilege. Bad aristocrats are castigated while aristocracy itself is celebrated – but the celebration is subversive insofar as the aristocratic idea is distinguished from every actual instance of aristocratic behaviour. It is only a matter of time before bolder critics ask why the aristocratic ideal is so rarely approximated in practice, and begin to call for its delegitimisation.

trajectory.<sup>46</sup> By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, nationalist politics in India was dominated by the ‘moderates’ – so called on account of their reformist objectives (typically limited to securing dominion status for India within the British empire) and methods (largely, the press and the platform). A key rhetorical feature of moderate discourse was the appeal to British public opinion with arguments about the ‘un-British’ character of colonial rule in India. As frustration grew with the degrading and fruitless ‘mendicancy’ of moderate politics, ‘swaraj’ (self-rule) became the movement’s rallying cry. But Swadeshi activists were divided over how to wrest swaraj from the colonial authorities. One group emphasised ‘constructive swadeshi’, which entailed autonomous self-development in the economic, social and educational spheres without precipitating an immediate political clash with the authorities. Dissatisfied with both the piecemeal constitutional reform favoured by the moderates and the path of slow self-regeneration of ‘constructive swadeshi’, a third group, led by figures such as Aurobindo Ghosh and Bipin Chandra Pal, called for ‘passive resistance’. This entailed a boycott of foreign goods and colonial institutions, a concomitant development of indigenous alternatives, and civil disobedience of unjust laws. The emphasis on *passive* resistance was intended to distinguish this approach from a fourth option – ‘aggressive resistance’ or armed revolt – which was left open in the event that the British government escalated its repression. Crucially, both ‘constructive swadeshi’ and ‘passive resistance’ shared a commitment to mass mobilisation and considered an appeal to religious sentiments as a potentially useful technique.

Sarkar reads the Tagore of the 1890s as critical of official government policy and conventional moderate nationalist politics, and as advocating a turn to constructive swadeshi. Tagore was particularly concerned with bridging the divide between the educated elite and the masses, towards which end he emphasised the use of the vernacular in educational instruction and political discourse, the revival of traditional folk institutions such as the mela (fair), and the use of magic lantern audio-visual talks as ways of promoting mass contact and literacy. A tension between modernism and revivalism animates Tagore’s thought during this time, but Sarkar identifies an ascendancy of Hindu revivalism in his writings between 1901-06.<sup>47</sup> In his effort to arouse mass opinion against the colonial state, Tagore highlights the distinction between *rashtra* (state) and *samaj* (society), emphasising that the ‘real’ history of India is located within *samaj*, which alone embodies the distinctiveness of the Indian people. In attempting to resuscitate pride in this distinctiveness, Tagore idealises *samaj* in aggressively Hindu, upper-caste and patriarchal terms during this period. An essay on Indian history (‘*Bharatvarsher Itihas*’, 1902) implies that unity in diversity has already been achieved in

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<sup>46</sup> Sarkar, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, ch. 2.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 52-3.

India in and through Hinduism. Other contemporaneous essays defend patriarchal divisions of household labour and the caste system (as an ingenious method of accommodating difference by giving each caste a functional niche in society).<sup>48</sup>

Between 1905-07, Tagore became an enthusiastic proponent of passive resistance in the struggle against the partition. He composed a magnificent series of patriotic songs evoking the unity of Bengal (although Sarkar reminds us that some of these conflated Mother Bengal with Goddess Durga,<sup>49</sup> so there was, perhaps, a little bit of Sandip in this Tagore). He was phenomenally successful at raising money for the movement. Perhaps most inspiringly, he appropriated the Hindu rite of rakhi-bandhan<sup>50</sup> as a gesture of protest: he exhorted Bengalis to tie rakhis on each other's wrists on partition day (16 October 1905) to symbolise their unity. In their account, Dutta & Robinson describe how Tagore went about tying rakhis enthusiastically on the wrists of Muslim stable hands and mullahs.<sup>51</sup> At the height of his involvement with the Swadeshi movement, Tagore was one of its leading personalities. His break with the movement, reflected in a prolonged silence from the summer of 1906 to early 1907, was therefore greeted with dismay.

Tagore seems to have grown increasingly disillusioned as he became acquainted with the extent to which the boycott relied on coercion for its effectiveness. One consequence of this was the eruption of Hindu-Muslim riots in East Bengal between May 1906 and May 1907.<sup>52</sup> As historians of the period have documented, Swadeshi activists employed extensive physical coercion (destruction of foreign goods, and intimidation and assault of those found buying, selling or otherwise patronising such goods), and social coercion (typically, various forms of ostracism such as refusals of inter-dining or inter-marriage with those considered guilty of deviating from swadeshi norms). One particularly widespread form of social coercion was the application of caste sanctions. Those found guilty of violating the boycott were punished by the withdrawal of the traditional services of priests, washermen and barbers, which was thought to trap them irretrievably in a state of impurity. As Ranajit Guha observes, the conservative ideology of caste was being grafted on to a developing nationalism: nationalism had found a use for the oppressive measures of caste discipline.<sup>53</sup> Tagore observed, and

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<sup>48</sup> Sumit Sarkar, *Writing Social History* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 26.

<sup>49</sup> Sarkar, 'Ghare Baire in its Times', 145.

<sup>50</sup> Raksha-bandhan, meaning 'bond of protection', is a Hindu festival in which women tie silk threads (rakhis) on the wrists of their brothers and pray for their well-being, in return for which brothers promise to protect their sisters.

<sup>51</sup> Dutta & Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 145.

<sup>52</sup> See Sarkar, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, ch. 8.

<sup>53</sup> Ranajit Guha, 'Discipline and Mobilise', in *Subaltern Studies VII*, eds. Partha Chatterjee & Gyanendra Pandey (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997), 82, 89.

empathised with, the consequent alienation of Muslim and lower-caste Namasudra peasants, who obstinately stuck to foreign salt and cloth even when their swadeshi substitutes became cheaper. In an essay entitled ‘Sadupay’ (‘The Right Way’) published in the summer of 1908, he lamented that

...our misfortune is that we want freedom, but we do not believe in freedom in our hearts...Threats of consigning forefathers to hell, social ostracism through withdrawing the services of washermen and barbers, burning homesteads, beating up recalcitrants on village paths...all these are ways of making slave-mentalities permanent within us.<sup>54</sup>

The Swadeshi experience gave Tagore a new awareness of the divisiveness of caste barriers and the violence associated with their maintenance. In sharp contrast with his earlier writings, he started to call for a rejection of caste and religious barriers and the construction of a mahajati (great community) in India on the basis of a broad humanism. Once a Hindu revivalist, he was now explicitly anti-traditionalist. In his own words, ‘A people whose religion teaches them to despise others, whose heaven is supposed to be ruined by drinking water touched by a neighbour, who have to protect their sanctity by insulting others – such a people deserves no better fate than humiliation’.<sup>55</sup>

Tagore saw the retrogressive implications of the use of orthodox religion as a tool of mass mobilisation. But like many of his contemporaries, he was less sensitive to the class dimensions of Swadeshi mobilisation. As Sarkar explains, ‘the real Achilles heel of the movement was its lack of a peasant programme, its inability to mobilise the peasants on issues and through idioms which could have had a direct appeal for them.’<sup>56</sup> The peasantry were being asked to purchase costly swadeshi goods (often of inferior quality) for a distant and abstract cause, by bhadralok leaders who had hitherto treated them with contempt or indifference. Little was done to improve the condition of the peasants or to upset the privileges of the rural bhadralok, who were the backbone of the movement. Alongside social boycott, the exertion of zamindari authority over the poorer classes (who, in many East Bengal districts, were predominantly Muslim) was the chief means of ensuring compliance with swadeshi norms. One particularly effective measure was the closure of local markets to commerce in foreign goods, from which petty vendors often derived their livelihoods. In many cases, the concurrence of religious and class tensions proved highly combustible, causing communal riots.

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<sup>54</sup> Cited from Sarkar, ‘*Ghare Baire* in its Times’, 148-9.

<sup>55</sup> Cited from Sarkar, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, 83.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, 79, 333-4.

Tagore reacted to the ugliness of the Swadeshi movement by turning his back on passive resistance and calling for patient 'constructive swadeshi' in the villages. He was acutely aware of the need to bridge the class divide between the educated bhadralok and the masses. He wanted volunteers to travel to rural areas to understand the real needs of villagers and to promote literacy, knowledge of improved techniques of production, sanitation, and other public concerns, in a language and idiom with which the peasantry were familiar.<sup>57</sup> This was a call for a turn away from political confrontation and towards grassroots economic and social transformation, but it fell on deaf ears because it lacked the romantic appeal of passive resistance or revolutionary terrorism, to which an increasing number would begin to turn. It did not address the question of what was to be done in the event that the British interfered with constructive swadeshi efforts. Above all, it failed to enthuse the peasantry or bridge the class divide because it seemed to amount to little more than top-down humanitarianism (expressed, fictionally, in the limitations of Nikhil as a progressive force) and left the structure of agrarian relations intact.<sup>58</sup>

Tagore's break with the Swadeshi movement was variously interpreted as capriciousness, irresponsibility and – most damningly – cowardice. But he sought to justify his attention to the mechanisms of Swadeshi mobilisation with a two-fold argument. First, he saw British imperialism as symptomatic of a deeper malaise in the body politic. As he wrote in the essay 'Ends and Means':

Many of us have the illusion that our subjection is not like a headache, an ailment pestering us from within, but like a load on the head, pressing down on us from without in the shape of the British Government; and that relief will be ours as soon as we can shake off that load by some means or other. Well, the matter is not so simple as all that. The British Government is not the cause of our subjection; it is merely a symptom of a deeper subjection on our part.<sup>59</sup>

The implication seems to have been that the hostile outside was a consequence of disunity and ineffectuality on the inside. Tagore's notion of constructive swadeshi, for all its blind spots, was not an evasion of politics. He saw it as a more radical way of addressing the root causes of imperial subjugation.

Tagore had a second concern with the particular modes of constructing subjectivity that Swadeshi activists were employing. He was opposed to the very idea of constructing the self

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<sup>57</sup> Dutta & Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 146.

<sup>58</sup> Sarkar, *Swadeshi Movement in Bengal*, 91.

<sup>59</sup> Cited from Dutta & Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 152.

in opposition to an other because of what he saw as the fratricidal implications of such a move:

Some of us are reported to be of the opinion that it is mass animosity against the British that will unify India...so this anti-British animus, they say, must be our chief weapon...If that is true, then once the cause of the animosity is gone, in other words when the British leave this country, that artificial bond of unity will snap in a moment. Where, then, shall we find a second target for animosity? We shall not need to travel far. We shall find it here, in our country, where we shall mangle each other in mutual antagonism, a thirst for each other's blood.<sup>60</sup>

Tagore's concern was that the reproduction of the self would always need an other, and that with the disappearance of the hostile external opponent, such others would be discovered *within* the nation, thus sowing the seeds of its eventual destruction. This was a much more profound critique of nationalism – one that he began to articulate in essays published after his break with the Swadeshi movement, developed in *The Home and the World*, but presented in its most stark and uncompromising form in a series of lectures on nationalism delivered in Japan and the United States in 1916-17.

#### 4.1.3 *Against nationalism*

Nationalism, for Tagore, was an abstraction that enabled the perpetration of the grossest cruelties. He likened it to a giant machine that transformed human beings into mere cogs who, absolved of personal responsibility, could justify their every action in the name of the abstract imagined whole. In his view, nationalism had become 'one of the most powerful anaesthetics that man has invented. Under the influence of its fumes the whole people can carry out its systematic programme of the most virulent self-seeking without being in the least aware of its moral perversion.'<sup>61</sup> Tagore saw two sorts of pernicious consequences stemming from nationalism. First, the construction of national identity relied upon a host of techniques that fostered ill will *between* nations: 'by the manufacture of half-truths and untruths in history, by persistent misrepresentation of other races and the culture of unfavourable sentiments towards them, by setting up memorials of events, very often false, which for the sake of humanity should be speedily forgotten, thus continually brewing evil menace towards neighbours and nations other than their own'.<sup>62</sup> Second, nation-building entailed the curtailment of individual freedom *within* the nation. In Japan Tagore perceived

...the voluntary submission of the whole people to the trimming of their minds and clipping of their freedom by their government, which through various educational

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Tagore, *Nationalism*, 42.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., 79.

agencies regulates their thoughts, manufactures their feelings, becomes suspiciously watchful when they show signs of inclining toward the spiritual, leading them through a narrow path not toward what is true but what is necessary for the complete welding of them into one uniform mass according to its own recipe. The people accept this all-pervading mental slavery with cheerfulness and pride because of their nervous desire to turn themselves into a machine of power, called the Nation, and emulate other machines in their collective worldliness.<sup>63</sup>

Tagore felt no need to temper the acerbity of his critique in deference to the sensitivities of his Japanese audiences. He expressed a sincere admiration for early Japanese attempts to integrate tradition with modernity, but criticized Japan's increasing militarism and imperialism and suggested that they were inherent in nationalism itself. And yet, he appreciated the international forces that had encouraged the growth of a virulent nationalism in Japan:

Japan had all her wealth of humanity, her harmony of heroism and beauty, her depth of self-control and richness of self-expression; yet the Western nations felt no respect for her till she proved that the bloodhounds of Satan are not only bred in the kennels of Europe but can also be domesticated in Japan and fed with man's miseries. They admit Japan's equality with themselves, only when they know that Japan also possesses the key to open the floodgates of hell-fire upon the fair earth whenever she chooses, and can dance, in their own measure, the devil dance of pillage, murder and ravishment of innocent women, while the world goes to ruin.<sup>64</sup>

Tagore refers here to Japan's 'admission' into International Society following its defeat of Russia in the war of 1905. This is an eloquent and little-known critique of the culpability of International Society in the spread of militaristic nationalism, as a result of the implicit terms on which it recognises and admits new members. The International Society literature would have us believe – and for the most part it is correct – that anti-colonial nationalists were eager to accept the norms of Westphalian Society in order to take their place as full members of that Society. Tagore stands apart in contesting the very basis of such membership, asking why communities must express their political subjectivity in the form of nationhood in order to be recognised as members of International Society. He recognises that non-Western nationalism is largely a response to Western imperialism – but he is uncompromisingly critical of even defensive nationalism:

I know what your advice will be. You will say, form yourselves into a nation, and resist this encroachment of the Nation... Why should this be a necessity? I could well believe you if you had said, Be more good, more just, more true in your relation to man, control your greed, make your life wholesome in its simplicity and let your consciousness of the divine in humanity be more perfect in its expression. But must you say that it is not the soul, but the machine, which is of the utmost value to ourselves, and that man's salvation depends upon his disciplining himself into a

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<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., 83.

perfection of the dead rhythm of wheels and counterwheels? That machine must be pitted against machine, and nation against nation, in an endless bullfight of politics?<sup>65</sup>

It was probably on account of such views that Tagore was seen as naïve, impractical and utopian (in the pejorative sense). (As he remarked on the Japanese reaction to his lectures, ‘Some of the newspapers praised my utterances for their poetical qualities, while adding with a leer that it was the poetry of a defeated people.’<sup>66</sup>) By this time, Tagore had written critically about both imperialism and nationalism, but his constructive agenda – far from offering alternative ways of organising political power – seemed to retreat into a sort of anti-politics (or, as critics have pointed out, into the politics of humanitarianism). Dutta & Robinson note frequently in their biography of Tagore that politics did not fundamentally interest him and that education and social reform were always of much greater concern.<sup>67</sup> This is true, but Tagore saw the political and the socio-cultural as inextricably linked: specifically, he saw India’s political subjection to a hostile outside presence as symptomatic of deeper problems on the inside.

The lectures on nationalism conclude with an indictment of Indian nationalists for failing to recognise ‘the patent fact that there were causes in our social organisation which made the Indian incapable of coping with the alien’.<sup>68</sup> Tagore argued that without addressing these social weaknesses – ‘the domination in India of the caste system, and the blind and lazy habit of relying upon the authority of traditions that are incongruous anachronisms in the present age’ – independence from Britain would simply render India vulnerable to other imperialists.<sup>69</sup> He appeared to see politics as a superstructural realm resting on a social base. In his view, lasting political change could only be accomplished by transforming relations within that social base. In a late essay he would write:

...my conviction [is] that politics is but a part of the social system – as is borne out by the history of every country. To be enamoured of some political system apart from its social foundation, will not do. Triumphal structures of different shapes and sizes raise their heads on the other side of the seas. We may be sure that none of them are built on foundations of sand. And when we set to work to imitate any super-structure that has

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 38. The lectures were published by Macmillan in 1917, the year after they were delivered in Japan and the US.

<sup>67</sup> Dutta & Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 123, 145, 299. I am reminded of Waiyaki, the protagonist of Kenyan novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o’s *The River Between*, who, in trying to mediate between colonialist and nativist influences, hesitates to enter politics but throws himself into education.

<sup>68</sup> Tagore, *Nationalism*, 113.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

caught our fancy, we should not forget the necessity of fitting it to some adequate foundation in the depths of our own social mentality.<sup>70</sup>

One of the key questions I ask in respect of the four thinkers studied in Part II of the thesis concerns the method by which they achieve simultaneity in their critique of the hostile outside and inside. Tagore's critique of the inside – the call for fundamental social transformation – was not distinct from the critique of the outside: rather, he saw it as a more radical method of eliminating the hostile external (imperial) presence. For Tagore, an obsession with the (external) political without attention to the (internal) social promised to yield only ephemeral results. His concern with education and social reform was not an escape from politics, but a way of building the social foundations of a more emancipatory political system.

In his preoccupation with social transformation, Tagore shared a great deal with Gandhi, whose public concerns encompassed virtually every aspect of life from nutrition, sanitation and sexuality to ecology, development and philosophy. Gandhi was a strong proponent of social change in many respects, but, as a master tactician of mass mobilisation, he was more willing to exploit existing prejudices and popular beliefs and attitudes to achieve his goals. Tagore was disturbed by the streak of irrationalism in Gandhian thought and the deployment of idols and symbols, which, he argued, infantilised the nation and exacerbated deep-rooted social problems such as illiteracy and superstition. He was horrified by Gandhi's characterisation of the 1934 Bihar earthquake as divine retribution for the practice of untouchability, although he shared Gandhi's goal of eradicating that egregious social institution. Gandhi precipitated another disagreement by attempting to persuade people to boycott and burn foreign cloth by describing it as 'impure'. Ever the rationalist, Tagore objected that

The question of using or refusing cloth of a particular manufacture belongs mainly to economic science. The discussion of the matter by our countrymen should have been in the language of economics. If the country has really come to such a habit of mind that precise thinking has become impossible for it, then *our very first fight should be against such a fatal habit, to the temporary exclusion of all else if need be*. Such a habit would clearly be the original sin from which all our ills are flowing. But far from this, we take the course of confirming ourselves in it by relying on the magical formula that foreign cloth is 'impure'. Thus economics is bundled out and a fictitious moral dictum dragged into its place.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Congress', *Modern Review* (1939), reprinted in *The Mahatma and the Poet: Letters and Debates Between Gandhi and Tagore 1915-1941* (hereafter *TMATP*), ed. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1999), 174.

<sup>71</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Call of Truth', *Modern Review* (1921), reprinted in *TMATP*, 83, emphasis mine.

But it was Gandhi's exhortation to his followers to spend a certain amount of time every day spinning khadi (hand-spun cloth) on a charkha (spinning wheel) that most roused Tagore's ire. Tagore questioned the strategic rationale underlying this gesture, asking rhetorically and provocatively whether Indians could win their independence 'by simply twirling away with their hands'. He argued that the root causes of poverty were 'complexly ramified' and could hardly be alleviated by spinning.<sup>72</sup> For Gandhi, the rationale for spinning was never merely economic. It was intended to draw into the production process, however symbolically, those whom he saw as living parasitically off the poor and weak. Spinning en masse was intended to promote dignity of labour and solidarity.<sup>73</sup> It was a common project through which the emerging nation could more concretely imagine itself. As Gandhi wrote, it was intended to show that 'there is a sameness, identity, or oneness behind the multiplicity and variety'.<sup>74</sup>

Yet this drive for unity and homogeneity militated against Tagore's creative individualist instincts. For Tagore, swaraj for the nation was meaningless if it did not allow for swaraj of the individual mind. In the course of his highly public debate with Gandhi in 1925 he would declare, somewhat heretically, 'If in any country we find no symptom of...rebellion, if we find its people submissively or contentedly prone on the dust, in dumb terror of some master's bludgeon, or blind acceptance of some guru's injunction, then indeed should we know that for such a country, *in extremis*, it is high time to mourn' – before going on to note that 'in our country, this ominous process of being levelled down into sameness has long been at work'.<sup>75</sup> He considered it his duty to 'put up a valiant fight against this terrible habit of blindly obeying orders'.<sup>76</sup> The Gandhian injunction to spin struck a particularly raw nerve in Tagore, because it did not foster critical reflection ('it may produce enormous quantity of yarn, but the blind suppression of intellect which guards our poverty in its dark dungeon will remain inviolate'<sup>77</sup>) and because of its reactionary, anti-modernist thrust ('by turning its wheel man merely becomes an appendage of the charkha...he but does himself what a machine might have done: he converts his living energy into a dead turning movement'<sup>78</sup>).

Given Tagore's canonical status today, particularly in Bengal, it is easy to forget what an iconoclastic figure he cut in his own time. He was trenchant in his criticism of Gandhi at a time when the latter had largely come to be accepted as the unquestioned leader of the

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<sup>72</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Cult of the Charkha', *Modern Review* (1925), reprinted in *TMATP*, 102, 104, 105, 109.

<sup>73</sup> Mohandas Gandhi, 'The Great Sentinel', *Young India* (1921), reprinted in *TMATP*, 87-92.

<sup>74</sup> Mohandas Gandhi, 'The Poet and the charkha', *Young India* (1925), reprinted in *TMATP*, 124.

<sup>75</sup> Tagore, 'The Cult of the Charkha', 100.

<sup>76</sup> Tagore, 'The Call of Truth', 84.

<sup>77</sup> Tagore, 'The Cult of the Charkha', 111.

<sup>78</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, 'Striving for Swaraj', *Modern Review* (1925), reprinted in *TMATP*, 121.

nationalist movement. It is to the credit of both men that they were able to disagree so strongly while maintaining a deep affection and respect for one another – it was Tagore who began calling Gandhi ‘Mahatma’ (great soul), and Gandhi who bestowed the honorific ‘Gurudev’ (divine teacher) on Tagore. And it is a testament to the elevated nature of the debate that, despite their differences, they remained firmly committed to non-violence. Yet there are moments in the argument where Gandhi emerges in a less flattering light, stooping to the use of innuendo and vaguely alluding to the possibility that Tagore’s dissent may have stemmed from jealousy.<sup>79</sup> Elsewhere, Gandhi tries to undermine the force of Tagore’s argument by portraying him as an idealistic poet: ‘true to his poetical instinct the Poet lives for the morrow and would have us do likewise’, whereas he – Gandhi – had offered the ‘spinning wheel as an indispensable sacrament for the India of today’.<sup>80</sup> (The sentiment is uncannily similar to Davin’s dismissal of Dedalus: ‘Ireland first, Stevie. You can be a poet or a mystic after.’<sup>81</sup>) In contrast, Tagore emerges as the more generous of the two, readily conceding his own deficiencies and acknowledging Gandhi’s leadership. As he would write towards the end of his life:

I should confess that I do not always see eye to eye with Mahatmaji, by which I mean that had I been endowed with his force of character, my scheme of work would have been different. What that scheme is, I have indicated in some of my previous writings. But though I may have the imagination to conceive, I have not the power to carry out. Only a few men in the world have this power. And since our country has had the good fortune of giving birth to such a man, the way should be kept clear for his progress – I certainly would never think of impeding it.<sup>82</sup>

Tagore’s critique of nationalism incurred charges of disloyalty from many, and even an attempt on his life by extremist Indian nationalists when he visited the US in 1916.<sup>83</sup> Yet he was well positioned to critique nationalism and Gandhian hegemony in particular, because his anti-imperialism could not, credibly, be doubted. Despite his disillusionment with the Swadeshi movement and his increasingly acerbic critique of nationalism, there were several key moments when his voice continued to lead the anti-imperialist chorus. His call for the release of the Irish theosophist Annie Besant, who had been interned by the British authorities in 1917 as a result of her demand for Home Rule in India, was one of these. But his most celebrated anti-imperialist gesture was his resignation of his knighthood in protest against the Jallianwala Bagh massacre of 1919<sup>84</sup> – an event that he described as ‘without parallel in the

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<sup>79</sup> For a discussion of this, see Dutta & Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 263-65.

<sup>80</sup> Gandhi, ‘The Great Sentinel’, 91-2.

<sup>81</sup> James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (London: Penguin, 1965), 221.

<sup>82</sup> Tagore, ‘The Congress’, 173.

<sup>83</sup> Dutta & Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 204-5.

<sup>84</sup> This refers to the events of 13 April 1919 in Amritsar (Punjab), where a crowd had gathered peacefully in a walled garden called Jallianwala Bagh on the occasion of Baisakhi (Punjabi new year).

history of civilised governments'.<sup>85</sup> His criticisms of British rule grew even sharper towards the end of his life, when he would bemoan 'the immense deadweight of British rule' and note bitterly that 'all that the so-called civilised rule has given us is 'law and order' and the instruments of a police state. The spirit of liberty has yielded to the display of barefaced might.'<sup>86</sup> Yet, Tagore arrived at these positions via a complex and circuitous route. His attitude towards imperialism was never simple – he saw the British presence in India as 'providential' in some respects, and even as his critique of imperialism sharpened, he always sought to differentiate between the politically predatory and the culturally enriching consequences of the imperial encounter. Tagore was also firmly rooted in the language and culture of Bengal – he was, even in his time, a towering presence in the Bengali literary canon. And he was a strong proponent of education in the vernacular and critical of the increasing dominance of English.

The key point is that neither anti-imperialism nor cultural rootedness made him a nationalist. I have already addressed the first half of this apparent paradox: while opposing imperialism, Tagore was critical of hegemonic nationalism on account of its inherently filicidal character and its tendency to focus on political superstructures to the neglect of social foundations. In the following section, I examine the cultural dimension of this apparent puzzle, by considering how Tagore made a passionate case for a cosmopolitan worldview while remaining firmly anchored in the cultural milieu of Bengal.

#### 4.1.4 *The East-West encounter*

When Rudyard Kipling famously wrote 'East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet', Tagore replied: 'It is true that they are not yet showing any signs of meeting. But the reason is because the West has not sent out its humanity to meet the man in the East, but only its machine...Earnestly I ask the poet of the western world to realise and sing to you with all the great power of music which he has, that the East and the West are ever in search of each other, and that they must meet not merely in the fullness of physical strength, but in

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The gathering violated the terms of martial law recently imposed in Punjab, which prohibited large congregations. Brigadier General Reginald Dyer ordered his soldiers to open fire on the crowd without giving them a chance to disperse. The unavailability of exits seems to have exacerbated the extraordinarily high, and still inconclusive, casualty rate. The event was widely condemned – even in Britain, where politicians sought to cast it, however, as an event of exceptional and uncharacteristic brutality. In India, it was a catalyst for Gandhi's Non-Cooperation Movement launched in 1920.

<sup>85</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, Letter to Lord Chelmsford (Viceroy of India), 30 May 1919, reprinted in *TMATP*, 187.

<sup>86</sup> Tagore, 'Crisis in Civilisation' (1941), in *TUM*, 356.

the fullness of truth...'<sup>87</sup> This keenness for a meeting of East and West was born of the conviction that all cultures had something to contribute to a fulfilling human life. 'We have to consider that the West is necessary to the East', he wrote; 'we are complementary to each other because of our different outlooks upon life which have given us different aspects of truth.'<sup>88</sup> And elsewhere in a very similar vein, 'the mind of Man in the East and West...is ever approaching Truth in her different aspects from different angles of vision'.<sup>89</sup> This cross-cultural vision found its most concrete expression in Visva-Bharati, the alternative university that Tagore founded at Shantiniketan, envisaged as a world centre for the study of the humanities bringing together Western and Asian scholars.

Tagore's call for inter-cultural conversation was historically grounded in his reading of the essential hybridity of Indian identity. As he saw it,

...the history of India does not belong to one particular race but to a process of creation to which various races of the world contributed – the Dravidians and the Aryans, the ancient Greeks and the Persians, the Mohammedans of the West and those of central Asia. Now at last has come the turn of the English to become true to this history and bring to it the tribute of their life, and we neither have the right nor the power to exclude this people from the building of the destiny of India.<sup>90</sup>

Tagore sees the English presence in India as the latest in a long series of cross-cultural encounters that have created what we have come to think of as 'Indian' culture. The implicit suggestion is that British imperialism was not a dramatic rupture with the previous history of the subcontinent.<sup>91</sup> Yet in other contexts, Tagore *does* regard it as a rupture. In the same essay, he argues that

Before the Nation came to rule over us we had other governments which were foreign, and these, like all governments, had some element of the machine in them. But the difference between them and the government by the Nation is like the difference between the hand-loom and the power-loom. In the products of the hand-loom the magic of man's living fingers finds its expression, and its hum harmonises with the music of life. But the power loom is relentlessly lifeless and accurate and monotonous in its production.<sup>92</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, 'East and West' (1922), in *Rabindranath Tagore: An Anthology*, eds. Krishna Dutta & Andrew Robinson (London: Picador, 1997), 212-3.

<sup>88</sup> Tagore, *Nationalism*, 14.

<sup>89</sup> Tagore's reflection on non-cooperation and cooperation, *Modern Review* (1921), reprinted in *TMATP*, 61.

<sup>90</sup> Tagore, *Nationalism*, 14.

<sup>91</sup> The issue continues to resonate in current debates over imperial history. Historians such as Niall Ferguson – accused of being an imperial apologist – are keen to point out that British imperialism was not a dramatic rupture (the normative sub-text here is that there is no basis for judging Western imperialism differently from non-Western imperialism); the anti-imperialists are of course keener to highlight rupture (see Priyamvada Gopal, 'The story peddled by imperial apologists is a poisonous fairytale', *Guardian*, 28 June 2006).

<sup>92</sup> Tagore, *Nationalism*, 18.

Tagore seems to be arguing that British imperialism *was* different in the precision and efficiency of its penetration into Indian society. To use the terms of James Scott's argument, it 'saw' much more like a modern state than its Mughal and other imperial predecessors.<sup>93</sup> But it was no more foreign to the subcontinent, and it carried within it the same potential for cultural ferment. There is a constant effort in Tagore's writings to disentangle the predatory effects of Western imperialism from its immanent promise of cultural enrichment.<sup>94</sup> He is referring to the latter when he insists that 'we must recognise that it is providential that the West has come to India', continuing: 'I am not for thrusting off Western civilisation and becoming segregated in our independence. Let us have a deep association. If Providence wants England to be the channel of that communication, of that deeper association, I am willing to accept it with all humility.'<sup>95</sup>

Tagore considers this 'deep association' potentially revitalising for Indian culture, which he sees as rigid and unreflective. 'The dynamism of Europe made a vigorous assault on our stagnant minds – it acted like the torrents of rain that strike into the dry under-earth, give it vital stirrings and bring forth new life.'<sup>96</sup> Elsewhere he advances this idea in still more provocative terms, appearing to almost welcome foreign domination because it imposes the imperative of regeneration:

Foreign domination...has manifested itself as a political symptom of our social disease, and at present it has become necessary to us for effecting the dispersal of all internal obstructive agencies. For now we have come under the domination not of a dead system, but of a living power, which, while holding us under subjection, cannot fail to impart to us some of its own life. This vivifying warmth from outside is gradually making us conscious of our own vitality and the newly awakening life is making its way slowly, but surely, even through the barriers of caste.<sup>97</sup>

This is oddly reminiscent of Marx's welcoming of British imperialism in India as the necessary catalyst for the replacement of the 'Asiatic' mode of production with industrial capitalism, thereby hastening the eventual realisation of communism.<sup>98</sup> As always, however, note Tagore's relatively greater concern with divisions of caste than class. Note also how the Western contribution to Indian regeneration is not seen purely – or even mainly – in

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<sup>93</sup> See section 3.3.2.

<sup>94</sup> Tagore, *Nationalism*, 87: 'while trying to free our minds from the arrogant claims of Europe and to help ourselves out of the quicksand of our infatuation, we may go to the other extreme and blind ourselves with a wholesale suspicion of the West.'

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>96</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Changing Age' (1933), in *TUM*, 342.

<sup>97</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Problem of India' (1909), in *Rabindranath Tagore*, eds. Dutta & Robinson, 239.

<sup>98</sup> Karl Marx, 'The British Rule in India', *New York Daily Tribune*, 25 June 1853.

materialist terms. Indeed Tagore radically disrupts the split consciousness that Partha Chatterjee argues was characteristic of the anti-colonial nationalist mindset (a wholesale, unreflective, frantic mimicry of the West in the sphere of the ‘material’ – where it was thought to have demonstrated its superiority – and a turn towards traditionalism, nativism, even chauvinism in the sphere of the ‘spiritual’ – where the East was thought to be more advanced).<sup>99</sup> If Chatterjee is right about the depth and pervasiveness of this split consciousness, then we get a sense of how profoundly Tagore went against the grain from the following passage:

It would be altogether unjust, both to us and to Europe, to say that she has fascinated the modern Eastern mind by the mere exhibition of her power. Through the smoke of cannons and dust of markets the light of her moral nature has shone bright, and she has brought to us the ideal of ethical freedom, whose foundation lies deeper than social conventions and whose province of activity is worldwide. The East has instinctively felt, even through her aversion, that she has a great deal to learn from Europe, not merely about the materials of power, but about its inner source, which is of mind and of the moral nature of man. Europe has been teaching us the higher obligations of public good above those of the family and the clan, and the sacredness of law, which makes society independent of individual caprice, secures for it continuity of progress, and guarantees justice to all men of all positions in life. Above all things Europe has held high before our minds the banner of liberty, through centuries of martyrdom and achievement, - liberty of conscience, liberty of thought and action, liberty in the ideals of art and literature.<sup>100</sup>

Given the extent to which British imperialism justified itself as a civilising mission, Tagore’s fine distinctions between predatory imperialism and culturally enriching contact may have been lost on his audiences. Certainly, nationalist agitators – insistent on the boycott of Western educational institutions – could not see how it was possible to have one without the other and therefore rejected both. This stance precipitated yet another confrontation with Gandhi, with Tagore criticising the Non-Cooperation movement’s negative, rejectionist attitude towards Western learning.<sup>101</sup> Gandhi’s celebrated observation – ‘I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible. But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any’ – is often cited as evidence of his cosmopolitanism. Yet as Ramachandra Guha reminds us, few know that these words ‘were squeezed out of a reluctant Mahatma by Rabindranath Tagore’.<sup>102</sup> Gandhi had begun the argument as a cultural nationalist, describing Tilak and Raja Rammohun Roy (both, by then, nationalist icons) as tainted by ‘the contagion of English learning’ and as having no hold on the people, in comparison with medieval Indian

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<sup>99</sup> Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World*, 50-51; Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments*, 6, 119-20. See section 3.3.3.

<sup>100</sup> Tagore, *Nationalism*, 89.

<sup>101</sup> See Tagore’s reflection on non-cooperation and cooperation; Mohandas Gandhi, ‘The Poet’s Anxiety’, *Young India* (1921); Gandhi, ‘The Poet and the charkha’; Mohandas Gandhi, ‘The Poet and the wheel’, *Young India* (1926); all reprinted in *TMATP*.

<sup>102</sup> Ramachandra Guha, ‘The independent journal of opinion’, *Seminar* 481 (1999).

philosophers.<sup>103</sup> That he eventually acknowledged the value of remaining open to external influences was a measure of Tagore's persuasiveness.

Tagore was not so naïve as to be blind to the inegalitarianism and unevenness of cultural interaction. He deplored the unequal terms of engagement on which the West was interacting with India and the rest of the world – for him it was the West's 'one-sided dominance which is galling'.<sup>104</sup> The East had achievements of its own, and it was his anguished desire that 'someone must show the East to the West, and convince the West that the East has her contribution to make to the history of civilisation'.<sup>105</sup> Yet this was difficult because 'the West comes to us, not with the imagination and sympathy that create and unite, but with a shock of passion – passion for power and wealth'.<sup>106</sup>

There was one crucial qualification to Tagore's impassioned plea for a cosmopolitan worldview, without which it is impossible to understand how he combined cosmopolitanism with cultural rootedness. In an important essay setting out his views on education, he noted that

...before we are in a position to face other world cultures, or cooperate with them, we must build up our own by the synthesis of the diverse elements that have come to India. When we take our stand at such a centre and turn towards the West, our gaze shall no longer be timid and dazed, our heads shall remain erect. For, we shall then be able to look at truth from our own vantage ground and open out a new vista of thought before the grateful world.<sup>107</sup>

Tagore argues that without an intimate knowledge of, and pride in, their roots, Indians would lack the self-confidence to engage in cross-cultural conversation and would be unable to bring anything distinctive to such a conversation. Yet note, crucially, how even building up 'our own' is itself a process of synthesis of diverse elements, many of which came to India from outside. Tagore is trying to hold two contradictory tendencies – openness and rootedness – in tension, without privileging either, making it difficult to classify him as a cosmopolitan or a nationalist. 'When we have the intellectual capital of our own', he says, 'the commerce of thought with the outer world becomes natural and fully profitable. But to say that such commerce is inherently wrong, is to encourage the worst form of provincialism, productive of nothing but intellectual indigence.'<sup>108</sup> In practical terms, what I have called 'rootedness' manifested itself in Tagore's strong commitment to the revival of the Bengali language and to

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<sup>103</sup> Cited from Dutta & Robinson, *Rabindranath Tagore*, 264.

<sup>104</sup> Tagore, *Nationalism*, 14.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, 109.

<sup>106</sup> Tagore, 'East and West', in *Rabindranath Tagore*, eds. Dutta & Robinson, 206.

<sup>107</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Centre of Indian Culture' (1919), in *TUM*, 220.

<sup>108</sup> Tagore's reflection on non-cooperation and cooperation, 62.

vernacular education. He believed that education could be meaningful only if it reflected life experience, best achieved through the medium of the student's native language.<sup>109</sup> He worried that the use of English would lead Indians to turn exclusively towards the West for inspiration, 'making the moving stream we have stagnant and shallow'.<sup>110</sup>

The tension between openness and rootedness finds expression in a series of elegant metaphors:

But now we are overtaken by the outside world, our seclusion is lost forever. Yet this we must not regret as a plant should never regret when the obscurity of its seed-time is broken...we must not, in foolish pride, still keep ourselves fast within the shell of the seed and the crust of the earth which protected and nourished our ideals; for these, the shell and the crust, were meant to be broken, so that life may spring up in all its vigour and beauty, bringing its offerings to the world in open light.<sup>111</sup>

The butterfly will have to be persuaded that the freedom of the sky is of higher value than the shelter of the cocoon.<sup>112</sup>

The nursery of the infant should be secluded, its cradle safe. But the same seclusion, if continued after the infant has grown up, makes it weak in body and mind.<sup>113</sup>

Tagore thinks that seeds, cocoons and cradles are necessary – for a time – to provide the space within which to build the intellectual capital that makes inter-cultural exchange mutually profitable. He is not a cultural protectionist, for he remarks unsentimentally that when the artificial fences separating cultures are broken down 'only that will survive which is basically consistent with the universal',<sup>114</sup> and later, that cultures 'must pass the test of the world-market, if their maximum value is to be obtained'.<sup>115</sup> Perhaps the argument is analogous to infant-industry protection: if seeds, cocoons and cradles are seen as metaphors for nationalist identity-consolidation, Tagore insinuates that such nurturing is a necessary, but necessarily temporary, stage.

In a characteristically insightful essay paying tribute to Tagore's thought, Isaiah Berlin helps us appreciate this tension between openness and rootedness. Berlin sees Tagore as an internationalist, but as one who understood the 'eternally valid element in nationalism' and reacted against the shallow internationalism of the time. As Berlin describes it,

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<sup>109</sup> Rabindranath Tagore, 'The Vicissitudes of Education' (1892), in *TUM*.

<sup>110</sup> Tagore, 'The Centre of Indian Culture', 216.

<sup>111</sup> Tagore, *Nationalism*, 67.

<sup>112</sup> Tagore's reflection on non-cooperation and cooperation, 55.

<sup>113</sup> Tagore, 'The Centre of Indian Culture', 220.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 219.

<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*, 220.

Races, communities, nations were constantly urged to abolish their frontiers, destroy their distinctive attributes, cease from mutual strife, and combine into one great universal society. This was well enough as an ultimate ideal: it would fit a world where peoples were of approximately equal strength and status; but so long as vast inequalities existed, these sermons addressed to the weak – who are still seeking recognition, or even elementary justice, or the means of survival – had they been listened to, would merely (like the doctrines of free trade and disarmament) have achieved for them the unity which the kid achieved with the tiger when it was swallowed by it. Unity must be unity of equals, or at least of the not too unequal<sup>116</sup> ... Those who are scattered, weak, humiliated, oppressed must first be collected, strengthened, liberated, given opportunity to grow and develop at least to some degree by their own natural resources, on their own soil, in their own languages, with unborrowed memories, and not wholly in perpetual debt, cultural or economic, to some outside benefactor.<sup>117</sup>

Through his self-evident pride in, and enormous contribution to, the language and culture of Bengal, his passionate commitment to social reform and education and his increasing opposition to British imperialism, Tagore – like the nationalists –endeavoured to restore the self-respect of a colonised and humiliated people. But he did so in a fundamentally different way, focusing on social foundations rather than political superstructures, acutely conscious of the fine line between pride in the self and contempt of the other, and warning of the ease with which it might be crossed. It is only through an appreciation of this paradoxical agenda that we might begin to comprehend how independent India and Bangladesh could choose two songs written by this fierce critic of nationalism as their national anthems.

## 4.2 Edward Said

Stephen Dedalus is a significant presence in Edward Said's 1993 Reith Lectures, which comprise what is perhaps his most purposeful analysis of the intellectual vocation. Said sees the role of the intellectual first described in literature in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century novels such as Turgenev's *Fathers and Sons*, Flaubert's *Sentimental Education* and Joyce's *Portrait* – in all of which 'the representation of social reality is profoundly influenced, even decisively changed by the sudden appearance of a new actor, the modern young intellectual'.<sup>118</sup> He quotes approvingly Seamus Deane's view of *Portrait* as 'the first novel in the English language in which a passion for thinking is fully presented'.<sup>119</sup> Said sees Dedalus as an obstinate, contrary, even pompous, figure, but is clearly moved by the affirmation of

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<sup>116</sup> This is a virtual echo of Tagore, 'Hindu University', 143-4: 'No mind that is alive can accept as greatness the largeness obtained through self-obliteration. Even a small entity, as soon as it gets to be aware of its true individuality, tries hard to preserve itself intact – such is the law of life. In fact, it would rather live in its smallness than die in largeness... Union in poverty, union in subjection, union in compulsion – all these are no more than patched-up unions.'

<sup>117</sup> Isaiah Berlin, 'Rabindranath Tagore and the Consciousness of Nationality', in *The Sense of Reality: Studies in Ideas and their History*, ed. Henry Hardy (London: Pimlico, 1997), 264.

<sup>118</sup> Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 11.

<sup>119</sup> *Ibid.*, 13.

intellectual freedom that is his credo. Dedalus shows us what an intellectual life might look like

...beset with numerous difficulties and temptations..., not [...] a fixed task to be learned once and for all from a how-to-do-it manual, but [...] a concrete experience constantly threatened by modern life itself...Intellectual representations are the *activity itself*, dependent on a kind of consciousness that is sceptical, engaged, unremittingly devoted to rational investigation and moral judgment; and this puts the individual on record and on the line.<sup>120</sup>

But it is not simply an affinity of temperament that draws Said to Dedalus. It is easy *not* to look beyond Dedalus' bitterness about, and distance from, Irish nationalist politics – much more intriguing and complicated to read Dedalus, despite this, as an 'Irish nationalist and intellectual' as Said has done elsewhere.<sup>121</sup> I believe that Said reads Dedalus in this fashion because he is himself a nationalist of a similarly ironic and sceptical persuasion, and because this was the only kind of nationalist he thought it justifiable to be.

The central point of comparison that I pursue in this chapter is that Said, like Tagore, was an active partisan in a national movement at the same time that he was a fierce critic of nationalism per se and *his* national movement in particular. Like Tagore, his concern with the multiplicity of threats to freedom and self-determination emanating from both within and outside the political community that he helped to imagine led him to a simultaneous critique of both the hostile outside (Zionism and Israeli Occupation) and inside (authoritarianism, corruption and incompetence within the Palestinian national movement). As in my analysis of Tagore, I am interested in understanding how Said achieves this simultaneity. This exercise in comparative political theory initially suggested itself by Said's affiliation of himself with a small but significant group of nationalists (within whose ranks he includes Tagore<sup>122</sup>), whom he sees as paradoxical because of their trenchant critiques of nationalism alongside a wholehearted support to particular national movements. Yet there is no evidence of any deep engagement with Tagore (in contrast to, say, Fanon) in Said's writing, except for occasional references to the 1917 lectures on nationalism.<sup>123</sup> So it is possible that Said did not appreciate how much he shared with Tagore.

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<sup>120</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>121</sup> Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), 228.

<sup>122</sup> Other names most frequently mentioned in this group are C. L. R. James, Pablo Neruda, Aimé Césaire, Frantz Fanon and Amílcar Cabral.

<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 264; Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 31; Edward Said, 'Nationalism, Human Rights, and Interpretation', in *Reflections on Exile and Other Literary and Cultural Essays* (London: Granta, 2001), 426; Edward Said, 'Third World Intellectuals and Metropolitan Culture', *Raritan* 9, no. 3 (1990): 27.

Nonetheless, comparison between the two is challenging because of the obvious differences of geographical and temporal location. Said was born only six years before Tagore died in 1941 (the same year, incidentally, as Joyce). One of the many ironies of Edward Said's life (1935 – 2003) is that while he came of age in a world that was rapidly beginning to decolonise and while his groundbreaking *Orientalism* virtually inaugurated the field of *postcolonial studies*,<sup>124</sup> his native Palestine would remain under the quasi-colonial authority of the state of Israel even at the time of his death. This disjuncture between global postcoloniality and the anachronistic coloniality of occupied Palestine is key to understanding the tensions and paradoxes that animate his oeuvre.

Coming to terms with that oeuvre entails pleasures and challenges similar to those encountered with the Tagore archive. Said's enormously prolific output spanned a bewildering array of academic specialisations and generated an abundance of commentary and scholarship *on* him. Again, my focus has had to be highly selective. I am interested in Said's views on nationalism and in how these views square with the rest of his work. This restrictive focus does not necessarily make my task easier. Said's most revealing arguments are not gathered together neatly in one or a few canonical texts, but scattered in numerous essays, articles and interviews on subjects as wide-ranging as musical style, literary theory and Middle Eastern politics. I make no claim to having assimilated everything he wrote, but aim instead to foreground aspects of his thinking on identity, resistance and nationalism that seem most radically at odds with one another, before considering how he attempts to work through these contradictions.

One critic who has taken Said to task for allegedly *not* recognising these contradictions is the Marxist literary theorist Aijaz Ahmad. In the course of a fierce and sweeping polemic against a vast swathe of Said's work, Ahmad accuses him of a great many inconsistencies, vacillations and conservative positions that are too numerous to detail here. Of particular interest to me, however, is Ahmad's reading of Said's position on nationalism, which he describes in the following terms:

In the years immediately following the publication of *Orientalism*, Said's position was indistinguishable from straightforward Third-Worldist cultural nationalisms, and what we used to get was an unselfcritical narrative of European guilt, non-European innocence. This has shifted dramatically, beginning in about 1984 and growing increasingly more strident in rejecting nationalism, national boundaries, nations as such, so that one now has reason to be equally alarmed by the extremity of this opposite stance. Characteristically, though, the most sweeping statements about 'nation' and 'state' as 'coercive identities' are frequently delivered alongside

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<sup>124</sup> Leela Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), 64; Young, *Postcolonialism*, 384.

resounding affirmations of national liberation, of the Palestinian *intifada* in particular, and the right of the Palestinian people either to obtain a nation-state of their own or, alternatively, to live as coequals in a binational state. It is this growing ambivalence about nation and nationalism...which should bear some scrutiny.<sup>125</sup>

Yet Ahmad shies away from the scrutiny he calls for, lamenting later: ‘that a stateless Palestinian, longing always to have a state of his own, should describe the state – *all* states; the state *as such* – as a ‘coercive identity’ signifies a paradox too painful to bear comment.’<sup>126</sup> There is much to take issue with in Ahmad’s characterisation of Said’s early thinking (there is very little about ‘non-Europe’ in *Orientalism*, for instance, much less any talk of its innocence or guilt), and the alleged swings in Said’s positions may be overstated. Nonetheless, Ahmad is right to point to the tension between Said’s simultaneous advocacy of Palestinian nationalism and criticism of nationalism per se. I argue that, far from being criticised on this account, Said’s position should be appreciated for its sensitivity to potential threats to self-determination emanating not only from outside but also from within the political community he was helping to imagine. It is this sensitivity that leads him to try to hold his cosmopolitan inclinations in tension with the nationalist imperatives of the moment. My intention here is not really to defend Said against Ahmad, but rather to think about how Said’s ambivalent position might speak to the larger normative dilemma I have outlined in Part I of the thesis.

Broadly, my argument proceeds in three steps. First, I demonstrate how in his more cosmopolitan moments, Said insists that we eschew analytical essentialism and normative blame in the study of cultures. Second, I suggest that as a Palestinian activist, he must use precisely these tools – essentialism and blame – in the construction of a stable and recognisable Palestinian identity. These steps of the argument, in combination, illustrate the Saidian paradox that Ahmad flags but refuses to understand. Third, I examine how Said recognises and attempts to work through the tension between these apparently irreconcilable positions and critically evaluate the persuasiveness of his attempt. I shall weave comparisons with Tagore into the text wherever appropriate.

#### 4.2.1 *Said, the cosmopolitan*

In mapping various conceptions of cosmopolitanism in chapter 1, I drew upon Scheffler’s description of two strands of normative cosmopolitan thinking.<sup>127</sup> Cosmopolitanism as a doctrine about justice posits that the scope of justice ought to be universal. It rejects communitarian views, which hold, as a matter of principle, that norms of justice apply

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<sup>125</sup> Ahmad, *In Theory*, 200.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>127</sup> See section 1.2.1.

primarily within bounded groups comprising some subset of the global population. Cosmopolitanism as a doctrine about culture and the self suggests that the identity or well-being of individuals does not require membership in a determinate cultural group whose boundaries are clear and whose stability and cohesion are assured. Indeed, ‘cultures’ are viewed not as discrete entities, but as systems of ideas, beliefs and practices that are constantly in flux, modifying and being modified in their interaction with other cultures. Cultural cosmopolitans regard this not only as an empirical statement of how cultures actually evolve, but also celebrate cultural miscegenation for its potential to enhance the agency and freedom of human beings. As a concomitant to their view of culture, individual identity is seen as complex, fragmented, fluid, mutable. Said gave expression to both conceptions of cosmopolitanism in his work, but I shall concentrate on the second of these in discussing his work as a cultural and literary theorist.

In all likelihood, Said’s views as a cultural critic followed from his understanding of his personal identity. Just as Tagore describes his family as the product of ‘a confluence of three cultures, Hindu, Mohammedan and British’,<sup>128</sup> Said describes in his memoir, his Russian doll-like cultural location as a member of the tiny Anglican community of Jerusalem, part of the larger, mostly Greek Orthodox, Christian community, itself embedded in the still larger Sunni Muslim majority of mandate Palestine. Born in Jerusalem, he spent much of his adolescence in Cairo and Beirut (to which most of his family fled after their displacement by the Arab-Israeli war of 1948), eventually moving to the US to complete his education and establish himself as an academic in New York. Arab, but Christian; Palestinian, but born a US national; an unrelenting critic of Western colonialism and imperialism, yet a product of colonial educational institutions in Palestine and Egypt and elite US academic institutions; a theorist concerned with excavating the deep implication of Western culture in the imperial project, yet an unabashed lover of that culture’s high humanist literary and musical texts – his very name – “‘Edward,” a foolishly English name yoked forcibly to the unmistakably Arabic family name Said’<sup>129</sup> – seemed to him a metaphor for these multiple identities and affiliations tugging in different directions. In a scathing review of Samuel Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilisations*, Said observes that ‘every identity is...a construction, a composite of different histories, migrations, conquests, liberations, and so on. We can deal with these either as worlds at war, or as experiences to be reconciled.’<sup>130</sup> Said’s preference for reconciliation was as much a way of coming to terms with himself as it was a public political choice.

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<sup>128</sup> Cited from Amartya Sen, *The Argumentative Indian: Writings on Indian History, Culture and Identity* (London: Penguin, 2005), 90.

<sup>129</sup> Edward W. Said, *Out of Place: A Memoir* (London: Granta Books, 2000), 3.

<sup>130</sup> Edward W. Said, ‘The Uses of Culture’, in *The End of the Peace Process* (hereafter *TEOTPP*) (New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2003), 142.

Nonetheless, the multiple displacements and contradictions in his life fuelled a sense of ‘being not quite right and out of place’ and led him to think of himself as a ‘a cluster of flowing currents’ rather than ‘a solid self’.<sup>131</sup> Said writes of this sense of not-quite-belonging – of which statelessness and exile are particularly extreme manifestations – in mixed registers. He dwells at length on the ugliness of exile: the individual pain and loneliness, but also the exaggerated sense of defensive group solidarity felt by besieged diasporic communities, the ‘narcissistic masochism that resists all efforts at amelioration, acculturation, and community’, and the petulant cynicism and querulous lovelessness that unending exile engenders. But he writes movingly of the creative and productive potential of exile. Just as Tagore writes of the complementarity of East and West ‘approaching Truth in her different aspects from different angles of vision’,<sup>132</sup> Said – using a musical metaphor – speaks of exile as enabling a contrapuntal awareness of at least two cultures, settings, homes.<sup>133</sup>

Because the exile sees things both in terms of what has been left behind and what is actual here and now, there is a double perspective that never sees things in isolation. Every scene or situation in the new country necessarily draws on its counterpart in the old country. Intellectually this means that an idea or experience is always counterposed with another, therefore making them both appear in a sometimes new and unpredictable light: from that juxtaposition one gets a better, perhaps even more universal idea of how to think, say, about a human rights issue in one situation by comparison with another.<sup>134</sup>

Exile, with its implications of severed roots, is of course a classic cosmopolitan trope. Denied a home, the exile is adrift in the world, forced either to find a new home by developing the ability to put down roots elsewhere or to become at home in the world at large. Said finds exile’s silver lining in its inherent potential to enable the development of a cross-cultural, or at least bicultural, vision that might offer a more plausible basis for universalist thinking. In addition he sees exile as offering the possibility of developing a critical perspective, particularly when it is understood not just as an actual condition but also as a metaphorical one in which individuals at odds with their society are more likely to be able to speak truth to power, being outsiders to circles of privilege. This brings him very close to Dedalus, who in one of the most celebrated passages in *Portrait*, says: ‘I will not serve that in which I no longer believe, whether it call itself my home, my fatherland, or my church: and I will try to express myself in some mode of life or art as freely as I can and as wholly as I can, using for my defence the only arms I allow myself to use – silence, exile, and cunning.’<sup>135</sup> This more

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<sup>131</sup> Said, *Out of Place*, 295.

<sup>132</sup> Tagore’s reflection on non-cooperation and cooperation, 61.

<sup>133</sup> Said, ‘Reflections on Exile’, in *Reflections on Exile*, 186.

<sup>134</sup> Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 44.

<sup>135</sup> Joyce, *Portrait*, 269.

metaphorical conception of exile also resonates strongly with the experience of Tagore, who while being a canonical larger-than-life figure in the Bengali literary world was nonetheless very much on the margins of political circles, seen by politicised bhadralok as a romantic or something of a maverick. Indeed, he was never very comfortable in Calcutta, preferring to live and work on his estates in rural Bengal at Shelidah and, later, Shantiniketan.

Said's deeply felt sense of incomplete belonging to the many identities that laid claim on him and his perception of himself as a cluster of currents from many different sources rather than a stable, solid essence, paralleled an impatience with the essentialisation of identity in academic analyses of culture. Responding to Huntington's clash of civilisations thesis, he writes:

For Huntington, civilisations have a fixed and constantly, perpetually recognisable identity, whereas the proper critical question to be asked at the end of the twentieth century is "Which West, or Islam, or Confucianism do you mean?" There are dozens, all of them in conflict, irreconcilably opposed, endlessly in flux. Is it really possible to speak of *the* West, or of one Confucianism, since the evidence of extraordinary diversity within each culture wrecks immediate havoc on any attempt to reduce the culture or civilisation to a simple, unitary phenomenon?<sup>136</sup>

In a similar vein, *Orientalism* can be read as a critique of a Western tendency to construct the 'Orient' in a singular and undifferentiated fashion as a place that was aberrant, undeveloped, given to sensuality and despotism, and inferior to a West that was rational, developed, humane and superior. *Orientalism* is a study of the relationship between Western representations of, and exercises of power over, the Orient.<sup>137</sup> Borrowing heavily from Foucault, Said sees Orientalism as a Western discourse that polices what can be said about the Orient and, in doing so, reinforces an enduring will to power over the Orient. Critics argued that in describing Orientalism as a discourse that 'can accommodate Aeschylus, say, and Victor Hugo, Dante and Karl Marx'<sup>138</sup> in a singular and undifferentiated fashion, Said was himself essentialising what was in fact a more complicated system of representations.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Said, 'The Uses of Culture', in *TEOTPP*, 140.

<sup>137</sup> Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 1995), 12. In his most succinct description of this relationship, Said describes Orientalism as 'a discourse that is by no means in direct, corresponding relationship with political power in the raw, but rather is produced and exists in an uneven exchange with various kinds of power, shaped to a degree by the exchange with power political (as with a colonial or imperial establishment), power intellectual (as with reigning sciences like comparative linguistics or anatomy, or with any of the modern policy sciences), power cultural (as with orthodoxies and canons of taste, texts, values), power moral (as with ideas about what 'we' do and what 'they' cannot do or understand as 'we' do).'

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, 3.

<sup>139</sup> Ahmad, *In Theory*, 183. For more sympathetic critiques see Gandhi, *Postcolonial Theory*, 77-80; Young, *Postcolonialism*, ch. 26. For an excellent survey of criticism of *Orientalism* see Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), ch. 6.

(He could hardly go on to criticise Huntington for speaking of *the* West, when he had himself insinuated that Orientalism as he had described it was *the* Western conception of the Orient.)

Two things might be said in defence of Said here. First, he *does* acknowledge the ambivalence of Oriental stereotypes (i.e. the fact that they were both affirming and derogatory), but perhaps all too briefly.<sup>140</sup> Second, when the methodological exclusions that Said makes at the start of the book are taken into consideration, it becomes clear that *Orientalism* is a much more modest, tightly drawn endeavour than its somewhat overblown sub-title<sup>141</sup> suggests: it is *not* a study of ‘Western’ conceptions of the ‘Orient’, but of British, French and (to a much lesser extent) US conceptions of the Islamic Orient from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onwards.

In response to criticism of the alleged essentialism of *Orientalism*, Said makes two points. In an Afterword to the 1995 edition, he regrets that he has been read as suggesting that the phenomenon of Orientalism is a synecdoche of the entire West, representing the West as a whole, and insists that the book ‘is explicitly anti-essentialist, radically sceptical about all categorical designations such as Orient and Occident’.<sup>142</sup> Second, he disavows any interest in, or capacity for, showing what the true Orient or Islam really are, suggesting that the veracity of Orientalist discourse has never been his concern. This opens up a complex methodological debate that, I think, Said leaves inadequately theorised. There are radically poststructuralist moments in the original text, where he doubts whether there can be ‘true’ representations of anything, given that all representations are embedded in the language, culture, institutions and ‘political ambience’ of the representer.<sup>143</sup> But there are other moments when he insists on the possibility of ‘scholarship that is not as corrupt, or at least as blind to human reality,’ as the kind he has mainly depicted in the book.<sup>144</sup> The problem seems to be that, like Foucault, Said sees (Orientalist) discourse as policing what can be said within a discursive field (‘contributions, even for the exceptional genius, are strategies of redisposing material within the field’<sup>145</sup>), suggesting that there *isn’t* very much scope for departure or innovation. Yet

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<sup>140</sup> See for example Said, *Orientalism*, 150: ‘Many of the earliest Oriental amateurs began by welcoming the Orient as a salutary *derangement* of their European habits of mind and spirit. The Orient was overvalued for its pantheism, its spirituality, its stability, its longevity, its primitivity, and so forth... Yet almost without exception such overesteem was followed by a counterresponse: the Orient suddenly appeared lamentably underhumanised, antidemocratic, backward, barbaric, and so forth.’

<sup>141</sup> Although the title is hardly the only problem. If in fact the discourse that Said describes should be understood within the narrower parameters suggested above, then the Athenian tragedies and Dante are somewhat out of place. One of Ahmad’s most compelling arguments is that Said periodizes the discourse of Orientalism very sloppily (Ahmad, *In Theory*, 181).

<sup>142</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 331.

<sup>143</sup> *Ibid.*, 272.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*, 326.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, 273.

unlike Foucault, he believes that individual scholars *can* have a transformational impact on discourse.<sup>146</sup> Orientalist discourse in Said's view constrains what scholars can think and say, but it is not totalising in the way that Foucault suggests. This is a 'men make their own history, but they do not do so in conditions of their own choosing' kind of statement, but it leaves underspecified the scope for agency that scholars enjoy. There is a great deal more that might be said about this, but I am more concerned with the issue of identity essentialism, the treatment of which I would like to analyse in the rest of Said's work.

In *Culture and Imperialism*, which is a more obviously anti-essentialist work than *Orientalism*, Said traces the connections between metropolitan cultural texts and the imperial process, arguing that to do so does not diminish their value as works of art but makes them more interesting and valuable by demonstrating their worldliness – that is to say, their complex affiliations with their real settings.<sup>147</sup> Thus, for instance, it is Australian wealth that makes possible the *Great Expectations* that Pip entertains, the order and civility of Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park* is premised on the profits generated by slave plantations in Antigua, and we cannot fully understand Verdi's *Aida* without reference to the politics of its commissioning by the Khedive of Egypt as part of his drive towards modernisation and acceptance into International Society. It is difficult to do justice here to the richness of the affiliations that Said describes, but his technique is essentially one of reading texts 'contrapuntally', with a simultaneous awareness of both metropolitan and peripheral history, with the result that iconic works of the Western canon begin to look hybrid and radically impure.<sup>148</sup> This, he argues, calls for an understanding of cultural identities 'not as essentialisations...but as contrapuntal ensembles, for it is the case that no identity can ever exist by itself and without an array of opposites, negatives, oppositions.'<sup>149</sup>

Closely related to this analytical understanding of cultures as invariably hybrid and intertwined, is a normative point concerning the irresponsibility and fallacy of rhetorics of blame in cultural studies. 'Real intellectual analysis', Said writes, 'forbids calling one side innocent, the other evil. Indeed the notion of a side is, where cultures are at issue, highly problematic, since most cultures aren't watertight little packages, all homogeneous, and all either good or evil.'<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> Ibid., 23, 273: 'each individual contribution first causes changes within the field and then promotes a new stability, in the way that on a surface covered with twenty compasses the introduction of a twenty-first will cause all the others to quiver, then to settle into a new accommodating configuration.'

<sup>147</sup> Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 13.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 52, 137.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 60.

<sup>150</sup> Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 89.

The construction of fictions like ‘East’ and ‘West’, to say nothing of racialist essences like subject races, Orientals, Aryans, Negroes and the like, were what my books attempted to combat. Far from encouraging a sense of aggrieved primal innocence in countries which had repeatedly suffered the ravages of colonialism, I stated over and over again that mythical abstractions such as these were lies, as were the various rhetorics of blame they gave rise to; cultures are too intermingled, their contents and histories too interdependent and hybrid, for surgical separation into large and mostly ideological oppositions like Orient and Occident.<sup>151</sup>

If we can no longer speak of ‘East’ and ‘West’ as unselfconsciously as Kipling and Tagore did, this is due in no small measure to the work of Edward Said. But even as he relentlessly deconstructed essentialism and blame in his study of cultures, these discursive practices remain integral to the politics of nationalism. In the following section, I examine the extent to which Said must rely on these devices to function effectively as a spokesman for the cause of Palestinian national self-determination.

#### 4.2.2 *Said, the nationalist*

Of the many public roles that he played, Said will long be remembered as one of the most prominent and passionate advocates of Palestinian self-determination, particularly in the West. As Abdul JanMohamed astutely observes, in this capacity his position is ‘only partly that of an articulator and defender of Palestinian aspirations...he is also an active and important producer of the evolving Palestinian identity.’<sup>152</sup> Said comes very close to acknowledging this in the introduction to *The Question of Palestine*, where he notes that ‘one of the features of a small non-European people is that it is not wealthy in documents, nor in histories, autobiographies, chronicles, and the like. This is true of Palestinians, and it accounts for the lack of a major authoritative text on Palestinian history.’<sup>153</sup> While disavowing any intention to fill this lacuna, Said goes on to try to do exactly something of the sort. ‘[I]f there is no country called Palestine it is not because there are no Palestinians’, he writes. ‘There are, and this essay is an attempt to put their reality before the reader’.<sup>154</sup> In describing this reality, he refers to

...a plain and irreducible core of the Palestinian experience for the last hundred years: that on the land called Palestine there existed a huge majority for hundreds of years a largely pastoral, a nevertheless socially, culturally, politically, economically identifiable people whose language and religion were (for a huge majority) Arabic and Islam, respectively. This people – or, if one wishes to deny them any modern conception of themselves as a people, this *group* of people – identified itself with the

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<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, xi.

<sup>152</sup> Abdul R. JanMohamed, “‘Worldliness-Without-World, Homelessness-As-Home’: Toward a Definition of the Specular Border Intellectual”, in *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, ed. Michael Sprinker (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 104.

<sup>153</sup> Edward W. Said, *The Question of Palestine* (London: Vintage, 1992), xxx.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

land it tilled and lived on (poorly or not is irrelevant), the more so after an almost wholly European decision was made to resettle, reconstitute, recapture the land for Jews who were to be brought there from elsewhere...such as it is, the Palestinian actuality is today, was yesterday, and most likely tomorrow will be built upon an act of resistance to this new foreign colonialism.<sup>155</sup>

Several paragraphs are then devoted to describing this 'Palestinian actuality' in more detail: historical references to Palestine from the eighth century onwards, current population statistics, occupations, areas of settlement, details of intellectual and professional life are mentioned; the existence of a 'highly developed national consciousness' and political organisations are attested to. All this is said to have 'created a Palestinian identity opposed equally to British rule and to Jewish colonisation, and solidified the Palestinian sense of belonging by whichever continuity of residence to a distinct national group with a language (the Palestinian Arab dialect) and a specific communal sense (threatened particularly by Zionism) of its own.'<sup>156</sup> Moreover, Palestinians are described as if they possessed a relatively coherent and unified sense of agency as a *nation*:

Judging by the great popular appeal and legitimacy of the PLO, by the constant resistance to and refusal of Israeli military strikes in the Occupied Territories, by the daily demonstrations, strikes, and political gestures of resistance there and among the Arabs inside pre-1967 Israel, by every mass and private organisation created by and for Palestinians, there is ample evidence to show that taken altogether as members of a community whose common experience is dispossession, exile, and the absence of any territorial homeland, the Palestinian people has not acquiesced in its present lot.<sup>157</sup>

Said's acts of historical narration are not merely a passive chronicling of events after the fact, so to speak, but are themselves actively constitutive of Palestinian identity. Indeed, this is what he sees himself as doing. Writing on the forty-ninth anniversary of the 1948 Deir Yassin massacre, he says: 'Collective memory is a people's heritage and also its energy: it does not merely sit there inertly, but it must be activated as part of a people's identity and sense of its own prerogative. To recall Deir Yassin is not just to dwell on past disasters, but to understand who we are and where we are going.'<sup>158</sup> Collective memory must of course be constructed – even 'activate' is too weak a verb – for people do not remember historical events in the same way, if at all, unless they are *told* an authoritative story. This seems to be the role that Said takes on.

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<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 7.

<sup>156</sup> Ibid., 10-12.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 47.

<sup>158</sup> Edward W. Said, 'Deir Yassin Recalled', in *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination 1969-1994* (London: Vintage, 1994), 158.

This role as active producer of Palestinian identity is performed not only through acts of historical narration, but also in more forward-looking gestures of identity consolidation. Among other things, Said recommends a census of the Palestinian population not only in historic Palestine but also in the refugee communities dispersed across the world. Speculating about why Israel, the US and Arab states might be opposed to such an exercise, he suggests that ‘opposition to the census stemmed from the realisation that were Palestinians to be counted all together, despite dispersion and dispossession, they would by that very exercise come close to constituting a nation and not just a collection of people...It would constitute an act of historical and political self-realisation outside the limitations imposed on them by the absence of sovereignty.’<sup>159</sup> This is of course exactly why Said thinks such an undertaking would be valuable.

The broader point I am trying to make here is that as a producer of Palestinian identity, Said the nationalist is compelled to use devices that might make Said the cosmopolitan rather uncomfortable. The attempt to describe the Palestinian ‘reality’, the ‘plain and irreducible core of the Palestinian experience’, ‘the Palestinian actuality’ (all Said’s phrases), is nothing but an exercise in distilling the *essentials* of Palestinian identity. To be sure, this is not done in a sinister gate-keeping sort of way (‘you are not a Palestinian unless...’). Nonetheless, we are no longer reminded of the fluidity of identity, of mixing, hybridity and impurity; instead, Palestinian identity is posited as something distinct and discrete – part of a larger Arab identity certainly, but different from Lebanese, Jordanian, Syrian and other national identities in the region. ‘I am Palestinian’, Said reiterates; ‘we have a collective identity that while Arab is not only generally Arab but specifically *Palestinian*, and an attachment to the actual land of Palestine antedates Zionism and Israel.’<sup>160</sup>

At the risk of stating the obvious, Said downplays his more cosmopolitan methodological commitments in favour of constructing a relatively stable and cohesive Palestinian identity in response to the incentives offered, and constraints imposed, by an International Society whose members are states. New members are admitted into this Society via the right of self-determination. But this is a right that is only available to a ‘people’ who must demonstrate both their peoplehood (i.e. their communality) and their denial of self-determination *as a people* by the political institutions within which they are currently governed. The right of self-determination is not available to a motley collection of individuals who have nothing in common but the misfortune of bad governance.

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<sup>159</sup> Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, xliv.

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi.

It is crucial to bear in mind that Said wrote *The Question of Palestine* in 1979, barely ten years after Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir had made her infamous statement denying the very existence of Palestinians in an attempt to portray them as just such a motley collection. Writing in the US on a playing field that was skewed by the considerable influence of the Jewish lobby over US policy towards the Israel-Palestine conflict, Said's job was made more difficult by the fact that, at least prior to the first intifada, representations of Palestinians in the media and public consciousness were dominated by images of terrorism and fanaticism. In such an environment, 'the first task', as Said puts it, 'was to get a place – literally anywhere – to say that we did exist'.<sup>161</sup> So rudimentary and primitive was the level of debate, so meagre the levels of awareness and support, that Said could hardly begin to acknowledge what a complex and unstable thing Palestinian identity (like all identity) really is. That identity had first to be inserted into global, and particularly Western, public consciousness in a relatively clear and unambiguous fashion if it was to be recognised as a people who had been expelled and dispossessed and who therefore had a legitimate claim to redress, before it could begin to be deconstructed for other purposes. (I will later suggest that Said had deep reservations about this apparent chronological sequence – first identity construction and consolidation, then deconstruction.) In this sense, we might regard Said's construction of Palestinian identity as a case of what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has described, in another context, as 'a strategic use of positivist essentialism in a scrupulously visible political interest'.<sup>162</sup>

Further tensions open up between Said's cosmopolitan and nationalist selves in his deployment of moral blame in pursuit of Palestinian self-determination. The reference to Deir Yassin above is part of a more general tendency to refer to the facts of Palestinian expulsion and dispossession by Israel as well as the continuing injustices of Occupation, at every available opportunity. Apart from the fact that the injustices that Said mentions quite simply *are* taking place and are important to talk about for their own sake, the construction and reiteration of victimisation narratives is intrinsic to the pursuit of national self-determination. Virtually all nationalist movements have employed victimisation narratives of some sort, either because of their mobilisational and unifying potential or because self-determination culminating in statehood is more easily justified in International Society as a remedial right.<sup>163</sup> Thus, while the cosmopolitan Said eschews rhetorics of blame in *intercultural*

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<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, xvi.

<sup>162</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, 'Subaltern Studies: Deconstructing Historiography', in *Selected Subaltern Studies*, eds. Guha & Spivak.

<sup>163</sup> Recall that in the postcolonial era, the right to self-determination has been interpreted narrowly (at the insistence of postcolonial states) as freedom from colonial rule. In other words, self-determination is interpreted as one-off decolonisation. The only exceptions to this have been cases where self-

analysis (this is not just a normative position; he thinks it is analytically impossible because of the analytical inseparability of cultures), the nationalist Said must deploy victimisation narratives and some corresponding notion of blame in *international* relations, in pursuit of Palestinian self-determination. The reiteration of blame is attenuated considerably by the strong emphasis on reconciliation and coexistence that is a notable feature of much of Said's later writing. Nevertheless, in order to get to this stage without diminishing the very real losses and injustices suffered by Palestinians, he must pass through the stages of blaming Israel and insisting on some acknowledgement of, and compensation for, its actions, before he can begin to speak of reconciliation. The nationalist Said must therefore use the very techniques – essentialism and blame – that the cosmopolitan Said has savaged.

Benita Parry succinctly frames this tension between what I have called the cosmopolitan Said and the nationalist Said, as one between a '*cognitive* recognition of cultural heterogeneity and the *political* need for solidarity'.<sup>164</sup> That is to say, on the one hand he recognises the subject as decentred and culture as hybrid. But on the other hand, he acknowledges political exigencies in the process of liberation – specifically, the potential of imaginary collectivities constructed under conditions of subjugation to confront and perhaps overcome those conditions.<sup>165</sup> Parry is right, but I think the tension goes deeper than this. It is not simply a tension that operates in two different realms – the cognitive and the political – as if Said the literary critic engaged in dispassionate textual analysis can (afford to) acknowledge the hybridity and messiness of identity, while Said the political activist must insist on stability, solidity and solidarity. Even within the realm of the political (if indeed such a sphere can be demarcated with any confidence), *political* exigencies can, and do, push us in both directions. Political exigencies of different sorts demand both split and united selves. In the following section, I argue that Said's recognition of this manifests itself in his extraordinarily ambivalent view of nationalism as both necessary and unfortunate.

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determination has been justified as a remedial response to situations of gross injustice – e.g. East Pakistan, East Timor, etc. Many proponents of Palestinian self-determination – including Said – have sought to draw an analogy between Zionism and colonialism. The analogy is strained by differences in the ways that Zionism and European colonialism sought to justify themselves (one thinks here of Zionism's scriptural claims to the Promised Land and of the moral urgency and backing acquired by the Zionist project in the wake of the Holocaust). If the argument for self-determination as decolonisation is unsuccessful, the construction of victimisation narratives becomes especially important in building a case for self-determination as a remedial right.

<sup>164</sup> Benita Parry, 'Overlapping Territories and Intertwined Histories: Edward Said's Postcolonial Cosmopolitanism', in *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, ed. Michael Sprinker (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 20, emphasis mine.

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, 30.

#### 4.2.3 *The paradoxes of (Said's) nationalism*

Despite his cosmopolitan commitments, Said tirelessly reiterates that nationalism is necessary in the world today. He writes: 'For those of us just emerging from marginality and persecution, nationalism is a necessary thing: a long-deferred and –denied identity needs to come out into the open and take its place among other human identities.'<sup>166</sup> And elsewhere, 'much of the early cultural resistance to imperialism on which nationalism and independence movements were built was salutary and necessary. I see it essentially as an attempt on the part of oppressed people who had suffered the bondage of slavery, colonialism, and – most important – spiritual dispossession, to reclaim their identity.'<sup>167</sup>

Yet at the same time, Said speaks of the inadequacies and misfortunes of nationalism. There are of course the familiar criticisms that nationalism engenders a politics of difference that very quickly slides into hierarchy and supremacism ('us' versus 'them', with 'them' invariably being less culturally valuable and developed than 'us'), that nationalism seems to require a generous dose of myth-making, a purifying or laundering of the cultural past followed by a process of indoctrination, that once nationalism achieves its objective of independent statehood it then becomes an ideology legitimising various sorts of abuses carried out in the name of state-building, etc.<sup>168</sup> But the more interesting point that Said makes is that nationalism – even anti-colonial nationalism – threatens to reproduce an imperial dynamic. Thus, he notes a conjunction of national identity discourse in Europe with the era of classical European imperialism:

Much of the literature of colonial justification in France that we associate with names like Jules Harmand, Albert Sarraut, Leroy-Beaulieu, Lucien Fevre, is often structured around a series of contrasting national identities, races, and languages, the point of which is to extract a hierarchy, with France at the top...the discourse of national identity was, if not the first, certainly among the most important elements in the armature of power and justificatory zeal posited by imperial theorists and administrators.<sup>169</sup>

Nationalism therefore furnishes, at least in part, the ideological impetus for imperialism. Imperialism then incites against itself, movements for national liberation. But national emancipation is no guarantee that the pattern will not be repeated in newly independent states in the form of a supremacist politics vis-à-vis external others (other states) and internal others (national minorities). These paradoxes of nationalism are at the root of Said's ambivalent

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<sup>166</sup> Said, 'Identity, Authority, and Freedom: The Potentate and the Traveller', in *Reflections on Exile*, 402.

<sup>167</sup> Said, 'The Politics of Knowledge', in *ibid.*, 377.

<sup>168</sup> Said, 'Nationalism, Human Rights, and Interpretation', in *ibid.*, 421-5.

<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, 417-8.

attitude towards the concept.<sup>170</sup> In the remainder of this section, I consider the different devices that Said uses to work through what he sees as the contradictory potentials of nationalism.

*Tragedy:* At his most pessimistic, Said sees the problem of nationalism as tragedy. In this view, the paradoxes of nationalism cannot be resolved. Nationalism, like all identity politics, is a sort of zero sum game in which ‘the triumph of identity by one culture or state almost always is implicated directly or indirectly in the denial, or the suppression of equal identity for other groups, states or cultures.’ Nationalism represents the most extreme form of this tragic conundrum ‘by offering what appears to be ethnosuicide as an alternative to clamorous demands for equality, for sovereignty, for national self-definition’.<sup>171</sup> This Said speaks in regretful tones of ‘triumphant, achieved nationalisms’ which ‘consign truth exclusively to themselves and relegate falsehood and inferiority to outsiders’, and which speak ‘the encompassing and thumping language of national pride, collective sentiments, group passions’.<sup>172</sup> This Said clearly wishes he did not have to be a nationalist, lamenting that ‘It’s the tragedy, the irony, the paradox of all anti-imperial or decolonising struggles that independence is the stage through which you must try to pass: for us independence is the only alternative to the continued horrors of the Israeli occupation, whose goal is the extermination of a Palestinian national identity’.<sup>173</sup>

*Transparency:* Even if the evils of nationalism cannot be avoided altogether, there is a constant effort in Said’s work to stretch the nationalist enterprise to the limits of transparency, honesty and self-awareness that it will permit. His nationalist writings occasionally take on a methodological transparency that reveals how nationalism works, but in doing so, threatens to unmask the novelty, fragility and instability of the very identity he is trying to construct. Thus, even as he attempts to distinguish Palestinian identity from a more general Arab identity,<sup>174</sup> he is ironic about the endeavour – as in this narration of an encounter with a close friend and fellow-Palestinian:

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<sup>170</sup> For a concise restatement of these paradoxes as seen by Said, see Joan Cocks, ‘A New Cosmopolitanism? V. S. Naipaul and Edward Said’, *Constellations: An International Journal of Critical and Democratic Theory* 7, no. 1 (2000): 54-5.

<sup>171</sup> Edward W. Said, ‘Identity, Negation and Violence’, *New Left Review* 171 (1988): 58. I believe he is suggesting, in this rather ambiguous statement, that nationalist victimisation narratives raise the spectre of existential threat if their demands for independent statehood are not conceded.

<sup>172</sup> Said, ‘Reflections on Exile’, in *Reflections on Exile*, 176-7.

<sup>173</sup> Jennifer Wicke & Michael Sprinker, ‘Interview with Edward Said’, in *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, ed. Michael Sprinker (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 236-7.

<sup>174</sup> Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, xvi.

In the morning we had breakfast, which included yoghurt cheese with a special herb, *za'tar*. This combination probably exists all over the Arab world, and certainly in Palestine, Syria, and Lebanon. But my friend said: 'There, you see. It's a sign of a Palestinian home that it has *za'tar* in it.' Being a poet, he then expiated at great and tedious length on Palestinian cuisine, which is generally very much like Lebanese and Syrian cuisine, and by the end of the morning we were both convinced that we had a totally distinct national cuisine.<sup>175</sup>

This is how nationalism works, and Said is clearly sceptical of some of the things that nationalists do – *have* to do – to be effective. One question that this raises is whether one can be both an effective nationalist and a theorist of nationalism at the same time. Said is clearly trying to be both. As he writes, 'With regard to the consensus on group or national identity it is the intellectual's task to show how the group is a constructed, manufactured, even in some cases invented object, with a history of struggle and conquest behind it, that it is sometimes important to represent'.<sup>176</sup> But if successful nationalism requires the naturalisation and primordialisation of identity, or 'forgetting' as Renan put it altogether more bluntly, are not the intellectual's reminders of the constructed, manufactured and invented nature of identity subversive of the nationalist project itself?<sup>177</sup>

One of the most peculiar features of Said's nationalism is this effort to participate in the construction and reiteration of nationalist mythology even as he reminds his audience of the myth-making aspect of nationalism – in short, to both 'do' and unmask nationalism. Referring to the battle of Karamah in 1968 between the Israeli army and Palestinian resistance fighters and the place that it occupies in the Palestinian national consciousness, Said writes: 'All occurrences become events after they occur. In part events are mythic, but like all effective myths they record an important aspect of a real experience.'<sup>178</sup> He then goes on to discuss and *justify* why the battle of Karamah has come to occupy such a significant place in Palestinian nationalist mythology, quite out of proportion to the strategic significance of the military encounter. There is a sympathetic appreciation of the myth and why it has been nurtured and handed down – but we are still reminded of the disjunction between occurrence and event, between what actually happened and the subsequent layers of meaning with which it became encrusted.

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<sup>175</sup> Said, 'On Palestinian Identity: A Conversation with Salman Rushdie' (1986), in *ibid.*, 115-116. On the construction of another 'national cuisine', see Arjun Appadurai, 'How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30, no. 1 (1988): 3-24.

<sup>176</sup> Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 24.

<sup>177</sup> Ernst Renan, 'Qu'est-ce qu'une nation?': 'L'oubli, et je dirai même l'erreur historique, sont un facteur essentiel de la création d'une nation, et c'est ainsi que le progrès des études historiques est souvent pour la nationalité un danger.'

<sup>178</sup> Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, 9.

*Moderation*: Another device that Said uses to work through his understanding of nationalism as necessary but unfortunate is to speak a language of quantitative moderation. On occasion, he appears to suggest that it might be possible to strike a balance between identity essentialisation and consolidation on the one hand and deconstruction on the other:

...it must be incumbent upon even those of us who support nationalist struggle in an age of unrestrained nationalist expression to have at our disposal some decent measure of intellectual refusal, negation and scepticism. It is at precisely that nexus of committed participation and intellectual commitment that we should situate ourselves to ask *how much* identity, *how much* positive consolidation, *how much* administered approbation we are willing to tolerate in the name of our cause, our culture, our state.<sup>179</sup>

Partha Chatterjee takes him to task for this rather vague and inchoate formulation, asking, 'Are we still trying to sort out that old liberal problem of 'good nationalism' versus 'bad nationalism'? Must it be our argument that a little bit of identity and positive consolidation and administered approbation is all for the good, but beyond a certain point they are intolerable?'<sup>180</sup> Chatterjee is right to seek clarification, but the quantitative tenor of both Said's formulation and Chatterjee's interrogation are misleading and do not really get to the heart of what makes Said's nationalism distinctive.

*Bifocality*:<sup>181</sup> Said is most persuasive in working through the paradoxes of nationalism when he turns to Fanon, whose classic statement of resistance is concerned as much with independence from colonial oppression (the hostile outside) as with liberation from a nationalist bourgeoisie (the hostile inside) that perpetuates poverty, illiteracy and underdevelopment.<sup>182</sup> Resistance, for Fanon, is a bifocal enterprise in which 'the people' must pass 'from total, indiscriminating nationalism to social and economic awareness'.<sup>183</sup> Without such a transition from a nationalist to a humanist socio-economic consciousness, Fanon argues that the oppressive nationalist bourgeoisie remains entrenched. Too weak to fulfil the historic role of a 'true' bourgeoisie (namely, the creation of conditions conducive to the formation of an industrial proletariat), but too strong to be easily dislodged thanks to its continuing relationship with the metropolitan bourgeoisie, the nationalist bourgeoisie maintains the country in a quasi-feudal, dependent position. The revolutionary leader

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<sup>179</sup> Said, 'Identity, Negation and Violence', 60.

<sup>180</sup> Partha Chatterjee, 'Their Own Words? An Essay for Edward Said', in *Edward Said: A Critical Reader*, ed. Michael Sprinker (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1992), 215.

<sup>181</sup> A term that was suggested by Fred Halliday, 'Post-national citizenship or international relations: a critical review of the legacies of cosmopolitanism and internationalism', Presentation to Political Theory and International Relations Seminar, Department of Politics and International Relations, University of Oxford, 16 November 2004 – although it was not applied to the theorists I have been considering.

<sup>182</sup> Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, tr. Constance Farrington (London: Penguin, 2001), 73-74.

<sup>183</sup> *Ibid.*, 115.

becomes ‘a screen between the people and the rapacious bourgeoisie’, using moral and political capital accrued from his leadership of the liberation struggle to obviate challenges from below; the revolutionary party ossifies into an instrument of control and pacification.<sup>184</sup> In such circumstances, a people who remain trapped within a nationalist mindset lack the consciousness vital to challenge their own bourgeoisie. Nationalism is central to the struggle against the hostile outside, but only a humanist socio-economic awareness can precipitate a struggle against the hostile inside.

In my view, Fanon presents the struggle against the outside and inside as sequential stages,<sup>185</sup> but Said’s reading of Fanon insists that they must be contemporaneous:

...as Frantz Fanon analysed the situation during the height of the Algerian war of liberation (1954-1962) against the French, going along with the approving chorus of anticolonialist nationalism as embodied in party and leadership is not enough. There is always the question of goal which, even in the thick of battle, entails the analysis of choices. Are we fighting just to rid ourselves of colonialism, a necessary goal, or are we thinking about what we will do when the last white policeman leaves?...Although there is an inestimable value to what an intellectual does to ensure the community’s survival during periods of extreme national emergency, loyalty to the group’s fight for survival cannot draw in the intellectual so far as to narcotise the critical sense, or reduce its imperatives, which are always to go beyond survival to questions of political liberation, to critiques of the leadership, to presenting alternatives that are too often marginalized or pushed aside as irrelevant to the main battle at hand. Even among the oppressed there are also victors and losers and the intellectual’s loyalty must not be restricted only to joining the collective march: great intellectuals like Tagore of India or Jose Marti of Cuba were exemplary in this regard, never abating their criticism *because* of nationalism, even though they remained nationalists themselves.<sup>186</sup>

Critics on the left would argue that Said has tamed Fanon by rendering his Marxist categories in the vague language of ‘victors and losers’ among the oppressed. Yet the emphasis on the contemporaneity or simultaneity (rather than sequentiality) of struggle against the hostile outside and inside also makes this the most radical rendition of Fanon possible. Said sums up this idea of simultaneity in the pithy slogan ‘never solidarity before criticism’.<sup>187</sup> The ‘before’

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<sup>184</sup> *Ibid.*, ch. 3.

<sup>185</sup> There is room for debate over this. On the one hand, Fanon’s sensitivity to different strands of anti-colonial resistance (tensions between urban and rural, moderates and radicals, legal and illegal tendencies within the party) suggests that social and economic consciousness develops – and *needs* to develop – in the thick of struggle against the colonial oppressor. On the other hand, he calls for struggle against the national bourgeoisie *after* independence from the colonialists, even suggesting at one point that ‘what can be dangerous is when [the people] reach the stage of social consciousness before the stage of nationalism. If this happens, we find in under-developed countries fierce demands for social justice which paradoxically are allied with often primitive tribalism’ (*ibid.*, 164). Yet the very fact that Fanon offered this analysis *before* Algeria had won its independence suggests that he was keen to foster the development of social and economic consciousness even before the nationalist struggle had been won.

<sup>186</sup> Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 30. See also Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 323-32.

<sup>187</sup> Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 24.

here contests the chronological and political priority typically accorded to solidarity and unity, particularly in times of resistance. ‘There can be no such thing as solidarity before, or without, criticism’, Said writes; ‘everyone is fallible, even Yasir Arafat, and where there is no fully articulated legal or constitutional order the need for criticism and reminder is still more crucial...criticism heightens awareness and recalls leaders to their constituency.’<sup>188</sup> He is severely critical of the tendency to rally unthinkingly around the flag in times of crisis. While recognising that ‘unity is a good thing, as is maintaining pressure on the Israelis’, he refuses ‘the thesis that we must all plunge ourselves heedlessly into the seething emotional turbulence of the present, without a thought, or a bit of clarity about why we are in this terrible state to begin with’. He asks: ‘Is it the intellectual’s duty simply to become a member of the chorus, or is it more valuable to stand aside (which implies not detachment but, I think, a greater commitment to the common good) and reflect without undue emotion on why we are here, and how we can move forward?’<sup>189</sup> The answer is categorical: ‘critical thought is much more useful now than flag-waving, a rhetorical ploy which I have always thought is one of the cheapest political tactics ever invented’.<sup>190</sup> Parry posits a tension between Said’s cognitive recognition of heterogeneity and split selves and his political recognition of the imperative of solidarity and united selves. Yet as I have tried to demonstrate above, through his insistence on the simultaneity of solidarity and criticism, Said in effect contests the need to place our cognitive recognition of split selves in abeyance while the political work of contesting oppression is carried out.

Said understood his stance of solidarity with criticism as that of a partisan but not a joiner or member<sup>191</sup> (an attitude that might well have incurred the same accusation that Davin hurls at Dedalus: ‘You’re a born sneerer, Stevie’<sup>192</sup>). This stance manifested itself in his independent membership for 14 years of the Palestinian National Council, but his stubborn refusal to join the Palestinian Liberation Organisation. His writing following the signing of the Oslo Accords seemed to struggle simultaneously against both Israel and the Palestinian Authority (PA), for a Palestinian state but also a certain *kind* of Palestinian state. Alongside his polemical writing against Zionism, al-Nakba (the catastrophe) of 1948, al-Naksa (the setback) of 1967, the frustrations and disappointments of the Oslo peace process and the US role in exacerbating the Palestinian plight, is a savage critique of the PA and Yasir Arafat – denounced for their alleged incompetence in agreeing to a peace process that essentially perpetuated the Occupation, while resulting in the transfer of a few sovereign powers over an

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<sup>188</sup> Said, ‘Where Do We Go from Here?’, in *TEOTPP*, 22.

<sup>189</sup> Said, ‘Responsibility and Accountability’, in *TEOTPP*, 113-4.

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>191</sup> Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, xxiv.

<sup>192</sup> Joyce, *Portrait*, 219.

archipelago of ‘bantustans’ that could hardly constitute a viable state. In addition, Said writes urgently and insistently about the lack of law, due process, freedom and democracy in Palestine,<sup>193</sup> bemoaning the inability of the Legislative Council to exercise any constitutional checks over Arafat – ‘a despot who controls the budget’ – or over ‘his twenty security services who torture, kill, imprison critics and ban their books at the whim of Palestine’s overweening tyrant’.<sup>194</sup> He is explicit about the corruption of the Authority, which is alleged to be ‘at bottom a kind of mafia...operating all kinds of special deals...that profit the inner circle of Arafat appointees and “experts”’.<sup>195</sup> At times he even goes to the extent of positing a rough moral equivalence between Israel and the PA, writing that ‘the clamp down on expression and democratic practices [in post-Oslo Palestine] is as severe as under direct Israeli rule’<sup>196</sup> and speaking of ‘the double occupation of the Israelis and the Palestinian Authority’.<sup>197</sup> Said contemptuously dismisses any suggestion that his critique of the nationalist leadership is premature:

To say...that it is irresponsible to ask for democracy in Palestine now, since we must wait fifteen years before we can begin to think of democratic practices, is the rankest idiocy. As we give up more and more of ourselves to the Authority, letting Arafat do what he wishes without any check or accountability on his power to use his bloated security services, we are being as bad as any Arab state. And we do not even have a state. How can we repeat the tragic course of the Arab countries, in which national unity and a state of permanent emergency have been used as a cover for sustained dictatorship, total corruption, and mediocrity, plus more and more losses to Israel?<sup>198</sup>

Said writes of the ‘stark and extraordinarily unappetising’ dilemma of waging battle simultaneously on dual fronts. ‘Was I to defend the PLO and Arafat as, in fact, the main instruments of the Palestinian struggle against an overwhelmingly hostile media and public reaction that denied that struggle was anything more than terrorism and anti-Semitism? Or was I to be someone who joined the general racist chorus in the US of attacks on the Palestinians, Islam, the Arabs, and Arab nationalism in general?’<sup>199</sup> Thus framed, the dilemma is not merely (as Parry sees it) one of a Said torn between a cognisance of the decentred-ness of identity and the hybridity of culture, and the political utility of stable identities in the struggle against oppression. Rather, we are faced with an entirely *political* dilemma in which there is a need for both split and united selves in response to different but contemporaneous

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<sup>193</sup> Said, ‘Where Negotiations Have Led’, in *TEOTPP*, 19.

<sup>194</sup> Said, ‘Thirty Years After’, in *TEOTPP*, 162.

<sup>195</sup> Said, ‘Where Do We Go from Here?’, in *TEOTPP*, 22. See also in the same collection, ‘Post-Election Realities’, ‘Are There No Limits to Corruption?’.

<sup>196</sup> Said, ‘Uprising Against Oslo’, in *TEOTPP*, 110.

<sup>197</sup> Said, ‘Total Rejection and Total Acceptance Are Equivalent’, in *TEOTPP*, 67.

<sup>198</sup> Said, ‘Responsibility and Accountability’, in *TEOTPP*, 117.

<sup>199</sup> Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, xxiv. For discussion of a similar dilemma articulated by Albert Memmi, see Mustapha Marrouchi, *Edward Said at the Limits* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004), 227.

political exigencies. There seems to be a need for a singular and relatively coherent notion of Palestinian identity that can overcome the marginality imposed on it by Israeli oppression, but one that is complex enough to accommodate difference and dissent within the resistance.

If Said works through the paradoxes of nationalism most persuasively with the aid of Fanon's bifocal account of resistance as entailing both independence from external oppression and liberation from internal nationalist hegemony, the question that one is tempted to ask is whether the two aspects of resistance ought to be carried on sequentially or simultaneously. The argument for sequentiality is a pragmatic one: there is, it might be argued, little prospect of liberation without independence.<sup>200</sup> But proponents of simultaneity would argue that the postcolonial struggle for liberation is made impossibly difficult by the hegemony acquired by the revolutionary leadership during the anti-colonial struggle. That hegemony must therefore be contested *during* the struggle – 'even in the thick of battle' – if the liberation is not to be owned by the Mugabes, the Arafats, even the Gandhis, of this world.

Yet the debate over sequentiality and simultaneity is rendered moot by the fact that one of Said's major criticisms of the Oslo Accords concerned the very incompleteness of the 'independence' that they heralded. The Accords, as he saw them, allowed Israel to defer negotiations on virtually all the difficult questions surrounding Palestinian self-determination (sovereignty over borders, the right of return of refugees, the status of Jerusalem, the removal of settlements, etc.), thereby perpetuating its hold over the Occupied Territories whilst absolving it of responsibility for the living conditions of Palestinians. Conversely, they gave the PA just enough sovereignty to enable it to exercise coercive authority over its own people, but not enough to enable it to improve their lives in any meaningful way. Oslo was a Trojan horse, conferring on the Territories a radically incomplete and unsatisfactory sort of independence, cementing the coercive hegemony of the PA and rendering the prospects for liberation dimmer than they had ever been.

The Palestinian political context has of course changed dramatically in the years since Said's criticisms of the Oslo peace process and his death in 2003. His concern with the stultifying hegemony of the revolutionary leader and party, while remaining an enduring problem of revolutionary politics, is less immediately relevant to the situation in Palestine today: the leader is dead and the hegemony of Fatah has been rejected, decisively and democratically, by

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<sup>200</sup> This of course rests on the assumption that good governance requires self governance – not, it must be said, a universally held view even in an age when few publicly contest the right of self-determination. But we are concerned here with the conversation *within* liberation movements, where this *is* a universally held assumption.

the Palestinian electorate. Yet Said would have been profoundly disturbed to see the struggle for internal liberation descend into fratricidal conflict (gun battles rage in the West Bank between Fatah and Hamas at the time of writing), even as Israel remains unrelenting on all outstanding issues of dispute, and the international community unremittingly hostile to the elected representatives of the Palestinian people. It is difficult to speculate about how Said would have responded to these circumstances, but there is good reason to suppose that he would have been critical of both the minimalism of those who defend the Oslo Accords (even if only tactically), and the maximalism of those who continue to refuse to recognise Israel's right to exist.

#### 4.2.4 *Said, the ironic nationalist*

In the previous section, I analysed some of the devices that Said uses to work through his recognition of nationalism as necessary but unfortunate. I suggested that the most persuasive of these is strongly influenced by Fanon's conception of resistance as a bifocal enterprise against both the colonial oppressor (the hostile outside) and the nationalist bourgeoisie (the hostile inside). For Fanon, nationalism is central to the native's battle against the settler. But if nationalist consciousness is not transformed into social and economic awareness, the oppressive nationalist bourgeoisie remains entrenched, perpetuating the quasi-feudal, dependent position of the country in the global political economy. Said does not appropriate Fanon's Marxist categories or teleology, but takes very seriously the imperative of transforming a nationalist into a humanist consciousness. This is driven both by a concern to challenge the crushing hegemony of the successful revolutionary leader and party over the newly independent nation, and to preclude the habitual supremacism of 'triumphant, achieved nationalisms'.

Said's emphasis on the transformation of nationalist into humanist consciousness assumes a special poignancy in the peculiar circumstances of the Israel-Palestine conflict. One of his most compelling criticisms of Zionism points to its failure to enlarge its stand against the persecution of Jews into a stand against persecution per se. Particular victimisation narratives are necessary and justifiable, but 'it is inadequate only to affirm that a people was dispossessed, oppressed or slaughtered, denied its rights and its political existence, without at the same time doing what Fanon did during the Algerian war, affiliating those horrors with the similar afflictions of other people'.<sup>201</sup> Only through such recognition and affiliation – only by universalising the particular, so to speak – might one avoid a repetition of the injustices of the past.

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<sup>201</sup> Said, *Representations of the Intellectual*, 33.

These interrelated themes – the enlargement of nationalist into humanist consciousness, the universalisation of the particular, the affiliation of one’s persecution to that of others – find their natural culmination in Said’s advocacy of a binational single state as the most ethical solution to the conflict between Israelis and Palestinians. There is of course a strong pragmatic dimension to the one-state argument, namely, the operational difficulties of separating Israelis from Palestinians, given the extent to which their lives are intertwined territorially, hydrologically and economically – even if not socially.<sup>202</sup> For Said, short of ethnic cleansing or mass transfer, the creation of two ethnically defined states is simply impossible.<sup>203</sup> From the point of view of land, strong doubts have been expressed about whether a viable Palestinian state could ever be constituted in the Occupied Territories, given their territorial discontinuity (now exacerbated by Israel’s mammoth ‘Separation Barrier’) and the proliferation and entrenchment of settlements that Israel seems highly unlikely to dismantle.<sup>204</sup>

But the principled basis for the argument rests on thoroughly universalist premises. ‘What is it...that we have against Israel’, Said asks, ‘if we say that we want a ‘pure’ Palestine, free of Jews, free of everything that isn’t pure Arab and Muslim and Palestinian? Nothing at all: we would be mimicking exactly what it is that we attack. And how ignorant and narrow-minded, how chauvinistic and racist it is to define a person not by his/her ideas and values, but by his racial origins, religion, or culture.’<sup>205</sup> Said condemns partition as ‘the desperate and last-ditch efforts of a dying ideology of separation, which has afflicted Zionism and Palestinian nationalism, both of which have not surmounted the philosophical problem of the Other, of learning how to live with, as opposed to despite, the Other’.<sup>206</sup> Here, then, is a Fanonian nationalist who ultimately refuses Fanon’s Manichean opposition between settler and native, insisting that they must learn to live with one another. Perhaps this is simply a function of facts on the ground: the settlers<sup>207</sup> here have neither reached an accommodation with the natives nor annihilated them. Neither side has vanquished the other, however unequal the struggle, so they have little choice but to live with one another. It was Said’s fervent wish that they find the courage and integrity to do so.

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<sup>202</sup> Said, ‘What Can Separation Mean?’, in *TEOTPP*, 327.

<sup>203</sup> Said, ‘Truth and Reconciliation’, in *TEOTPP*, 316.

<sup>204</sup> Virginia Tilley, ‘The One-State Solution’, *London Review of Books* 25, no. 21 (2003).

<sup>205</sup> Said, ‘Art, Culture and Nationalism’, in *TEOTPP*, 264.

<sup>206</sup> Said, ‘What Can Separation Mean?’, in *TEOTPP*, 330.

<sup>207</sup> The settler/native terminology is of course highly contested in the case of Israel/Palestine because the ‘settlers’ here insist that they are returning natives (Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*, 244).

If Tagore and Said were asked whether they were nationalists, they would probably have answered the question in very different ways. Tagore would have denied that he was a nationalist, but might have acknowledged that he shared a number of nationalist concerns. Like the nationalists he was an anti-imperialist and a cultural revivalist, yet his notion of cultural revival was directed towards fundamentally internationalist ends. Moreover, his primary commitment was towards building what he saw as the educational and social foundations of the ideal society rather than the political superstructures that would govern it. Said would have acknowledged much more candidly that he was a nationalist, but would have qualified this acceptance with a Fanonian emphasis on liberation above and beyond mere nationalist independence. Yet disclaimers and qualifications apart, as prominent spokesmen for nationalist causes and as active producers of national identities, both men were nationalists par excellence. They were nationalists despite themselves, or what I have called 'ironic nationalists'.

[...]

'Bingle. 5<sup>th</sup> April. Saturday.  
Reliable informants say  
That the Great Bigshot Number One  
Shri Padma Bhushan Gobardhun  
And the Man-Council of this state,  
Intending to alleviate  
The water shortage in the town  
Across our ridge and ten miles down,  
Have spent three cartloads of rupees  
So far upon consultants' fees -  
Whose task is swiftly to appraise  
Efficient, cheap and speedy ways  
To dam our stream, create a lake,  
And blast a tunnel through to take  
Sufficient water to supply  
The houses that men occupy.'

'What do you think,' the tragopan  
Burst out, 'about this wicked plan  
To turn our valley blue and brown?  
I will not take this lying down.  
I'll cluck at them. I'll flap my wings.  
I tell you, I will do such things - '

[...]

And so it happened that a rally  
Meandered forth from Bingle Valley  
A few days later, up and down  
The hills towards the human town.

[...]

'You see, good beasts,' the Bigshot said,  
'We need your water - or we're dead.  
It's for the people that I act.  
The town must drink, and that's a fact.  
Believe me, all your agitation  
Will only lead to worse frustration.  
Go back, dear beasts, to Bingle now.  
We'll relocate you all somehow  
In quarters of a certain size.'  
He yawned, and rolled his little eyes.

Immediately, the tragopan  
Pulled out his papers, and began,  
With fact and query and suggestion,  
To give the Bigshot indigestion.  
'You say the town is short of water,

Yet at the wedding of your daughter  
The whole municipal supply  
Was poured upon your lawns. Well,  
why?  
And why is it that Minister's Hill  
And Babu's Barrow drink their fill  
Through every season, dry or wet,  
When all the common people get  
Is water on alternate days?  
At least, that's what my data says,  
And every figure has been checked.  
So Bigshot, wouldn't you expect  
A radical redistribution  
Would help provide a just solution?'

[...]

'Dear chap,' the Bigshot said, 'somehow  
I think you fail to comprehend  
What really matters in the end.  
The operative word is Votes,  
And next to that comes Rupee-notes.

[...]

Sadly, since you're now in the know,  
I can't afford to let you go.  
Your friend will never leave this room.  
The tragopan has found his tomb.'

[...]

The water problem in the state  
Became a topic for debate.  
The Bigshot, struggling with the flood,  
Was splashed with editorial mud.  
Then intellectuals began  
To analyse the tragopan.  
Was he a hothead or a martyr?  
A compromiser or a tartar?  
A balanced and strategic planner  
Or an unthinking project-banner?  
It seemed that nobody could tell.  
And maybe that was just as well -  
For mystery matched with eccentricity  
Provides the grist for great publicity,  
And myths of flexible dimension  
Are apt to call forth less dissension.

[...]

- Excerpted from Vikram Seth, 'The Elephant and the Tragopan', in *Beastly Tales From Here and There* (1991)

## ***5. Indigenous Insurgents and Rioting Ryots: cosmopolitanism and nationalism in multilevel contentious politics***

This chapter continues the endeavour of Part II of the thesis, which is to think inductively about what resistance in the condition of postcoloniality ought to look like. It looks at a rather different kind of resistance from that studied in the previous chapter, but one that similarly perceives self-determination as being threatened both from outside the postcolonial state and by that state. And it poses the same questions in respect of these cases of resistance: how do they achieve simultaneity? How is the scope of resistance framed? What is their attitude towards the postcolonial state? The focus of analysis in this chapter shifts in two ways. It tries to shift ‘down’ from elite to rather less elite voices of resistance, and it also moves from a consideration of anti-colonial nationalism to the terrain of what is popularly known as ‘anti-globalisation’ protest. These shifts are motivated by three considerations, which relate closely to the broader purpose of the thesis: namely, the contemplation of what relevance cosmopolitanism might have to subaltern resistance.

As suggested in chapter 1, despite the obvious appeal to non-elites of its promise of universal inclusion and egalitarianism, liberal cosmopolitanism’s strongest proponents have historically been those sufficiently endowed with the political and material privileges that enable them to experience a sense of inhabitation of the world as a whole, giving cosmopolitanism itself the appearance of a discourse of privilege.<sup>1</sup> I am not sure how much a study of Tagore and Said can do to dissipate these connotations and associations. Although both were deeply concerned, indeed identified, with non-elite resistance and demonstrated compellingly what a cosmopolitan outlook might bring to such resistance, it is difficult to deny that in both cases that outlook was itself a product of privileged class location, exemplary education (in Tagore’s case, largely informal) and much travel. None of this detracts from the magnitude and value of their achievements, but it does risk reinforcing the common prejudice of cosmopolitanism as an elite position. By steering the discussion towards social movements of indigenous peoples and marginal farmers in this chapter, I intend to consider how cosmopolitanism might appeal to rather less elite actors manoeuvring between hostile external and internal environments.

The shift in focus in this chapter is also intended to address a criticism that has been levelled at postcolonial theory in recent years on account of its perceived ‘linguistic turn’. This refers to its tendency to see the arena of politics as textual rather than empirical, one consequence of

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<sup>1</sup> See section 1.2.2.

which is that radicalism is seen to reside in identity politics at the expense of the material.<sup>2</sup> Neither Said nor Tagore is easily vulnerable to this criticism: it should be evident by now that Said was interested in the relationship between textual representation and material power, and that Tagore was deeply engaged with the materiality of caste oppression, even if he never adequately foregrounded class. Nevertheless because their work consisted mainly in producing cultural texts and criticism and because the terrain and mode of their resistance was primarily cultural, my thesis – were it to focus exclusively on them – risks mirroring the broader turn in postcolonial studies towards the cultural at the expense of the material. To focus on texts as primary repositories of discursive power and the production of counter-texts as primary modes of resistance leaves out those who are not mentioned in the former or, for whatever reason, were unable to produce the latter. Shifting the focus of analysis to social movements struggling for both cultural and material autonomy (in the form of control over land, resources and livelihoods) may compensate for this tendency.

A third and closely related rationale for the shift to social movements relates to the strong linkage between cosmopolitanism and mobility in much of the literature. The cosmopolitan worldview has sometimes been characterised as a view from multiple locations. Yet the very possibility of multiple vantage points is often premised on mobility (Said, for example, credits his cosmopolitan ‘contrapuntal’ vision to the fact of his exilic existence). The link between mobility and cosmopolitanism (or ‘post-nationalism’ as he puts it) is brought out most strongly by Appadurai. Adapting Anderson’s argument that ‘New World’ nations came to be imagined in particular ways that corresponded to the migratory and professional mobility options of creole elites conjoined with the phenomenon of ‘print capitalism’,<sup>3</sup> Appadurai suggests that global migration and global mass media now provide the basis for post-national imagined communities.<sup>4</sup> Mobility and migration are not necessarily privileged practices (think of refugees, exiles, indentured labour, illegal aliens, trafficked women), but Appadurai’s emphasis on mobility begs the question of whether those who are rooted might have the motivation and ability to imagine post-national communities.<sup>5</sup> I have already suggested that they do,<sup>6</sup> but I hope to develop this consideration of what cosmopolitanism might mean to the rooted by looking at social movements of people with a strong attachment to, and dependence on, land.

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<sup>2</sup> Darby, ‘Postcolonialism’, 24.

<sup>3</sup> Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.

<sup>4</sup> Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 21.

<sup>5</sup> Meyda Yegenoglu, ‘Cosmopolitanism and nationalism in a globalised world’, *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28, no. 1 (2005): 111.

<sup>6</sup> See section 1.2.2 and particularly the text accompanying footnote 92.

If these seem admirable rationales for the shift in focus from bourgeois public intellectuals writing in their individual capacity to social movements of the rooted struggling for cultural and material autonomy, the reader should stand warned that my aspirations have been realised to a limited extent. In large part, the limitations stem from methodology. As a work of comparative political theory, this chapter is chiefly concerned with the theory generated by the movements under consideration. Social movements ‘theorise’ themselves for a wide variety of reasons – most obviously as a guide to action for insiders, and to explain and justify claims to outsiders. But to ‘theorise’ also means to render claims abstract and modular, to frame them in more universally recognisable terms so as to enable their diffusion and sympathetic reception outside the locale in which they were generated.<sup>7</sup> This makes theorisation vital to the task of building alliances with other actors. My interest in the political theory generated by social movements has led to a disproportionate focus on actors within the movements who are responsible for the production of theory – typically, the leadership or actors close to the leadership, who typically originate from a higher class than the rank-and-file of the movement, are better educated and tend to travel more widely. This has the unfortunate consequence of attenuating, but hopefully not completely eclipsing, the rationales outlined above for studying social movements. Those rationales are not completely eclipsed because, for one thing, the theory articulated by the leadership of a movement must still resonate with the rank-and-file – it must have legitimacy – if it is to command their allegiance and guide their actions in any meaningful way. Second, we would be taking a seriously impoverished view of ‘theory’ if we were to view it solely as something contained within texts written by leaders. The theory of a movement – what it stands for, what it means – is generated as much by what its leaders say about it, as by what it does. As such, the analyst might abstract theory out of praxis – out of political gesture, demonstration, protest and theatre, in all of which the rank-and-file might have considerable agency – as much as out of written text. Yet, again, one must be realistic about what comparative political theory can do. It may be that the methodologies of comparative politics, sociology or anthropology are better equipped to provide insights into the question of what cosmopolitanism means to the rank-and-file of rooted social movements. The question I have really addressed, perhaps, is how cosmopolitanism is deployed on behalf of such actors.

In addition to the shift down from elite to less elite societal actors, this chapter also turns from one kind of contentious politics – anti-colonial nationalism – to another: what is popularly described as ‘anti-globalisation’ protest. This should not be seen as a temporal shift (the coloniality of occupied Palestine and Iraq, anachronistic as they seem, precludes us from

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<sup>7</sup> Sidney Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 104.

viewing anti-colonial nationalism as a phenomenon of the past), but as a conceptually distinct dilemma in which what is at stake is not the creation of postcolonial nation-states, but their continued viability as coherent units in conditions of contemporary capitalism. That viability has come under challenge from a form of contentious politics triggered by the perceived shrinkage of the pluralist space available to Third World states on economic issues, on account of a coercive liberal economic solidarism ushered in by the practice of conditionality.<sup>8</sup> This domain of contentious politics is popularly described as the ‘anti-globalisation movement’, but I do not use this label for a number of reasons.

First, the label presumes that there is a consensus on what ‘globalisation’ is, and therefore that we can understand, by implication, what the ‘anti-globalisation movement’ represents. ‘Globalisation’ is an enormously complex, multi-dimensional<sup>9</sup> phenomenon that has generated a vast literature, much of which is conceptually unhelpful even if empirically accurate, because it succeeds in capturing only a very small part of this phenomenon. I do not employ ‘globalisation’ as an analytical category in this thesis, preferring to use the idea of solidarism to describe the dissemination of norms along different dimensions because it seems to capture the geographical unevenness and politicisation of this process in a way that the catchall term ‘globalisation’ does not.

But the multi-dimensional nature of ‘globalisation’ does not simply make definition difficult – it also makes a mockery of the label ‘anti-globalisation’. A number of actors situated within the so-called ‘anti-globalisation movement’ resist the label because, while they oppose certain aspects of ‘globalisation’ (coercive convergence around the norms of the Washington Consensus,<sup>10</sup> for example), they are themselves parasitic on other aspects – the growth of global transport and communication technologies, the emergence of institutions of global governance which serve as targets of contention and have in turn precipitated the formation of global public spheres (such as the World Social Forum) in opposition to them.<sup>11</sup> Further,

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<sup>8</sup> See section 2.2.2 and the end of section 3.1.2. In the run-up to the war on Iraq in 2003, this ‘domain’ seemed to expand as a result of the merging of what were popularly called the ‘anti-globalisation’ and ‘anti-war’ movements. As such, it might have been defined as ‘the domain of contentious politics that crystallised in response to the perceived shrinkage of the pluralist space available to Third World states, on account of a coercive solidarism ushered in by the practices of economic conditionality, humanitarian intervention and pre-emptive war’. Because the actors I am concerned with in this chapter had already situated themselves in this domain of politics prior to 2003 primarily on account of their stance on economic issues, I shall employ the heavily economic pre-2003 conception of this domain as defined in the main text.

<sup>9</sup> David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt & Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> See section 2.2.2

<sup>11</sup> For arguments along these lines see David Graeber, ‘The New Anarchists’, in *A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible?*, ed. Tom Mertes (London: Verso, 2004), 204; Naomi

many actors within the ‘anti-globalisation movement’ envisage global solutions to the problem of minimally regulated capital.<sup>12</sup> For these reasons, it is hardly accurate to describe contentious politics against the Washington Consensus as ‘anti-globalisation’.

Even if ‘globalisation’ were understood in extremely restrictive, unidimensional terms – for example, as the convergence of norms of economic organisation around the Washington Consensus – definitional difficulties would persist. As most attempts to map this domain of contentious politics have quickly discovered, ‘anti-capitalism’ fails as an adequate description of the domain as a whole because of the presence of both ‘reformists’ (who are not opposed to capitalism per se, but typically to a particular ‘neoliberal’ model of capitalism) and ‘radicals’ (who might be understood as genuine anti-capitalists).<sup>13</sup> And while ‘anti-neoliberal capitalism’ might capture the lowest common denominator, it seems too anodyne to do justice to the many actors in this domain whose critiques of capitalism and the state are rather more fundamental.

The fractiousness and fragmentation of contentious politics against the Washington Consensus has led some analysts to question whether its agents can be described as comprising a ‘movement’ at all.<sup>14</sup> Nick Crossley argues that such politics is better viewed as taking place in a ‘protest field’, where ‘fields’ are understood – following the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu – as ‘sui generis social spaces, constituted by the objective relations which hold between specific agents, organisations and institutions, and organised around the common participation of these players in a historically and culturally specific social

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Klein, *Fences and Windows: Dispatches from the Front Lines of the Globalisation Debate* (London: Flamingo, 2002), 4; Mark Laffey & Jutta Weldes, “‘Anti-Globalisation’ Protests and the Future of Democracy”, in *Democracy and Globalisation*, ed. Charles Nieman (Kent State University Press, 2004).

<sup>12</sup> This is not true of all opponents of the Washington Consensus – many argue that the appropriate response is ‘de-globalisation’ – either via a strengthening of the regulatory capacity of nation-states, or through a strategy of localisation with a considerably reduced role even for nation-states. See Alex Callinicos, ‘Where Now?’, in *Anti-Capitalism: A Guide to the Movement*, eds. Emma Bircham & John Charlton (London: Bookmarks Publications, 2001), 393; On localisation, see Colin Hines, *Localization: A Global Manifesto* (London: Earthscan, 2000).

<sup>13</sup> Meghnad Desai & Yahia Said, ‘The New Anti-Capitalist Movement: Money and Global Civil Society’, in *Global Civil Society 2001*, eds. Helmut Anheier, Marlies Glasius & Mary Kaldor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Simon Tormey, *Anti-capitalism: a beginner’s guide* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2004).

<sup>14</sup> Many commentators view the lack of a linking metanarrative as a strength rather than a weakness, enabling coalition-building among radically different actors without a consequent subsumption of individuality (Klein, *Fences and Windows*, 16; Paul Kingsnorth, *One No, Many Yeses: A Journey to the Heart of the Global Resistance Movement* (London: Free Press, 2003)). This lack of coherence has given rise to the occasional usage ‘movement of movements’ (see Mertes ed., *A Movement of Movements*).

“game”<sup>15</sup>. Crossley suggests that the players share a tacit minimalist agreement (opposition to a particular model of capitalism), which provides the axis around which different actors are able to disagree or compete – i.e. to engage in the same ‘game’ – thereby constituting a common social space, ‘field’, or what I have been calling a ‘domain’.

The radical heterogeneity of this protest field makes generalisation about the claims and theoretical moorings of its constituents a hazardous endeavour and has encouraged me instead, to focus on fragments within the field. The two fragments that I analyse in this chapter are the Zapatistas of Chiapas, Mexico and the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (Karnataka State Farmers’ Association, hereafter KRRS) of southern India. The former is now an icon of ‘anti-globalisation’ protest; the latter, less well known globally, is perhaps the most prominent example of such protest in the state of Karnataka in southern India, where I live. It is worth emphasising that this chapter is an analysis of these fragments rather than a study of the protest field in which they are located. But why study these fragments and not some others?

In a lecture delivered in 1996, economist Jagdish Bhagwati drew attention to what he saw as an ironic global role reversal, in which developed<sup>16</sup> countries had come to fear the implications of economic globalisation (declining wages and lost jobs as a result of competition from low-cost developing countries) ‘in sharp contrast to the warm embrace of the Global Age by the policymakers in a large number of developing countries’.<sup>17</sup> Bhagwati singled out three developing countries for mention as evidence of this trend – Brazil, Mexico and India. The choice is instructive. As ‘middle power’ developing countries with large internal markets and relatively more diversified economies, these were countries that were better positioned to make the best of policies of economic autarchy and/or self-sufficiency than many others in the Third World. Their ‘defection’ from economic pluralism to the new economic solidarism therefore seemed to symbolise the decisive end of such policies. The relative strength of these states may have insulated their populations from global competitive pressures to a greater degree than other Third World states found possible, making the shock of adjustment when that protection was withdrawn correspondingly greater. This might account for the ferocity of ‘anti-globalisation’ protest that has been witnessed in these countries, though it would certainly not be the only reason. We would also have to take into

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<sup>15</sup> Nick Crossley, ‘Global anti-corporate struggle: a preliminary analysis’, *British Journal of Sociology* 53, no. 4 (2002): 674-6.

<sup>16</sup> I use developed / developing for the moment because it is Bhagwati’s preferred terminology.

<sup>17</sup> Jagdish Bhagwati, ‘The Global Age: From a Skeptical South to a Fearful North’, in *A Stream of Windows: Unsettling Reflections on Trade, Immigration, and Democracy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 36.

account the similar political opportunity structures offered by these constitutional democracies (albeit constrained by the institutionalisation of one-party control and/or periods of authoritarian rule). I offer these only as tentative speculations on why we might logically view Mexico and India as similarly situated states, making it reasonable to compare contentious politics against economic liberalisation within these states.

This leaves, as a final issue for preliminary clarification, the question of what I am going to be comparing. One noteworthy feature of ‘anti-globalisation’ protest is that its targets of contention seem to be distributed across different levels of the international system – institutions of global governance, multinational corporations, governmental authorities (typically at the national level, which tends to be the locus of authority on questions of economic liberalisation, but also occasionally at the provincial or state level). This gives rise to what I have called ‘multilevel contentious politics’<sup>18</sup> in the title of this chapter. Or to express the idea in more familiar terms, it pits the actors I am interested in against a set of hostile external and internal opponents – IFIs, powerful states and foreign investors on the outside, and their sympathetic interlocutors<sup>19</sup> on the inside. Yet what distinguishes the relationship between the hostile inside and outside here, is that instead of being engaged in a Manichean confrontation with one another (as in the case of anti-colonial nationalism), they are perceived as being complicit in the common project of disseminating a particular model of capitalism.

The challenge of engaging in political contestation simultaneously against these different actors at different levels of the international system has tended to produce what Sidney Tarrow calls ‘rooted cosmopolitans’, whom he defines as ‘individuals or groups who mobilise domestic and international resources and opportunities to advance claims on behalf of external actors, against external opponents, or in favour of goals they hold in common with transnational allies’.<sup>20</sup> Tarrow views cosmopolitan identities as relational, in the sense that

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<sup>18</sup> This is an open-ended category that encompasses all actors engaged in contentious politics vis-à-vis targets located at different levels of the international system. As such it could well include Al Qaeda and other vectors of political Islam. There is no reason, from the point of view of a comparativist studying social movements, why such actors should not be amenable to the sort of analysis I conduct in this chapter. Nevertheless, as a normative theorist I am interested mainly in the appeal of liberal cosmopolitanism to the Third World (see section 1.2) and am therefore interested in actors whose claims are assimilable to a broadly liberal politics. While contemporary political Islam and other projects inspired by notions of religious community would certainly qualify as ‘multilevel contentious politics’ and may indeed generate distinctive cosmopolitical visions (see section 1.2.1), they fall outside the normative scope of this thesis as defined in chapter 1.

<sup>19</sup> See section 2.2.2.

<sup>20</sup> Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*, 29. Note that the first half of this definition alludes to a politics of solidarity with those perceived to be in need, while the second half alludes to a more self-

they develop through people's relations with one another. He sees a greater prospect of such identities developing today, when heightened flows of goods, capital, information and labour place increasingly large numbers of people in relations of threat and/or opportunity vis-à-vis others outside their local or national settings. Yet the imperatives of multilevel contestation mean that even as cosmopolitans move physically and cognitively outside their locales of origin, they continue to be linked to social networks, resources, experiences and opportunities in their places of origin. Different actors mediate these conflicting imperatives differently – some become heavily invested in their cosmopolitan identities, becoming participants in enduring transnational coalitions, while for others “global identities” will be costumes put on during occasional external forays before returning to domestic activism or retreating into private life’.<sup>21</sup>

In this chapter, I ask why the Zapatistas and the KRRS have engaged in multilevel contestation and whether the imperatives of such contestation have made them ‘rooted cosmopolitans’. Tarrow has given us a rich array of concepts with which to think about how social movements marshal resources to exploit political opportunity structures at multiple levels. I want to think more specifically about the political theoretic aspect of this problem – how do social movements engaged in multilevel contentious politics theorise their claims and actions? My analysis of the theory generated by the Zapatistas and the KRRS focuses on a tension that sits at the heart of the effort to be ‘rooted cosmopolitans’. On the one hand these social movements face strong incentives to articulate their claims in universalist terms that appeal to external allies who might be of assistance in the struggle against external and internal opponents. On the other hand, the effort to remain rooted gives rise to a politics that looks very much like a kind of nationalism. Most studies of multilevel contentious politics have focused on what seems new about this kind of politics – the growth of transnational networks and coalitions, the crystallisation of global public spheres, etc. Rather less attention has been paid to the deployment of familiar nationalist tropes and identities for new purposes. I try to draw out both registers in this chapter.

## **5.1 Indigenous insurgents**

On 1 January 1994, the world awoke to news that between two and three thousand members of a military organisation calling itself the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional (Zapatista Army of National Liberation, hereafter EZLN), had occupied four large towns and hundreds of ranches in the state of Chiapas in southern Mexico, in a surprise armed uprising.

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interested politics. The actors I study in this chapter are better described by the latter half of the definition, although they do express solidarity with other struggles.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., 41-2, 47.

Describing themselves as the ‘product of five hundred years of struggle’ of the indigenous peoples of Mexico and more pointedly claiming the ideological legacy of Emiliano Zapata – a leading figure of the Mexican Revolution of 1910 – the rebels introduced their struggle as one for ‘work, land, housing, food, healthcare, education, independence, freedom, democracy, justice and peace’.<sup>22</sup> Although taken by surprise, the Mexican military responded swiftly, bombing indigenous communities from the air and reportedly resorting to torture and extrajudicial execution to suppress the rebellion: 200 people lost their lives in the fighting that ensued.<sup>23</sup> By 6 January, the rebels had been dislodged from the municipalities they had occupied and forced to retreat into the relative safety and obscurity of the Lacandon jungle.

Yet from the very outbreak of the rebellion, they had begun to employ a sophisticated communications strategy, explaining and justifying their actions in eloquent communiqués addressed variously ‘to the people of Mexico’, ‘to the peoples and governments of the world’, ‘to national and international civil society’. Issued under the authority of the ‘General Command of the EZLN’, but more frequently in the name of its enigmatic and erudite spokesman Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, the communiqués<sup>24</sup> are a curious blend of political and economic analysis, Mayan folklore, magical realism, satire, invective, and quasi-religious, almost messianic rhetoric that sketch incrementally a vision of a political project that has confounded, inspired and irritated in almost equal measure, observers in Mexico and elsewhere. Disseminated through a complex network<sup>25</sup> comprising indigenous communities, solidarity activists from Mexican and international civil society organisations, newspapers such as the Mexico City centre-left daily *La Jornada* and the Italian communist *Il Manifesto*, internet listservs and websites, the communiqués piqued such a high level of sympathetic interest in the rebellion both within Mexico and outside, that the government felt compelled to declare a unilateral ceasefire on 12 January 1994, despite its unquestionable ability to crush the rebellion decisively. A subsequent government military offensive in February 1995 was

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<sup>22</sup> General Command of the EZLN (hereafter General Command), ‘War! First Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle’, 2 January 1994, in *Our Word is Our Weapon* (hereafter *OWIOW*), ed. Juana Ponce de León (London: Serpent’s Tail, 2001), 15.

<sup>23</sup> Human Rights Watch, *World Report 1995: Mexico*, [http://www.hrw.org/reports/1995/WR95/AMERICAS-09.htm#P490\\_177020](http://www.hrw.org/reports/1995/WR95/AMERICAS-09.htm#P490_177020).

<sup>24</sup> The communiqués are the key textual primary sources from which the political theory of the Zapatistas might be abstracted. I focus mainly on the 1994 – 2001 period, which was a highpoint in the global visibility of the movement, and during which much of its initial political and philosophical worldview was elucidated. As a movement that is ongoing, a great deal of this worldview may change in response to events on the ground. The difficulties of chasing a moving target have compelled me to confine the analysis to a defined period.

<sup>25</sup> For a description of this network, see Thomas Olesen, ‘The transnational Zapatista solidarity network: an infrastructure analysis’, *Global Networks* 4, no. 1 (2004): 89-107; for a sense of the Internet presence of the solidarity network, see <http://www.eco.utexas.edu/faculty/Cleaver/zapsincyberwebsites.html>; for a description of the process of ‘diffusion’ of Zapatista propaganda, see Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*, 113-17.

similarly halted by the embarrassing glare of domestic and international publicity. Since then, the Zapatista struggle has taken the form of intermittent negotiation with the government, conducted in an atmosphere of low-intensity warfare, with the military virtually encircling rebel strongholds with a view to wearing down resistance through a slow process of attrition. Operating under conditions of siege, the rebels have experimented with various schemes of autonomous governance and have continued to communicate with the outside world in their own imitable style.

That indigenous communities in Chiapas had chosen to rebel could not have surprised informed observers of Latin American politics. The indigenous peoples of Latin America have physically resisted Latin domination of the continent since the Conquest. That history of resistance includes hundreds of rebellions against minority rule in Bolivia, Peru and Guatemala, participation in revolutionary coalitions in twentieth century Mexico and Bolivia, and a half-millennium long implicit contestation of hegemonic cultural practices through the use of indigenous languages, religions, dress, artistic expression, etc. Nor is it difficult to understand the motivations for such resistance – as Alison Brysk puts it starkly, ‘Latin American Indians are the poorest, sickest, most abused, and most defenceless members of their societies’.<sup>26</sup> Chiapas (one of six states in Mexico with a high proportion of indigenous peoples) presents a classic instance of such deprivation, rendered still more unjust by the enormous natural wealth of the state. At the time of the rebellion, it produced 55% of Mexico’s hydroelectricity for example, yet 33% of its homes were not electrified (compared to a national average of 12.5%). 41.6% of homes did not receive potable water (national average: 20.6%), and 58.8% lacked basic sanitation facilities (national average: 36.4%). Chiapas accounted for 21% and 47% of Mexico’s oil and natural gas production respectively and 35% of its coffee; it was also the second largest producer of beef and corn. Yet 70% of its population lived below Mexico’s official poverty line and 31% of its people were illiterate (national average: 13%).<sup>27</sup>

Most observers of the conflict in Chiapas acknowledge that high levels of deprivation were exacerbated by tensions over land fuelled by the rapid penetration of capitalist relations in the region. Peasants were pushed off the land by a rapid expansion in cattle production during the 1970s, and pulled into urban areas by the oil boom of that decade. The growing demand for electricity from an expanding urban economy drove the establishment of hydroelectric

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<sup>26</sup> Alison Brysk, ‘Turning Weakness Into Strength’, *Latin American Perspectives* 23, no. 2 (1996): 40.

<sup>27</sup> All figures cited from Stephen J. Wager & Donald E. Schulz, ‘Civil-Military Relations in Mexico: The Zapatista Revolt and Its Implications’, *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs* 37, no. 1 (1995): 3-4. For Marcos’ recitation of these facts, see Marcos, ‘A Storm and a Prophecy: Chiapas – The Southeast in Two Winds’, 27 January 1994, in *OWIOW*, 22-29.

projects, which resulted in further encroachment of land.<sup>28</sup> There followed a period of hyper-involvement of the state in the rural economy, particularly during the administration of Luis Echeverría Álvarez (1970-76) when, in an attempt to break the power of caciques and local middlemen who were seen as undermining the state's ability to siphon off resources to the national level, government-run commercial institutions were set up to provide credit to, and purchase directly from, small farmers. Investment in rural development expanded further in the oil boom years under José López Portillo (1976-82), providing rural infrastructure, direct support to production and social welfare institutions. Extensive land distribution took place under the administration of Miguel de la Madrid (1982-88), although this was done in ways that undermined relatively independent campesino groups, whilst rewarding those that had been loyal to the ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI).<sup>29</sup>

'Hyper-involvement' of the state in the rural economy induced a new dependence on the state, which in turn made the sudden withdrawal of state support in the wake of the Mexican debt crisis exceedingly difficult to adjust to. Determined to maintain Mexico's competitive position in the global economy, policy elites in the administrations of de la Madrid and Carlos Salinas de Gortari (1988-94) introduced a series of austerity measures as part of a broader effort to ensure that debt repayments were made on schedule. Two sets of policy initiatives in particular would send seismic waves through the rural economy in Chiapas. First, maize and coffee growers were hurt by the phasing out of various forms of state support (guaranteed prices, input subsidies, etc.). Between 1989 and 1993, coffee productivity fell by 35% and small growers experienced a 65-70% drop in income; many in Chiapas were forced to abandon production entirely. Second, art. 27 of the Mexican Constitution, which had hitherto enabled the granting of communal use-rights over land (ejidos) to legally incorporated groups of peasants (ejidatarios), was reformed to allow a virtual free market in land.<sup>30</sup> Studies of the process of neoliberal reform in Mexico suggest that these policy reforms were not externally imposed on the Mexican state by IFIs, but reflected ideas that insiders – particularly the 'technocrats' within the de la Madrid and Salinas administrations – had been advocating for some time. External crisis strengthened the hands of these insiders, enabling them to push

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<sup>28</sup> Mike Gonzalez, 'The Zapatistas: the challenges of revolution in a new millennium', *International Socialism* 89 (2000): 63.

<sup>29</sup> Roger Burbach, 'Roots of the Postmodern Rebellion in Chiapas', *New Left Review* 205 (1994): 118-20.

<sup>30</sup> Neil Harvey, 'Rural Reform and the Zapatista Rebellion: Chiapas, 1988-1995', in *Neo-liberalism revisited: Economic Restructuring and Mexico's Political Future*, ed. Gerardo Otero (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996), 192-3; Merilee S. Grindle, 'Reforming Land Tenure in Mexico: Peasants, the Market, and the State', in *The Challenge of Institutional Reform in Mexico*, ed. Riordan Roett (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 1995), 42-3, 46, 49.

through – in a highly secretive process – proposals that had previously encountered resistance from within the policymaking elite.<sup>31</sup>

When social movements engage in multilevel contention they appear to identify multiple sources of grievance, prompting further questions about the relative weight given to each of these sources. If, as most commentators suggest, the Zapatista rebellion was the result of long-running discontents on account of indigenous alienation from the Mexican social contract, ignited by the further hardships imposed by neoliberal reform, it would appear that the primary locus of grievance was domestic and the primary target of contention the Mexican state. So why have the Zapatistas chosen to engage in multilevel contention, and how have they theorised this choice?

### 5.1.1 *Global framing*

The Zapatistas could easily have gone down in history as just another Guevarist uprising, meriting a few inches of column space in the world's newspapers before being quickly and quietly suppressed by the Mexican state. Instead within months, activists in distant corners of the world were saying 'todos somos Marcos'. The reason is that from the very outset, the Zapatistas had framed their rebellion with exceptional sophistication and originality in global terms.

The notion of 'framing' was originally proposed by sociologist David Snow and his collaborators, who argued that all societies use cognitive frames ('schemata of interpretation') to organise experience and guide action. Social movements construct 'collective action frames' to attract supporters, signal their intentions and gain media attention. Drawing on these ideas, Tarrow has argued that social movements are increasingly resorting to 'global framing', which he defines as 'the use of external symbols to orient local or national claims'.<sup>32</sup> Global framing could entail the representation of the particular as a metaphor for a more universally felt experience, thereby attracting the attention, and possibly the support, of external actors who might otherwise have felt no connection with a particular movement.

Organised indigenous resistance in Chiapas is not a recent phenomenon. As far back as the 1960s, catechists preaching in indigenous languages had been urging people to articulate their experiences of oppression and consider exercising their rights. This grassroots dissemination of liberation theology culminated in a First Indigenous Congress in 1974, which brought

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<sup>31</sup> Woods, *The Globalizers*, 86; Grindle, 'Reforming Land Tenure in Mexico', 47-50.

<sup>32</sup> Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*, 60-1.

together 1,250 indigenous delegates from more than 300 communities to the state capital San Cristóbal de las Casas.<sup>33</sup> Maoist student activists, particularly those influenced by the anti-Leninist/Stalinist *Política Popular* tendency after 1968, had also begun working with peasant groups in the state.<sup>34</sup> Formal campesino organisations had begun to emerge in the 1970s, three of which would merge to form the Alianza Campesina Independiente Emiliano Zapata (ACIEZ: Emiliano Zapata Independent Peasant Alliance) in the late 1980s. By 1992, ACIEZ had gained support from a number of indigenous ethnic communities – the Tzotziles, Tzeltales, Choles, Tojolabales, Mames and Zoques – and recast itself as a ‘Nacional’ organisation. It eventually went underground to begin training for an armed rebellion and emerged as the EZLN.<sup>35</sup>

Each of these quite distinct ideological currents in the region might have framed the rebellion in a very different way. What the EZLN succeeded in doing was to reframe resistance that had previously been articulated in terms of campesino/indigenous discontent against the Mexican state, as a revolt against what they called ‘neoliberalismo’. This seems to be a case of what Snow et al. called ‘frame bridging’, which they defined as ‘the linkage of two or more ideologically congruent but structurally unconnected frames regarding a particular issue or problem’.<sup>36</sup> The EZLN had bridged two narratives – a long-running narrative of dispossession and discrimination at the hands of the Mexican state and a more recent narrative about the depredations of global capital. It did not matter that the locus of power and responsibility in both narratives could quite credibly have been placed largely in Mexico City. By articulating its dissent in multilevel terms, targeting not only the Mexican federal government but also the IFIs, global corporate power and powerful states, the EZLN had aroused the interest and solidarity of opponents of all these targets of contention the world over.

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<sup>33</sup> Judith Adler Hellman, ‘Real and Virtual Chiapas: Magic Realism and the Left’, in *Necessary and Unnecessary Utopias: Socialist Register 2000*, eds. Leo Panitch & Colin Leys (London: Merlin Press, 2000), 164, points out that the Catholic Church was motivated mainly by the desire to check the advance of evangelical Protestant sects in the region.

<sup>34</sup> Gonzalez, ‘The Zapatistas’, 69. The break with Leninism and Stalinism was advocated in a document entitled ‘Hacia una Política Popular’ (‘Towards a Popular Politics’), written by Adolfo Orive, a lecturer at Mexico City’s Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. Departing from the assumption that only an industrial proletariat could and would function as a revolutionary agent, it advocated a politics of alliance of several classes defined by their common exclusion from the state. It was critical of armed struggle and sceptical of the Leninist conception of a vanguardist party, calling instead for a ‘política de dos caras’ (politics on two fronts). This entailed political organisation on the margins, away from the threat of state repression and immersed within mass movements; the method of organisation was called ‘una política asambleista’, implying direct democracy through mass meetings.

<sup>35</sup> The account of campesino organisation is cited from Adam David Morton, ‘Mexico, Neoliberal Restructuring and the EZLN: A Neo-Gramscian Analysis’, in *Globalisation and the Politics of Resistance*, ed. Bary K. Gills (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 262.

<sup>36</sup> Cited from Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*, 62.

Global framing was accomplished in a number of ways. The outbreak of the rebellion on 1 January 1994, was timed to coincide with the entry into force of NAFTA – a powerful symbol of ‘neoliberalismo’ in North America as a whole. Zapatista communiqués contain frequent references to neoliberalism, which Marcos describes as a ‘Fourth World War’ (the Cold War being the third), waged by ‘the great financial centres’ who are said to be engaged in a dual process: on the one hand, the destruction of the distinctive material, historic and cultural bases of nation states and a ‘qualitative depopulation’ of their territories, which involves ‘detaching all those who are useless to the new market economy’; on the other hand, a reconstruction of national states and their reorganisation in accordance with the logic of the global market. This reconstruction and reorganisation is said to produce ‘a peculiar excess: left-over human-beings, not necessary for the ‘new world order’, who do not produce, or consume, who do not use credit, in sum, who are disposable’.<sup>37</sup> In another communiqué, Marcos attempts global framing by casting himself as a metaphor for ‘disposable’ subaltern identities everywhere. The communiqué was occasioned by a report in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, alluding to the possibility of his being homosexual. This is what Marcos had to say in response:

Marcos is a gay person in San Francisco, a black person in South Africa, an Asian person in Europe, a Chicano in San Isidro, an anarchist in Spain, a Palestinian in Israel, an indigenous person in the streets of San Cristóbal, a gang-member in Neza, a rocker in the Ex-Soviet Union, a Jew in Germany... In other words, Marcos is a human being in this world. Marcos is every untolerated, oppressed, exploited minority that is resisting and saying, ‘Enough already!’ He is every minority who is now beginning to speak and every majority that must shut up and listen. He is every untolerated group searching for a way to speak, their way to speak. Everything that makes Power and the good consciences of those in power uncomfortable – this is Marcos.<sup>38</sup>

But it was not simply through a rhetorical affiliation with distant struggles that global framing was achieved. As Naomi Klein observes, in contrast to most movements of indigenous peoples, which seek to protect land and culture by barricading themselves against the outside world, the Zapatistas have ‘flung open the doors and invited the world inside’.<sup>39</sup> In August 1994, the EZLN hosted a National Democratic Convention in Chiapas, which drew nearly 6,000 participants, mostly from Mexico, to discuss strategies for revitalising Mexican democracy. It has organised national and international consultas at periodic intervals as well

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<sup>37</sup> Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, ‘The Seven Loose Pieces of the Global Jigsaw Puzzle’, June 1997, <http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/1997/jigsaw.html>.

<sup>38</sup> Subcomandante Marcos, ‘The streams, when they descend, have no way of returning to the mountains except beneath the ground’, 28 May 1994, <http://www.spunk.org/library/places/mexico/sp000655.txt>. Other texts are less personalised, with the ‘Zapatistas’ functioning as universal metaphor for exclusion. See for example, General Command, ‘Opening Remarks at the First Intercontinental *Encuentro* for Humanity and against Neoliberalism’, 27 July 1996, and ‘Mexico City’, 11 March 2001, in *OWIOW*, 103-4, 155.

<sup>39</sup> Naomi Klein, ‘The unknown icon’, *Guardian*, 3 March 2001, <http://books.guardian.co.uk/departments/politicsphilosophyandsociety/story/0,6000,445553,00.html>.

as two extraordinary encuentros. The first of these, held in August 1996 in the jungles of Chiapas, brought together a few thousand activists from all over the world. The second, called by the European Zapatista support network, took place in Spain the following year and resulted in the creation in 1998 of Peoples' Global Action (PGA) – a network that has coordinated a number of global protest 'days of action' against the summits of the IFIs.<sup>40</sup> The consultas and encuentros have not only served as arenas for discussion but have also functioned as decision-making bodies, with delegates (both Mexican and foreign) voting on key strategic issues. These activities have, in a very tangible sense, contributed to the development of an extensive global solidarity network<sup>41</sup> that has brought an unending stream of international activists, observers and solidarity-tourists to Chiapas, despite the state of siege and grinding poverty of the region.

It is not difficult to appreciate why the Zapatistas have resorted to global framing or invested such considerable efforts in the construction of global solidarity. They have been trying to precipitate what Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink have called the 'boomerang effect', in which social actors confronting a repressive or unresponsive state seek international allies to bring pressure on the state from the outside.<sup>42</sup> Pressure in this case has come in the form of an embarrassing spotlight on poverty and immiseration in Mexico at precisely the moment at which the state was trying to enter First World clubs such as NAFTA and the OECD. The solidarity that has come out of publicity has given the Zapatistas some respite from the repression that would almost certainly have attended the rebellion, allowed them some measure of autonomy over their lives and lands, and won some official recognition for long-standing indigenous demands.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> For archives of the two encuentros, see <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/chiapas1996/en/encounter1dx.html> and <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/chiapas1996/en/index.htm>. For more on PGA, see <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/en/>.

<sup>41</sup> See Thomas Olesen, 'Globalising the Zapatistas: from Third World solidarity to global solidarity?', *Third World Quarterly* 25, no. 1 (2004): 260, who argues that the Zapatista solidarity network has a stronger claim to being 'global' and reflects a more intense sense of mutuality because, in contrast to older internationalisms where there was often a clear distinction between providers and beneficiaries of solidarity, the Zapatistas serve as a source of inspiration and ideas and not merely as an object of solidarity. But see Josée Johnston and Gordon Laxer, 'Solidarity in the age of globalisation: Lessons from the anti-MAI and Zapatista struggles', *Theory and Society* 32, no. 1 (2003): 76, who argue that the Zapatista solidarity network cannot be considered 'global' because its participants come primarily from a limited number of Western countries. Johnston & Laxer fail to consider the extent to which elements of Zapatista ideology have come to influence the social forum process, thereby travelling far beyond Western and Latin American left circles.

<sup>42</sup> Margaret E. Keck & Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 12.

<sup>43</sup> For one example of this, see the San Andres Accords reached in February 1996 between the Mexican government and a number of indigenous groups. For the full text, see [http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/san\\_andres.html](http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/san_andres.html).

The rationale for global framing seems fairly clear, although there is obviously a debate to be had about the extent to which successful global framing has altered the power balance between the insurgents and the state. But it also raises a number of intriguing questions about norms within the movement, that I cannot fully do justice to here. If global framing is intended primarily for international consumption, what resonance does it have with the rank-and-file of the movement? What, for example, does a Tzotzil Mayan peasant make of Marcos's identification with gay liberation?<sup>44</sup> Questions such as this stretch the competence of the political theorist and seem to demand the skills of a sociologist or anthropologist. So I shall only note that identities initially employed rather cosmetically for instrumental purposes can sometimes stick, to become constitutive of the subject. The reason is that the persuasiveness of global framing depends, in the medium- to long-term, on a reasonable congruence between rhetoric and reality. Without such congruence the Zapatistas will quickly lose international support. In framing their rebellion in global terms and inviting the world into their home, the Zapatistas have also opened *themselves* up to global scrutiny and with scrutiny comes the risk that solidarity might dissipate if international activists do not like what they see or feel they have been misled.<sup>45</sup> To give just one example of the process by which instrumental identities might become constitutive, consider the fact that the communiqués frequently affirm feminist commitments. Even if we were to assume, cynically, that these were expressed primarily for the consumption of western solidarity activists, there *is* evidence of a gradual contestation and transformation of norms on gender relations in Zapatista communities.<sup>46</sup> Whether this is the result of long-running bottom-up contestation by indigenous women themselves, or a top-down effort by the leadership to close gaps between

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<sup>44</sup> This also raises questions of process and procedure. In most of the communiqués, the voice seems far too individualistic for them to be a committee product, although the general themes may reflect decisions taken collectively. But if the communiqués are the product of one or a few persons, are they conveyed back to, and ratified by, the indigenous communities as a whole? Or are they seen primarily as devices for communication with the external world, and therefore left largely to the discretion of those who are seen to know that world best (Marcos and the 'General Command' of the EZLN)?

<sup>45</sup> Of course many solidarity activists may be wary of criticising for fear of being seen as cultural imperialists, but there will always be others – unpersuaded by the arguments of cultural relativists – who are less reticent. The argument I have made in this section is essentially one of compliance via entrapment in one's own rhetoric – a phenomenon that we should be able to observe equally in state and non-state actors that value their reputations (Thomas Risse & Kathryn Sikkink, 'The socialisation of international human rights norms into domestic practices: introduction', in *The Power of Human Rights: International Norms and Domestic Change*, eds. Thomas Risse, Stephen C. Ropp & Kathryn Sikkink (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)).

<sup>46</sup> See for example, the EZLN's Women's Revolutionary Law, <http://www.eco.utexas.edu/~hmcleave/booklaw.html>; On the participation of women in the struggle, see Lynn Stephen, 'Democracy for Whom? Women's Grassroots Political Activism in the 1990s, Mexico City and Chiapas', in *Neo-liberalism revisited*, ed. Otero, 177-8; Patrick Cuninghame and Carolina Ballesteros Corona, 'A Rainbow at Midnight: Zapatistas and Autonomy', *Capital and Class* 66 (1998): 20. But see Howard Campbell, *Zapotec Resistance: Ethnic Politics and Cultural Revivalism in Southern Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico, 1994), 229-35, whose anthropological study of Zapotec women in the Isthmus of Tehuantepec suggests that political participation is either mediated through men or restricted to stereotypically female domains.

revolutionary rhetoric and reality is difficult to say (or rather, the precise balance of these forces is difficult to specify). Nonetheless, these are the sorts of issues we would want to investigate to understand what rooted non-elites make of the cosmopolitan frames employed on their behalf.

### 5.1.2 Nationalism against the state

There has been a great deal of focus on the global level of the Zapatistas' multilevel resistance, but rather less appreciation of the place of 'nation' and 'state' in the political theory of the movement. This is surprising because despite their evident alienation from hegemonic understandings of these concepts, the Zapatistas have consistently expressed a passionate sense of belonging to the 'Mexican nation'. The Declaration by the National Indigenous Congress (comprising delegates from different indigenous groups) stated in May 2001:

...509 years of history have signified nothing but exploitation, discrimination, and misery to our peoples, who are the primordial inhabitants of this nation...this Mexican Nation, born from our seed and heart, was built by powerful rulers in denial of our existence and of our supreme right to walk along our own path – and *by this we don't mean that we deny ourselves of our Fatherland, which was founded with our blood.*<sup>47</sup>

In one communiqué after another, the Zapatistas cast themselves as patriots, as 'the inheritors of the true builders of our nation',<sup>48</sup> while successive federal administrations of Salinas, Ernesto Zedillo and Vicente Fox are characterised as traitors and sell-outs that have betrayed the ideals of the 1910 revolution. 'Our fight is for the homeland, and the bad government dreams with a foreign flag and language.'<sup>49</sup> Laying claim to the ideological heritage of the long history of subaltern resistance in modern Mexico, they declare:

We are a product of five hundred years of struggle: first, led by insurgents against slavery during the War of Independence with Spain; then to avoid being absorbed by North American imperialism; then to proclaim our constitution and expel the French empire from our soil; later when the people rebelled against Porfirio Diaz's dictatorship, which denied us the just application of the reform laws, and leaders like Villa and Zapata emerged, poor men just like us who have been denied the most elemental preparation so they can use us as cannon fodder and pillage the wealth of our country...we are millions, the dispossessed who call upon our brothers and sisters to join this struggle as the only path, so that we will not die of hunger due to the insatiable ambition of a seventy-year dictatorship led by a clique of traitors who represent the most conservative and sell-out groups. They are the same ones that opposed Hidalgo and Morelos, the same ones that betrayed Vicente Guerrero, the same ones that sold

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<sup>47</sup> Declaration by the National Indigenous Congress about the Law of Indigenous Rights, 1 May 2001, <http://www.globalexchange.org/countries/americas/mexico/resources/IndigenousRights.pdf>, emphasis mine.

<sup>48</sup> General Command, 'First Declaration', in *OWIOW*, 13.

<sup>49</sup> General Command, 'Fourth Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle', 1 January 1996, in *OWIOW*, 79.

half our country to the foreign invader, the same ones that imported a European prince to rule our country, the same ones that formed the ‘scientific’ Porfirista dictatorship, the same ones that opposed the Petroleum Expropriation, the same ones that massacred the railroad workers in 1958 and the students in 1968, the same ones that today take everything from us, absolutely everything.<sup>50</sup>

Note how domestic opponents are accused of betraying the nation to ‘the foreign invader’ and are tarred by association, however anachronistically, with ‘North American imperialism’, ‘the French empire’, ‘a European prince’. Alongside this tirade against the state’s facilitation of pillage by outsiders, the Zapatistas passionately embrace and reclaim nationalist imagery and symbols at every available occasion. They express allegiance to the national flag, which is displayed prominently alongside the EZLN flag in demonstrations and marches. Indeed one communiqué notes that although all are welcome to fly the EZLN flag, ‘there is a much bigger and powerful [sic] flag with which we can all be covered. The flag of the national revolutionary movement where all the most diverse tendencies can fit...’ The communiqué ‘calls on Mexicans to fly that flag, not the EZLN flag, not the flag of armed struggle, but the flag that is the right of all thinking beings,’ and concludes that ‘under that great flag we’ll fly our Zapatista flag’.<sup>51</sup> The rebellion is even justified with reference to the national constitution,<sup>52</sup> with the Zapatistas cast as guardians of the Constitution even as they take up arms against the state: ‘As long as a new constitution is not created, we will uphold the 1917 Constitution as the true one. We will fight for it.’<sup>53</sup>

Commentators have offered a variety of tortuous interpretations of these strongly patriotic and nationalist inflections in a movement that has otherwise attracted attention for the global framing of its grievances. For example, Massimo de Angelis argues that the invocation of ‘nation’ in Zapatista internationalism can be understood in four different ways.<sup>54</sup> First, ‘nation’ is said to refer to the ‘ideal’ or ‘whole’ that the indigenous communities feel a sense of belonging to. De Angelis is not explicit about what this ‘whole’ is in the context of the Zapatistas, but he seems disinclined to identify it with the Mexican nation. Gideon Baker

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid.

<sup>51</sup> General Command, ‘We want all who walk with the truth to unite in one step’, 20 January 1994, [http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/ccri\\_unite.html](http://flag.blackened.net/revolt/mexico/ezln/ccri_unite.html).

<sup>52</sup> Specifically, art. 39 of the constitution, which provides that ‘National Sovereignty essentially and originally resides in the people. All political power emanates from the people and its purpose is to help the people. The people have, at all times, the inalienable right to alter or modify their form of government.’ General Command, ‘First Declaration’, and ‘Second Declaration of the Lacandon Jungle’, 12 June 1994, in *OWIOW*, 14, 43.

<sup>53</sup> Marcos, ‘Mr. Zedillo, Welcome to the Nightmare’, 3 December 1994, in *OWIOW*, 69.

<sup>54</sup> Massimo De Angelis, ‘Globalisation, New Internationalism and the Zapatistas’, *Capital and Class* 70 (2000): 20-21. The author makes the argument that whereas in the ‘old internationalism’, the international dimensions of struggle were subordinated to the strategic objectives of the national dimension, in the ‘new internationalism’ the national/international distinction has lost its sharpness. I am not persuaded that ‘this new internationalism is definitively losing the “national” dimension as the referent of social transformation’ (16).

displays a similar reluctance, preferring to read the Zapatistas' invocation of 'nation' as 'a metaphor for that self-determining political space from which they, and many other subaltern groups, are systematically excluded'.<sup>55</sup> Second, de Angelis argues that 'nation' as used by the Zapatistas is not defined by national borders or racial characteristics but more in terms of the 'subversive affinity' shared by actors in all parts of the world engaged in a common struggle. Third, the use of a nationalist discourse is said to enable the Zapatistas to challenge the state's claim to represent and protect the general interest against the competing clamours of special interests. Fourth, the Zapatista deployment of the term 'nation' is argued to be much closer to the rhetoric of liberation, autonomy and identity pursued over the last two centuries by indigenous 'nations', whose claims to sovereignty have always been in direct opposition to those of nation-states.

The third and fourth of these putative connotations of 'nation' in Zapatista discourse seem to me most persuasive, yet what is notable about the discussion as a whole is the extreme reluctance to acknowledge the most obvious conclusion: that when the Zapatistas invoke the 'nation' and embrace symbols popularly associated with the *Mexican* nation, they use that term not as a metaphor for some other, quite different kind of political community, but in the way that it is commonly understood. One would hardly use 'nation' as a metaphor for some quite distinct notion of community, whilst wrapping oneself in the symbols of an actually existing nation-state.<sup>56</sup> Add to this the fact that much of the rhetoric of betrayal accuses domestic opponents of engaging in kleptocratic collaboration with foreigners, and one cannot help but be struck by the strongly nationalist currents in the political thought of the movement. So why are sympathetic commentators so reluctant to acknowledge this nationalist dimension? Part of the reluctance comes from the association of nationalism with racism, xenophobia and fascism, in the minds of a significant portion of the Western left, from which many of the solidarity activists originate.<sup>57</sup> Part of it comes from a disinclination to interpret Zapatismo in Western political theoretic terms and a valorisation of supposedly pre-modern indigenous political traditions. But the EZLN itself has warned against this latter tendency, noting that

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<sup>55</sup> Gideon Baker, *Civil Society and Democratic Theory: Alternative Voices* (London: Routledge, 2002), 144.

<sup>56</sup> This is not intended to suggest that 'nation' can never be used as a metaphor in political communication. One frequently hears the term 'queer nation', where 'nation' is intended to arouse strong feelings of loyalty and allegiance to an identity without carrying the territorial connotations that national identities tend to. The phrase is understood easily enough, but confusions would certainly arise if queer advocacy on behalf of queer people worldwide were carried out under the banner of the Union Jack.

<sup>57</sup> Gordon Laxer, 'The Movement That Dare Not Speak Its Name: The Return of Left Nationalism/Internationalism', *Alternatives* 26 (2001): 1-32.

Those who deny the indigenous Mexican peasant the possibility of understanding the concept of Nation, who force him to look to his past – which separates him from the rest of the country – and prohibit him from looking to the future – which unites the nation and which is the only possibility for survival of the indigenous people – reiterate the division, not of social classes, but of categories of citizens. The first is the governing class, the second is the political parties of the opposition, and the third is the rest of the citizens. The indigenous would be in the very inferior category of ‘citizens in formation’...<sup>58</sup>

A more candid acknowledgement of the place of nationalism in the worldview of the Zapatistas would allow us to ask critical questions about what political work nationalism is doing, and whether Zapatista nationalism has managed to avoid the more exclusivist and supremacist connotations of nationalism. If successful global framing draws international support for the movement thereby precipitating a boomerang effect, nationalist rhetoric is intended primarily for a domestic audience. The rhetoric of betrayal reminds Mexican society of the extent to which ideals that are central to its founding myths remain unfulfilled. If successfully employed, it could arouse the sympathy of domestic constituencies, paving the way for alliances with other subaltern groups or even cross-class alliances.

In reading the Zapatistas as nationalists, one enters a vexed discourse that has been plagued by the enduring problem of distinguishing between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ nationalisms. That problem has typically been addressed by positing a distinction between ‘good’ civic nationalisms that open their ranks to all who consent to the political values and procedures of the nation, and ‘bad’ ethnic nationalisms that restrict membership on the basis of pre-political, unchosen and often immutable characteristics such as ethnicity or race.<sup>59</sup> Indigenous/aboriginal ethnic nationalisms have usually been spared this judgment, probably because their typically abject material circumstances are seen to give them an unimpeachable claim to being ‘defensive’ nationalisms. But it is not clear why they should be spared scrutiny, given that indigenous ethnic reassertion is no less capable than other ethnic nationalisms of stoking tensions between groups.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Unattributed, ‘The Long Journey from Despair to Hope’, 22 September 1994, in *OWIOW*, 59-60.

<sup>59</sup> Michael Ignatieff, *Blood and Belonging: Journeys into the New Nationalism* (London: Vintage, 1994), 3-6.

<sup>60</sup> See for example Campbell, *Zapotec Renaissance*, 227-29, writing about the Coalición Obrera Campesina Estudiantil del Istmo (COCEI: Worker-Peasant-Student Coalition of the Isthmus of Tehuantepec), who argues that ‘Zapotec ethnic militancy and COCEI’s ethno-political ideology are a double-edged sword. By glorifying Isthmus Zapotec culture and history, COCEI leaders strengthen the movement internally, but limit possibilities for expansion to other Isthmus indigenous groups and mestizo Mexicans’. Campbell writes that the emphasis on ethnicity has been an obstacle to rapprochement between the mostly Zapotec COCEI and the Huave people and has also generated conflict with the Mixe and Zoque peoples.

One way of cutting through the unhelpful, and frequently narcissistic, debate on good and bad nationalism is to take note of David Lloyd's reminder that nationalism is always in competition with other social identities such as class, gender, etc. jostling for recognition on the same terrain and that it has historically proven able to contain these alternative social movements because of its intimate conjunction with the state. To appreciate his argument, it is useful to think of nation and state as typically engaged in a mutually cannibalistic relationship, in which the state wants to hijack nationalism to legitimate its authority even as nationalism seeks a monopoly over the state apparatus to protect and foster itself. For Lloyd, the radical or emancipatory potential of nationalism turns on whether it has developed conjunctural relations to other social movements, rather than viewing them as competitors that need to be eliminated or contained through the repressive apparatuses of state formations.<sup>61</sup>

With this in mind, several points may be made in defence of Zapatista nationalism. First, it has not sought to 'saturate the field of subject formation' as Lloyd puts it, by subordinating other identities. As a subaltern minority movement, it can hardly hope to do so at the level of the nation-state. But even within the Zapatista 'nation', there has been space for other identities – the distinctiveness of the various indigenous communities of Chiapas is consistently recognised and reiterated, and there seems to be a growing contestation of patriarchal norms within indigenous communities, to give just two examples. Second, far from entering into an intimate relationship with the state, Zapatista nationalism has resolutely asserted itself against the state. As Marcos put it very clearly in an open letter to Zedillo, shortly after the latter's inauguration as President:

We do not want for Mexico your kind of unity, which will assure the permanence of the same system of oppression, now made up to look like a new administration. That is not the type of unity that Mexico needs. The one that our history reclaims is the *unity against the state-party system of government, which has the nation submerged in a poverty of body and spirit.*<sup>62</sup>

Not only is this a nationalism against the current incumbents of the state apparatus, it is also a nationalism that does not aspire to occupy that apparatus at all. The Zapatistas have refused both the Leninist role of a revolutionary vanguard as well as the liberal route to power via transformation into a political party and participation in the electoral process. Some observers have described this as a form of anti-politics or as a 'non-power opposition to power',<sup>63</sup> but

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<sup>61</sup> David Lloyd, 'Nationalisms against the State', in *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital*, eds. Lisa Lowe & David Lloyd (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 182, 192.

<sup>62</sup> Marcos, 'Mr. Zedillo, Welcome to the Nightmare', in *OWIOW*, 64.

<sup>63</sup> Observation of a participant at the World Social Forum, Mumbai, January 2004, cited in Rahul Rao, 'WSF Mumbai – included out?', *Mute: Culture and Politics after the Net* 28 (2004): 64.

this is a mystification of what the Zapatistas have accomplished. In pushing the state out of the Lacandon jungle and establishing autonomous areas within which they govern themselves, they have undeniably seized power. Their novelty lies in the way they have exercised it in accordance with the indigenous notion of ‘mandar obediciendo’ (‘commanding by obeying’ or ‘leading by following’), which is said to entail the subjection of leaders to the rule of their command bases. In Western political theoretic terms, this may be understood as analogous to a form of direct democracy with provision for revocability of authority.<sup>64</sup> The EZLN claims, and visitors have attested, that indigenous base communities exercise these rights of election and revocation in relation to local committees as well as the top council of the EZLN. If true, this would suggest, not that the Zapatistas have refused power, but that they have wrested it from the state, divided it up and spread it around.

Nor does nationalism against the state necessarily imply a commitment to the abolishment of the state, as some commentators have suggested.<sup>65</sup> I am more persuaded by the view that the Zapatistas aim, rather more realistically, to build strong checks on the exercise of state power by creating alternative public spheres – what José Johnston has called ‘subaltern counterpublics’ – in which subaltern groups denied the possibility of engaging in democratic deliberation in dominant public spheres might find an alternative space in which to articulate their interests.<sup>66</sup> But I would contest the anti-statist reading of the Zapatistas more strongly by arguing that they *do* envisage a continued role for nation-states and, in some respects, argue for a strengthening of national sovereignty. As Marcos says very plainly:

...the Zapatistas think that, in Mexico (attention: in Mexico) the recuperation and defence of national sovereignty is part of an antineoliberal revolution...The Zapatistas think that the defence of the national state is necessary in view of globalisation, and that the attempts to slice Mexico to pieces comes from the governing group and not from the just demands for autonomy for the Indian Peoples. The EZLN, and the best of the national indigenous movement, does not want the Indian peoples to separate from Mexico, but to be recognized as part of the country with their differences...The paradoxes continue because while the EZLN struggles for the defence of national sovereignty, the Mexican Federal Army struggles against that defence and defends a government who has destroyed the material bases of national sovereignty and given the country, not just to powerful foreign capital, but to the drug traffickers...<sup>67</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> For a good discussion, see Baker, *Civil Society and Democratic Theory*, 141.

<sup>65</sup> John Holloway, ‘Dignity’s Revolt’, in *Zapatista! Reinventing Revolution in Mexico*, eds. John Holloway & Eloina Pelaez (London: Pluto Press, 1998), 171; Gustavo Esteva, ‘The Zapatistas and People’s Power’, *Capital and Class* 68 (1999): 165.

<sup>66</sup> José Johnston, ‘Pedagogical guerrillas, armed democrats, and revolutionary counterpublics: Examining paradox in the Zapatista uprising in Chiapas Mexico’, *Theory and Society* 29, no. 4 (2000): 478-92.

<sup>67</sup> Marcos, ‘The Seven Loose Pieces’.

Elsewhere, the defence of national sovereignty is advanced with a clear awareness that the indigenous peoples of Chiapas, acting on their own, would have little chance of regulating the entry and operation of global capital:

It hasn't escaped our notice that various international powers are nursing the idea of using the rich oil and uranium deposits under Zapatista soil for their own benefit. Those up above are making up complex accounts and calculations, entertaining the hope that the Zapatistas will make separatist proposals. It would be easier and cheaper to negotiate purchasing the subsoil with the cooperation of the Banana Republic (Mayan Nation, they call it). After all, it's well known that the indigenous are satisfied with small mirrors and glass beads...they certainly have made no headway, because – it just so happens – the Zapatistas take the 'National Liberation' part of the EZLN very much to heart and sword. We may be anachronistic, but we still believe in 'outmoded' concepts like 'national sovereignty' and 'national independence'.<sup>68</sup>

I have been trying to explain why the Zapatistas engage in multilevel contestation and what this entails in political theoretic terms. I have tried to draw out the different registers in which they speak and to identify the political work that each of these is intended to accomplish. The cosmopolitan language of global framing arouses international interest and solidarity in the struggle against an unresponsive and/or repressive state, pressing the state to modify its behaviour via the 'boomerang effect'. Even if the primary targets of contention are hostile internal actors, there are strategic benefits to be reaped from highlighting their links with powerful external agents. Having chosen to engage in multilevel contestation, the Zapatistas are compelled to speak in both cosmopolitan and nationalist registers. Nationalism speaks to a domestic audience, reminding it of the incomplete realisation of its founding ideals and inviting it to join in the struggle against the state. That struggle, in the case of the Zapatistas, is neither anti-state nor anti-power, but entails what Marcos has called 'the recuperation and defence of national sovereignty'. A rhetoric of betrayal is employed to suggest that the state has been seduced away from the nation by global capital. Under such circumstances, the Zapatistas demand, the nation ought to be able to revoke the authority of the state (or at least that of the current incumbents of the state) to act in its name. But once this unmooring of the state from the nation has been repaired, the state ought to be strengthened to enable it to defend the nation from the depredations of global capital. Rooted cosmopolitanism, in the case of the Zapatistas, seems to work towards the strengthening of national sovereignty.

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<sup>68</sup> Marcos, 'For Maurice Najman, Who Keep Feigning Death', 19 July 1999, in *OWIOW*, 201. This seems to echo Eric Hobsbawm's observation that 'the most convenient world for multinational giants is one populated by dwarf states or no states at all', cited in Laxer, 'The Movement That Dare Not Speak Its Name', 7.

## 5.2 Rioting ryots

In June 1980, the Malaprabha irrigation project in the south Indian state of Karnataka became the focus of an agitation by farmers in the region against the state government. They were protesting the imposition of a 'betterment levy', exorbitant water taxes and irrigation cesses;<sup>69</sup> to add insult to injury, the water they were being charged for had not even been supplied to them.<sup>70</sup> Tensions were heightened after police fired at the protesters, resulting in five deaths. Beginning initially in the Dharwad and Gadag districts of Karnataka, the agitation had been led by a local coordination committee that included leaders of left political parties. By August, non-party raitha sanghas (farmers' associations) had sprung up in many districts, including Belgaum, Bijapur, Bellary and Shimoga. These would eventually merge to form the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (KRRS).

The KRRS was not alone in organising farmers. Other notable farmers' associations were Shetkari Sanghatana (SS) in the west Indian state of Maharashtra and the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), based mainly in the north Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.<sup>71</sup> Unlike other contemporaneous social movements<sup>72</sup> such as those of women and dalits, which have tended to see themselves as pan-Indian in their scope of concern, farmers' organisations were formed independently within the different linguistic states of the country. Although loosely federated with one another, each bears the stamp of the particular ethno-linguistic context from which it emerged (reflected, for example, in the word for 'farmer' in their names, which, in each case is taken from the regional language of their state of origin). The tendency towards localisation is particularly evident in the case of the KRRS, which, unlike the other two organisations, has not expanded its base beyond the state of Karnataka,<sup>73</sup> even though it has supported agitations elsewhere in India. Ironically, despite this intensely local orientation, the KRRS enjoys perhaps the highest international visibility of all the farmers' associations in India, particularly in 'anti-globalisation' circles. It is a prominent member of La Via Campesina, an

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<sup>69</sup> Gail Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1993), 111.

<sup>70</sup> M. Madan Mohan, 'A powerful voice that espoused farmers' cause', *The Hindu*, 4 February 2004.

<sup>71</sup> Other major farmers' organisations are the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh in Gujarat and the Tamilaga Vyavasavavigal Sangham (Tamil Nadu Agriculturalists' Association) in Tamil Nadu.

<sup>72</sup> For some overviews of the social movement landscape in India, see Smitu Kothari, 'Social Movements and the Redefinition of Democracy', in *India Briefing 1993*, ed. Philip Oldenburg (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993); Niraja Gopal Jayal, 'Reinventing the State: The Emergence of Alternative Models of Governance in India in the 1990s', in *Democratic Governance in India: Challenges of Poverty, Development, and Identity*, eds. Niraja Gopal Jayal & Sudha Pai (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2001); Pramod Parajuli, 'Power and Knowledge in Development Discourse: New Social Movements and the State in India', in *Democracy in India*, ed. Niraja Gopal Jayal (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); Ghanshyam Shah ed., *Social Movements and the State* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2002).

<sup>73</sup> Muzaffar H. Assadi, *Peasant Movement in Karnataka: 1980 – 94* (Delhi: Shipra Publications, 1997), 143.

international network of small farmers' organisations, and played a central role in the creation of PGA, which, as mentioned earlier, was itself a product of the second Zapatista-inspired *encuentro* held in Spain in 1997. This combination of a pronounced local and global orientation provided a *prima facie* basis for the decision to study the KRRS as an instance of multilevel contentious politics.

At the local level, KRRS has long been demanding 'remunerative prices' or, very simply, higher returns to farmers for their crops. Its members have long complained of the increasing cost of agricultural inputs without a corresponding increase in remuneration from the market, as a result of which profit margins have continually shrunk. This fundamental grievance has provoked a barrage of protest over the last 25 years. Resorting to what Ramachandra Guha has described, in another context, as a 'Gandhian vocabulary of protest',<sup>74</sup> non-cooperation has been a favourite tactic. Farmers have refused to pay land revenue to land development and commercial banks, evaded taxes on water and power and, on occasion, withheld agricultural produce from the market. When failure to pay land revenue has prompted attachment of land by the government, KRRS members have formed 'anti-attachment squads' to resist punitive action by the state, sometimes locking up or chasing away land revenue bureaucrats who approach their villages.<sup>75</sup> They have frequently refused to pay for electricity, returning electricity metres to officials in symbolic gestures of protest. They have demanded the writing off of loans and have protested the 'unscientific' pricing policy of the government, accusing it of setting artificially low support prices even as (more recently) it has opened markets, in accordance with WTO obligations, to heavily subsidised foreign produce.<sup>76</sup>

These specific demands form part of what Gail Omvedt describes as an 'ideology of ruralism', which essentially calls for an improvement in the terms of trade between agriculture and industry, between rural and urban areas.<sup>77</sup> The rallying cry is that of *grama swarajya* (village self-rule), in furtherance of which the movement has, in previous years, led boycotts of industrialised manufactured goods, insisted on the appropriation of natural resources in and around villages for the consumption of the rural populace, agitated against

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<sup>74</sup> Ramachandra Guha, 'The Environmentalism of the Poor', in *Between Resistance and Revolution: Cultural Politics and Social Protest*, eds. Richard G. Fox & Orin Starn (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1997), 28. The notion of a 'vocabulary of protest' draws on, but also attempts to move beyond, Charles Tilly's 'repertoires of contention', in that it sees techniques of protest as having both a utilitarian and an expressive dimension. Protesters are both defending their interests and trying to pass judgment on prevailing social arrangements.

<sup>75</sup> Assadi, *Peasant Movement*, 59-61.

<sup>76</sup> Interview, Chukki Nanjundaswamy (Working president, KRRS), Bangalore, 20 September 2005, who informed me that 'dumping' facilitated by the liberalised import regime had significantly undercut local prices in the market for sugarcane, paddy, coconut, maize, jowar and wheat.

<sup>77</sup> Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution*, 111.

commercial eucalyptus plantations on environmental and economic grounds, demanded that social forestry programmes be managed by village panchayats (the lowest rung of local government in rural areas), etc. Many of these goals, it believes, are best advanced through a revitalisation of Panchayati Raj institutions, primarily through programmes of mass education to raise awareness amongst the rural populace of their right to participate in local government.<sup>78</sup>

Alongside its tradition of Gandhian resistance through non-cooperation and mass civil disobedience, the KRRS began a gradual and hesitant engagement with party politics in the 1980s. It had adopted a resolute ‘non-party, non-electoral politics’ position till 1983, but ended its political neutrality and decided to support parties in opposition to the ruling Congress in elections to the state legislative assembly held that year. In 1984, it went back to rejecting all political parties and began a tentative non-party engagement with the electoral process by setting up ‘mathadarara vedike’ (voters’ forums) in each constituency. In 1987, it created a political party named Kannada Desha, distinct from the movement itself (the movement would reabsorb the party two years later). Finally, in 1990 and 1992 it contested elections in 11 constituencies of the Lok Sabha (lower house of the federal Parliament) and 111 constituencies of the Vidhana Sabha (lower house of the state legislative assembly), but won only two seats in the latter.<sup>79</sup> In addition to being spectacularly unsuccessful, this brief flirtation with the electoral sphere seems to have been a much-regretted affair. One issue of the movement’s newsletter details how the lure of power led to the defection of several members, some to the right-wing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), in return for the promise of ministerial office. More broadly, entry into electoral politics is now seen to have bred hierarchical relations between the leadership and rank and file of the movement, and to have demobilised the movement, robbing it of much of its activist zeal.<sup>80</sup>

Scholars of social movements in India have observed that interest-based movements have tended to remain substantially disengaged from electoral politics, whereas identity-based movements – particularly those organised around language, caste and religion – have fared well in the electoral domain.<sup>81</sup> The reasons are not hard to fathom. Interest-based movements

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<sup>78</sup> Interview, A. Somalingayya (member, KRRS), Bangalore, 20 September 2005.

<sup>79</sup> This account of the KRRS’s foray into electoral politics is summarised from Assadi, *Peasant Movement*, ch. 2, and Muzaffar H. Assadi, “‘Khadi Curtain’, ‘Weak Capitalism’ and ‘Operation Ryot’: Some Ambiguities in Farmers’ Discourse, Karnataka and Maharashtra 1980-93”, in *New Farmers’ Movements in India*, ed. Tom Brass (Ilford: Frank Cass, 1995).

<sup>80</sup> KRRS, *News from KRRS*, no. 1 (1999), <http://www.rfb.it/icc99/krrsnews/news1.htm>.

<sup>81</sup> Mary Katzenstein, Smitu Kothari & Uday Mehta, ‘Social movement politics in India: institutions, interests, and identities’, in *The Success of India’s Democracy*, ed. Atul Kohli (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 244, 252.

find it difficult to appeal to those outside the interest group, whereas identity claims can paper over differences of interest within the group. Indeed the particular issues taken up by identity-based movements are fungible – one can easily be replaced with another, so long as it does the work of securing recognition for the community’s selfhood (think of the relative ease with which the Hindu right has used a number of different issues to consolidate its electoral base – construction of the Ram temple at Ayodhya, a uniform civil code, ending the special constitutional status of Kashmir, etc.).

It is difficult to estimate the precise size of the interest group that the KRRS represents. Its newsletter claims a membership of 10 million,<sup>82</sup> which is equivalent to about 20% of the population of Karnataka.<sup>83</sup> This seems to be a gross overestimate, given its poor electoral performance – even allowing for the disadvantages suffered by third parties in a first-past-the-post electoral system. When I asked Chukki Nanjundaswamy, the current president and daughter of the founding president of the KRRS, how big the movement was, I was given the evasive response that there had not been a numerical reckoning of the movement’s base in ten years.<sup>84</sup> In any case, given that the plunge into electoral politics in the early 1990s had yielded dismal results, it was time to try something different.

### 5.2.1 *Global framing*

In December 1992, the KRRS hit the headlines when around 75 of its members occupied the Bangalore offices of the agro-multinational Cargill, threw much of its equipment out of the windows on to the street below and set fire to it. In July 1993, KRRS members destroyed a Cargill warehouse in the city of Bellary, 300 kilometres north of Bangalore. In August 1995, activists attacked the newly-opened Bangalore outlet of Kentucky Fried Chicken, offering a battery of arguments in justification including health concerns over the possible carcinogenic effects of substances used to fatten chickens and economic and environmental concerns over the diversion of land use from food cropping to animal fodder.<sup>85</sup> Although the restaurant reopened soon after the attack and was well patronised by an urban middle-class clientele, it

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<sup>82</sup> KRRS, *News from KRRS*. An internet search of ‘KRRS 10 million’ revealed that this was a claim that had been picked up and disseminated, uncritically and without verification, by the movement’s international allies.

<sup>83</sup> Census of India, 2001, [http://www.censusindia.net/t\\_00\\_003.html](http://www.censusindia.net/t_00_003.html).

<sup>84</sup> Interview, Chukki Nanjundaswamy, Bangalore, 20 September 2005.

<sup>85</sup> Muzaffar H. Assadi, “‘Chickens’, ‘Greens’, and ‘Ragi Balls’”: A Discourse on Kentucky Fried Chickens’, in *Contemporary Social Movements in India: Achievements and Hurdles*, eds. Sebesti L. Raj & Arundhuti Roy Choudhury (New Delhi: Indian Social Institute, 1998), 204.

was given police protection for several months for fear of repeat attacks.<sup>86</sup> In 1998, KRRS activists sabotaged two of the three field trials of genetically engineered Bt cotton being conducted by Monsanto in Karnataka, by setting the crop on fire (the action was called ‘Operation Cremate Monsanto’). Throughout, the movement insisted that its actions were compatible with a Gandhian commitment to non-violence, on the understanding that ‘one can only speak about violence when it is directed against living beings, not against inanimate objects. We hence consider the destruction of office material or buildings as perfectly non-violent actions, as long as no human being or other living beings are attacked,’ it clarified.<sup>87</sup> Less confrontationally, the KRRS had begun to engage in a number of awareness-raising activities. Working closely with the Malaysia-based Third World Network in 1992-93, it organised seminars to discuss the so-called Dunkel Draft, then still under negotiation, which would later become the basis for the agreement establishing the WTO.<sup>88</sup> In October 1993, it organised a convention of ‘Third World peasantry’ in Bangalore, attended by thousands of local farmers and representatives of farmers’ organisations from other parts of India and from Indonesia, Malaysia, Nicaragua, Zimbabwe, Sri Lanka and the Philippines.

Two factors accounted for this dramatic change in tactics and targets of contention. First, the failure of electoral politics demanded a change in course. Spectacular attacks on symbols of global capitalism brought this hitherto rural movement to the attention of urban Karnataka. As we shall see, it also brought the KRRS a high level of global visibility. Second, in terms of timing, the change in forms and targets of contention coincided with the liberalisation of the Indian economy commenced by the Congress-led government of P. V. Narasimha Rao in 1991, and with India’s participation in negotiations over the Dunkel Draft. The severe balance of payments crisis in 1991 necessitating assistance from the IMF provided the context in which liberalisation was commenced, but the decision to liberalise predated the crisis and the reforms enacted outstripped the conditions that the IMF was inclined to impose. As with Mexico, on balance, the impetus for liberalisation seems to have come from domestic actors.<sup>89</sup> Nonetheless, the increasing involvement of IFIs in policy-making and the expansion of foreign direct investment in previously restricted sectors made the global framing of farmers’ grievances highly plausible to domestic and international audiences.

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<sup>86</sup> The attack on KFC took place three years before the more widely reported dismantling of a McDonald’s outlet by French farmers led by José Bové, suggesting that KRRS may have been playing something of a pedagogic role in the ‘anti-capitalist’ movement.

<sup>87</sup> KRRS, *News from KRRS*.

<sup>88</sup> Assadi, “‘Chickens”, “Greens”, and “Ragi Balls”, 211.

<sup>89</sup> On this point, see Arunabha Ghosh, India Background Paper, *Pathways through Financial Crises Project*, Global Economic Governance Programme (University College, Oxford), April 2004; Shastri, ‘The politics of economic liberalisation in India’, 27-56.

In a scathing attack on ‘global civil society’ activists, David Chandler has suggested that the tendency to engage in contention at the global level is primarily the result of a narcissistic unwillingness to engage with one’s own polis.<sup>90</sup> In the case of the KRRS the reasons seem to have more to do with its inability to engage, and with the apparent futility of attempting to do so, given the perception that policy-making authority has leached out of the state and into the IFIs. ‘Inability’ to engage with one’s polis, even a democratic one that offers ample opportunity for contestation, should not ipso facto suggest that one’s views are somehow unreasonable. In many cases, inability may be the result of structural inequalities that consign certain groups to the position of permanent minorities. Adivasis in India, for example, despite constituting 8.2% of the total population are a miniscule minority in all but a few states, thanks to their geographical dispersion. Inadequately served by the institutions of representative democracy and inadequately protected by alternative institutions intended to mitigate the tyranny of the majority (such as the bureaucracy and judiciary), they have felt compelled to ‘go global’ – particularly in the case of contention against the Sardar Sarovar dam in the Narmada valley.<sup>91</sup> We cannot assume, from their inability to engage with the polis, that there is something illegitimate about their attempts to transfer contention to another venue.<sup>92</sup> Yet going global carries risks. In the case of the anti-dam movement it has resulted in a vicious backlash from the state – particularly its Hindu nationalist incumbents, who have sought to portray opponents of the dam as ‘anti-national’.<sup>93</sup> Going global also sometimes misdiagnoses the agency and extent of influence of external actors on the state – it overestimates the power of the hostile outside. In focusing excessively on global targets such as the World Bank, the anti-dam movement successfully forced the Bank to withdraw funding

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<sup>90</sup> David Chandler, ‘Building Global Civil Society “From Below”?’ , *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 33, no. 2 (2004): 313-39.

<sup>91</sup> For studies of which, see Sanjeev Khagram, *Dams and Development: Transnational Struggles for Water and Power* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004); William F. Fisher ed., *Toward Sustainable Development? Struggling Over India’s Narmada River* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1995); Jean Drèze, Meera Samson & Satyajit Singh eds., *The Dam and the Nation: Displacement and resettlement in the Narmada Valley* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).

<sup>92</sup> This seems to be the assumption made by some of the literature criticising civil society demands for greater access to IFIs as an illegitimate attempt to get a second bite at the negotiating cherry. See for example, David Robertson, ‘Civil Society and the WTO’, *The World Economy* 23, no. 9 (2000): 1119-34.

<sup>93</sup> But even the kinder, gentler face of the Indian state resorts to this variety of innuendo. During the course of a lecture entitled ‘Managing Globalisation in India: Critical Issues’ (1 November 2006), Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission, Montek Singh Ahluwalia, parried questions about the demands of the anti-dam movement with the irrelevant observation that the movement plays very well to the international gallery and is the ‘darling’ of Western NGOs, not least because its leaders speak very good English. It was an ironic comment, given that anyone who has heard Ahluwalia speak could testify – from the adulation that he typically elicits – that he plays very well to Western capital. The comment suggests, however, that when social movements are too successful at global framing, they can become vulnerable to the ‘authenticity’ bogey.

for the Sardar Sarovar Project, but underestimated the determination and ability of the Indian state (the hostile inside) to continue work on the project with alternative sources of finance.<sup>94</sup>

What did global framing accomplish for the KRRS? If it initially entailed the contestation of global symbols on the terrain of the local, it quickly enabled what Tarrow calls the externalisation of contention, or the diffusion of contention into external ‘global’ spaces.<sup>95</sup> Following the high level of global visibility that the KRRS had earned from its dramatic direct actions against multinational corporations, its founding president M. D. Nanjundaswamy, a former law professor, received an invitation to join La Via Campesina,<sup>96</sup> a global network of small farmer organisations formed two years previously.<sup>97</sup> The KRRS went on to become an active member of Via Campesina, organising its third congress and first international women’s meeting in Bangalore in 2000. It also participated actively in the second Zapatista-inspired encuentro held in Spain in August 1997 and in the process leading up to the creation of PGA – a network envisioned as an instrument for communication and coordination among, what its website calls, ‘clearly anti-capitalist (not just anti-neoliberal)’ groups.<sup>98</sup> PGA’s main activity has been the coordination of global ‘days of action’, chiefly in opposition to summits of the IFIs. On the first of these in May 1998 timed to coincide with the second ministerial of the WTO, the KRRS together with other Indian movements in a recently launched ‘Joint Action Forum of Indian People against the WTO and Anti-People Policies’, organised a rally reportedly attended by 200,000 people in the city of Hyderabad.<sup>99</sup> In the summer of 1999, in a highly unusual protest initiative, 400 Indian farmers (mostly from the KRRS) joined around 50 representatives of other Third World social movements in a month-long protest tour intended to travel through nine countries. Dubbed the Inter-Continental Caravan of Solidarity and Resistance (ICC) it was an unprecedented initiative that brought members of Third World social movements at the forefront of resisting ‘globalisation’, to protest for themselves en masse at First World centres of power – at the Cologne G8 summit and the headquarters of the WTO in Geneva, the EC in Brussels and the OECD in Paris. In addition of course, Nanjundaswamy saw it as an opportunity for coalition

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<sup>94</sup> Interview, Ramachandra Guha, Bangalore, 22 September 2005.

<sup>95</sup> Tarrow, *The New Transnational Activism*, ch. 8.

<sup>96</sup> [http://viacampesina.org/main\\_en/index.php](http://viacampesina.org/main_en/index.php). For an overview of Via Campesina and other efforts at organising small farmers globally, see Marc Edelman, ‘Transnational Peasant and Farmer Movements and Networks’, in *Global Civil Society 2003*, eds. Mary Kaldor, Helmut Anheier & Marlies Glasius (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003).

<sup>97</sup> Interview, Chukki Nanjundaswamy, Bangalore, 20 September 2005.

<sup>98</sup> PGA, ‘Brief history of PGA’, <http://www.nadir.org/nadir/initiativ/agp/en/pgainfos/history.htm>.

<sup>99</sup> KRRS, *News from KRRS*.

building amongst like-minded farmer and peasant organisations.<sup>100</sup> Speaking at the demonstration against the G8 summit, he said:

We have come here to build bridges between people who want to reclaim their future, to disobey the institutions that run the current, self-destructive system of global economic, political and military governance, and to take their own power in their hands in order to construct a different world. A world where local people are in control of their local economy, where centralised political and economic power disappear... We do not want Western money, technologies or 'experts' to impose their development model on us... We only want to organise our strength and combine it with the strength of other movements in the North and the South in order to regain control over our lives. We are not working for a place on the global table of negotiations, nor for a bloody revolution; we are just working on the long-term process of construction of a different world, a world which will come about from the local to the global, from a shift in the values and everyday choices of million of persons.<sup>101</sup>

The ICC seems to have prompted a considerable exchange of ideas between groups – a process that was fraught with difficulties. David Featherstone, in an excellent study of the highly contested organisational process, reveals the multiple dissonances that opened up between the Indian farmers and west European social justice and green activists on questions concerning targets of contention, the composition of delegations and methods of decision-making. Citing in particular, Nanjundaswamy's insistence that a minimum of 400 Indian activists would comprise the core of the caravan and the unwillingness of some Indian activists to share the platform with counterparts from Nepal, Featherstone notes that 'although the Caravan was conceived of as a process that would institute solidarities between different struggles against globalisation, some of the particularistic ways [in which] resistance to globalisation was envisioned closed down the potential productiveness of these solidarities'.<sup>102</sup> Katharine Ainger, describing the caravan as 'a mixture of inspired genius and terrible folly', quotes one European solidarity activist as saying of the experience: 'It was probably stunning at first for many middle-aged, male leaders from a highly patriarchal society to be organised and treated on an equal footing by very young people – often female, and dressing and acting in apparently outlandish and shocking ways to boot!' Conversely, some European activists seem to have shown little understanding of the reality of the farmers, many of whom had possibly never left their villages before, condemning their wish to spend

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<sup>100</sup> Ranjit Dev Raj, 'Indian Farmers Take the War to Europe', Inter Press Service, 24 May 1999, <http://www.globalpolicy.org/soecon/bwi-wto/caravan.htm>.

<sup>101</sup> Statement of Professor Nanjundaswamy at the demonstration against the World Economic Summit, Cologne, 19 June 1999, [http://www.rfb.it/icc99/discorso\\_Nanjundaswamy.htm](http://www.rfb.it/icc99/discorso_Nanjundaswamy.htm).

<sup>102</sup> David Featherstone, 'Spatialities of transnational resistance to globalisation: the maps of grievance of the Inter-Continental Caravan', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 28, no. 4 (2003): 404-21. But Featherstone also writes of more productive engagements that resulted from the Caravan, in which activists challenged their essentialist notions of each other, besides unsettling and reconfiguring understandings of terms such as 'environmentalism' and 'development'.

time sight-seeing as ‘bourgeois’.<sup>103</sup> More edifyingly, one of the farmers who went on the tour – A. Somalingayya – informed me that he had been impressed by the eco-villages, small scale industries, alternative money systems, organic farming ventures and community centres that he had visited in Switzerland and Germany.<sup>104</sup> A retrospective in the KRRS newsletter confesses to having learnt a great deal from European anarchist networks’ non-hierarchical methods of organisation, suggesting that these might be preferable to the ‘twisted relations between the high ranks of our movement’.<sup>105</sup> And in a similar vein, Trasgu, a Spanish-born PGA activist who now works closely with the KRRS, spoke of the deep impact that M. D. Nanjundaswamy had had in shaping her politics, particularly by introducing her to Gandhian conceptions of decentralisation and non-violence.<sup>106</sup> In short, the externalisation of contention into new venues of protest was an ambiguous and mutually unsettling process, brought on by a perceived convergence of interests, but facilitating an exchange of ideas that seems to have begun a tentative reconstitution of identities.

So global framing seems to have boosted the visibility of the KRRS at a time when its domestic fortunes were flagging. It enabled the externalisation of contention into new venues, it won the movement new friends and promoted some norm diffusion across those relationships, and it generated a new cosmopolitan discourse in which the movement’s leaders began, tentatively, to see themselves as part of a project to construct an alternative world. But it does not seem to have generated anything resembling a boomerang effect in the KRRS’s struggle against the Indian state. To put this slightly differently, global framing has done the KRRS no harm, but it has not assisted significantly in the battle against economic liberalisation’s domestic interlocutors – the hostile inside. In response to a question about the relative importance of local and global priorities for the movement, Chukki Nanjundaswamy says: ‘we cannot differentiate between local and global campaigns; our struggle is directly against the World Bank’.<sup>107</sup> But she was forthright about her growing disillusionment with global activism, expressing concerns about the increasing bureaucratisation of networks such as Via Campesina, wastage of time and energy in seminars devoted to such arcane issues as the utility of alliances with the FAO and UNCTAD, and, ultimately, the possibility of alienation from the grassroots that an excessive focus on global activism was bound to

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<sup>103</sup> Katharine Ainger, ‘Life Is Not Business: the intercontinental caravan’, in *We Are Everywhere: the irresistible rise of global anticapitalism*, ed. Notes from Nowhere (London: Verso, 2003), 164.

<sup>104</sup> Interview, A. Somalingayya, Bangalore, 20 September 2005.

<sup>105</sup> KRRS, *News from KRRS*.

<sup>106</sup> Interview, Trasgu (PGA activist), Bangalore, 20 September 2005.

<sup>107</sup> For one recent example of how Karnataka farmers have been affected by World Bank conditionality, see Parvathi Menon, ‘The rural anger in Karnataka’, *Frontline* 21, no. 12 (2004), <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2112/stories/20040618003303500.htm>.

engender.<sup>108</sup> This suggests that we might see less emphasis on global framing in the future activism of the KRRS.

### 5.2.2 *Nationalism at home*

The KRRS describes itself as a ‘Gandhian social movement’<sup>109</sup> and indeed Gandhi’s influence is visible both in its substantive ideological orientation (the ideology of ruralism and the championing of panchayati raj) and its vocabulary of protest (the use of non-cooperation and other classic Gandhian tactics such as bandhs, hartals and hunger strikes). In much the same way as Zapata furnishes the Zapatistas with a rhetoric of betrayal, Gandhi is used to remind the postcolonial state of its unfulfilled historic mission.

In addition, Muzaffar Assadi – in the only book length study of the KRRS that exists to date – has drawn attention to the influence of dependency theory on the political thinking of its leadership. In line with the dependistas, the KRRS attributes the destitution of farmers and economic underdevelopment more generally to the continuing dependence of peripheral Third World countries on metropolitan states at the core of the world economy. This state of affairs is reportedly perpetuated by the denial of technology and markets to Third World producers, resulting in the subordination of indigenous capitalism to metropolitan capital. Assadi argues that the KRRS has moved from a Gandhian conceptualisation of indigenous capitalism as ‘weak’, to a more radical Marxist one that sees it as ‘comprador’. In addition, it has mapped caste relations on to its image of dependency, arguing that the periphery is itself divided into a core, dominated by Brahmins and other higher castes, who exert power over the periphery-within-the-periphery via an analogous denial of knowledge and property to the rest of society.<sup>110</sup> Yet this depiction of hostile external and internal actors is not without its ambiguities. As I shall go on to suggest, the KRRS’s anti-Brahminism is not necessarily a position against caste hierarchies per se. And its attitude towards technology is ambivalent:<sup>111</sup> even as it cites the denial of technology as a factor sustaining underdevelopment, it vigorously opposes the introduction of certain new technologies (such as genetically modified crops).<sup>112</sup>

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<sup>108</sup> Interview, Chukki Nanjundaswamy, Bangalore, 20 September 2005.

<sup>109</sup> KRRS, *News from KRRS*.

<sup>110</sup> Assadi, *Peasant Movement*, 125-8; Assadi, “Khadi Curtain”, “Weak Capitalism” and “Operation Ryot”, 219-21.

<sup>111</sup> Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution*, 117, sees this as characteristic of Indian farmers’ movements, which embraced and profited from ‘green revolution’ technology, but also recognised the destructive effects of the new seeds and chemical inputs and looked for alternatives.

<sup>112</sup> But see M. D. Nanjundaswamy, interview with Fred de Sam Lazaro (2002), <http://www.mindfully.org/GE/GE4/M-D-Nanjundaswamy-02.htm>, who clarifies that the issue is not the provenance of technology (indigenous v. imported), but the high degree of scientific uncertainty inherent in new technologies and the need to minimise uncertainties before introducing them into farmers’ fields.

In an interview with Assadi in 1988, M. D. Nanjundaswamy argued that dependence could only be ended by ‘delinking’ from the global economy, an idea that he expressed through the metaphor of dropping a ‘khadi curtain’ between India and the rest of the world.<sup>113</sup> Ever since Gandhi’s rousing call to every household to boycott foreign textiles and spin khadi (hand-woven cloth) during the struggle for independence, the material has had the connotations of indigeneity and self-sufficiency. But deployed in contrast to the Churchillian coinage from which it deviates, the ‘khadi curtain’ suggests a barrier that is softer and more porous – a stance that is evident in the KRRS’s openness to external influences and norms where its own activism is concerned.

India’s position in the world economy has changed tremendously since these ideas were first expressed, but there is evidence that the ideology of the KRRS continues to have a nationalist flavour. More recent nationalist statements by the movement, however, make a concerted attempt to articulate a form of nationalism that is more explicitly internationalist, not least because of the perceived need to distinguish itself from the ‘anti-globalisation’ wing of the Hindu right.<sup>114</sup> In the KRRS’s own words:

We are obviously against capitalist globalisation and in favour of self-reliance, but this does not stop us from denouncing the neo-fascist use of the ‘Swadeshi’ concept, the originally very positive Gandhian concept of self-reliance that has been perverted and abused by the Hindu far-right of this country to boost the most stupid nationalism and intolerance with their xenophobe [sic] discourse on Swadeshi. We reclaim the internationalist roots of the Gandhian concept, which we do not see as an objective to achieve at the national level, but at community level. We have had enough years of over-bureaucratic, centralised, corrupt, inefficient and industry-biased ‘national self-sufficiency’. Instead of the ‘national Swadeshi’ so loudly proclaimed by Hindu nationalist fanatics of BJP, we fight for the economic self-management and freedom of Village Republics...<sup>115</sup>

(As an aside we might note that the vulnerability of Gandhian swadeshi to cooption by the xenophobic right is, perhaps, eloquent testimony to Tagore’s critique all those years ago.) In addition to distancing itself from right-wing anti-globalists, the KRRS seems to be trying here to reconcile its cosmopolitan ‘one world’ discourse of global framing with the rhetoric of betrayal that Gandhian nationalism furnishes at home in the struggle against the Indian state. Gandhian nationalism is invoked, not to reinforce an oppressive state apparatus, but to defend the sovereignty of local communities – an idea that resonates well with the movement’s

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<sup>113</sup> Assadi, “‘Khadi Curtain’, “Weak Capitalism” and “Operation Ryot””, 221, and endnote 22.

<sup>114</sup> Aditya Nigam, ‘Radical Politics in the Times of Globalisation: Notes on Recent Indian Experience’, in *Democratic Governance in India*, eds. Jayal & Pai, 157.

<sup>115</sup> KRRS, *News from KRRS*.

international allies. If this reconciliation were persuasive, the KRRS might be able to speak to its global and domestic audiences in one voice.

But it is not clear, in practical terms, how local communities could be defended from global capital without the strengthening of the state. Indeed it is difficult to read the invective against the ‘national level’ in the above statement as a position against state sovereignty per se in light of the movement’s efforts to enter institutions of the state via the electoral process. Even in earlier, Marxist-influenced phases when the state was seen as an instrument of the exploitative classes, the struggle was not against the state so much as for a state that would dispense ‘*mridu rajya*’ (soft rule) in relation to farmers.<sup>116</sup> ‘Soft rule’ seemed to entail active state intervention in some respects (remunerative prices) and autonomy from the state in others (as Tom Brass writes, farmers’ movements have tended to oppose state intervention to enforce land ownership ceilings or payment of minimum wages to agricultural labour).<sup>117</sup> As for relations with the outside world, the KRRS’s criticism of the liberalised import regime which enables the dumping of foreign agricultural produce, suggests a desire for a stronger state that could better withstand the pressure to open markets non-reciprocally. In effect, the demand seems to be for a state that is selectively soft on the inside, but hard on the outside.

Marxist critics have been less than persuaded by the KRRS’s invocations of nationalism, despite its attempts to render them internationalist and to distance itself from right-wing nationalism. Brass argues, for example, that the use of a nationalist discourse by movements like the KRRS functions to obscure class differences between different categories of cultivators. Instead of providing a political critique of capitalism in general (whether foreign or indigenous), the movement focuses mainly on the non-economic identities of alleged exploiters, who are identified as agents of ‘foreign’/‘global’ capital or as national high-caste allies thereof. It thereby instils a ‘false’ ethnic or national consciousness amongst poor peasants and agricultural labour, who begin to perceive themselves as sharing an identity with wealthier farmers despite the antagonism of their class interests. The nationalist discourse of the KRRS therefore obviates challenges from below to the dominant position of wealthier farmers, ensuring that grievances are deflected towards other targets.<sup>118</sup> We might also see this as a mechanism by which electorally unsuccessful interest-based movements seek to recast themselves as identity-based ones.

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<sup>116</sup> Muzaffar Assadi, ‘Globalisation and the State: Interrogating the Farmers’ Movement in India’, *Journal of Social and Economic Development* 4, no. 1 (2002): 49.

<sup>117</sup> Tom Brass, ‘The Politics of Gender, Nature and Nation in the Discourse of the New Farmers’ Movements’, in *New Farmers’ Movements in India*, ed. Brass, 35.

<sup>118</sup> This argument is condensed from a selection of Brass’ writings. See *ibid.*, 32; Brass, ‘Introduction: The New Farmers’ Movements in India’, in *New Farmers’ Movements in India*, ed. Brass, 12-18; Brass, ‘Moral Economists’, 180-5.

To appreciate the force of the argument, we need to know a little more about the social composition of the KRRS. The literature on agrarian social movements makes a key distinction between ‘peasants’ and ‘farmers’, with the former being understood as cultivators whose livelihoods are centred primarily on subsistence and only secondarily on commodity production. ‘Farmers’, on the other hand, are understood as those who produce primarily for the market, often with advanced technology, hired labour and formal credit.<sup>119</sup> Whatever their normative readings of these movements, most scholars agree that the major agrarian movements in India from the early 1980s onwards have been farmers’ movements. Dipankar Gupta categorically describes the three most significant of these – the BKU, the SS and the KRRS – as ‘farmers’ (not peasants)’ movements, adding for good measure that although ‘the agriculturalists present themselves as an undifferentiated phalanx...one should bear in mind that these farmers’ movements distinguish their interests quite clearly from the interests of the agricultural labourers’.<sup>120</sup> This is borne out by Assadi’s careful empirical work on the KRRS, which reveals that it is a movement primarily of landholders agitating against policies that have made landholdings uneconomical. It has never seriously taken up the issues of landless labour, whose participation in the movement, Assadi reports, has dwindled. Likewise in caste terms, the KRRS is heavily dominated by lingayats and vokkaligas;<sup>121</sup> it does not represent dalits in any meaningful sense and has been unable to form alliances with dalit organisations.<sup>122</sup>

Brass rightly points out the very particular class character of the KRRS that is obscured by its nationalist rhetoric, but his normative critique of the movement rests on the belief that the primary contradiction in agrarian relations is internal to cultivators (i.e. wealthier farmers – not the state or global capital – are the most crushing source of exploitation vis-à-vis the lowest class of cultivators). This is a controversial assertion. *Pace* Brass, Omvedt sees an ‘unequal, caste-bound, but still cultivating peasantry...not being “differentiated” into agricultural labourers and capitalist farmers engaged in class struggle against each other, but rather pulled (with all their hierarchy and inequalities) into a new kind of capitalist

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<sup>119</sup> Edelman, ‘Transnational Peasant and Farmer Movements and Networks’, 187.

<sup>120</sup> Dipankar Gupta, ‘Farmers’ Movements in Contemporary India’, in *Social Movements and the State*, ed. Shah, 195. See also Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution*, 100, 114, who agrees that these movements are composed, not of sharecroppers or poor peasants fighting landlords, but of independent commodity producers engaged in market production.

<sup>121</sup> Both communities are found in the Government of India’s list of ‘other backward classes’, making them eligible for various forms of affirmative action, unless they are excluded by a complicated set of criteria used to define the ‘creamy layer’ within each eligible caste on grounds such as property holdings. See <http://ncbc.nic.in/backward-classes/karnataka.html>. Both are, however, unambiguously above dalits in the caste hierarchy.

<sup>122</sup> Assadi, *Peasant Movement*, ch. 3.

enslavement to the market and the state.’<sup>123</sup> Omvedt criticises ‘old left’ Marxists for conflating the possession of private property with exploitation – an assumption that leads them inexorably to conclude that only a landless labour-based movement on wage issues can be ‘radical’, while farmers’ movements must be seen as reactionary. This perspective seems incapable of seeing cultivators as a whole, although it has no difficulty with a unitary conception of the ‘working class’, which is arguably equally hierarchical and fragmented. As Omvedt notes of traditional Marxists:

The relationship of peasants as a group with supra-village exploitation (the state, the buyers of their produce, those who taxed them) and the struggles they organised against this – however militant and involving however many deaths – fell outside the scope of ‘class analysis’ and ‘class struggle’...<sup>124</sup>

The reference to death is particularly apposite. Most informed observers, including liberalisation’s sympathetic interlocutors in the policy elite,<sup>125</sup> acknowledge an agrarian crisis of serious proportions in southern India, which has manifested itself in a spate of suicides by farmers.<sup>126</sup> By one reckoning, 3,000 farmers in Karnataka took their lives in the period between 2000 and August 2003.<sup>127</sup> A recent Christian Aid report suggests that the situation in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh is even more acute: 2,115 farmers are estimated to have killed themselves in 2004, bringing the toll since 1998 to 4,378. These are mere regional snapshots of a more widespread phenomenon that has seen 22,000 farmers kill themselves over the past decade.<sup>128</sup> Most of these suicides have been by small, landholding farmers producing for the market, driven to take their lives by the crushing burden of debt. Access to institutionalised credit is difficult because of the decline in preferential lending to agriculture as a result of banking sector ‘liberalisation’; private sector credit tends to be unaffordable, not least because the lack of assets makes it difficult for applicants to offer collateral security. In such circumstances, farmers are forced to borrow in the informal sector at extortionist rates of interest. Meanwhile profit margins have been squeezed by the increase in cost of agricultural

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<sup>123</sup> Omvedt, *Reinventing Revolution*, 103.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

<sup>125</sup> Montek Singh Ahluwalia, ‘Managing Globalisation in India: Critical Issues’, University of Oxford, 1 November 2006, who flagged the issue of farmer suicides.

<sup>126</sup> One exception was Ron Herring, ‘Why did “Operation Cremate Monsanto” Fail? Class and Science in India’s Great Terminator Technology Hoax’, Global Economic Governance Research Seminar, University of Oxford, 2 November 2006, who made the unsubstantiated claim that the increase in suicides is not peculiar to farmers, but reflects a more widespread social trend. Somewhat at variance with this point, Herring cited – without criticism – a Government of Karnataka report that attributed increasing suicides among farmers to alcoholism. This begs the question of whether alcoholism is symptomatic of deeper socio-economic problems, but neither the report nor Herring seemed interested in pursuing that line of enquiry.

<sup>127</sup> Shalmali Guttal, ‘Farmers’ Suicides in Karnataka State’, Focus on the Global South, 14 September 2004, <http://www.focusweb.org/farmers-suicides-in-karnataka-state-15.html>.

<sup>128</sup> Christian Aid, *The damage done: Aid, death and dogma* (2005), <http://www.christian-aid.org.uk/indepth/505caweek/CAW%20report.pdf>.

inputs, thanks in part to the withdrawal of 'inefficient' state subsidies for fertilisers, water and power (in many cases, these policy changes can be traced to World Bank pressure for the introduction of user fees). Market prices have fallen, in part because the liberalisation of the import regime has enabled the dumping of cheap (often heavily subsidised) foreign produce.<sup>129</sup> One is compelled to respond to Brass's criticism of the nationalist discourse of farmers' movements with the observation that it isn't simply a distraction from intra-cultivator class contradictions – it is also a response to a crisis of existential proportions produced, in no small measure, by the new liberal economic solidarism. In Karnataka at least, the kulaks are killing themselves.

This might help us empathise with the nationalist rhetoric of the KRRS, but it raises a final perplexing question concerning possible disjunctions between global and local activism. How and why has a movement, seen domestically as comprising petty capitalist farmers, come to affiliate itself so successfully with a 'clearly anti-capitalist (not just anti-neoliberal)' network such as PGA?<sup>130</sup> One obvious reason might be the weakness of PGA verification mechanisms. As an anarchist network that prides itself on non-hierarchical organisation, there is no pre-defined authority within the group charged with verifying the credentials of actors seeking affiliation with the network. The network is the sum of all its affiliates and all decisions have to be made collectively. This gives PGA a radical openness, but also makes it vulnerable to infiltration by actors who do not fully subscribe to its central tenets.<sup>131</sup> PGA seems to rely on a more informal sort of verification in which other members of the network from the same locale, or solidarity activists travelling frequently between the global and local levels, are able to verify that global framing claims do in fact reflect the local politics of a movement. Yet if the only actors who are intimately familiar with both the global and local levels are the leadership of the movement itself, there is likely to be less of a check on its claims.<sup>132</sup> This seems to be more of a problem with the KRRS than the Zapatistas, who are so heavily visited

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<sup>129</sup> These connections are traced in *ibid.*, Menon, 'The rural anger in Karnataka'; Parvathi Menon, 'From Debt to Death', *Frontline* 20, no. 20 (2003), <http://www.frontlineonnet.com/fl2020/stories/20031010003810800.htm>; P. Sainath, 'No sugar-coated pills for cotton farmers', *The Hindu*, 13 December 2006, <http://www.hindu.com/2006/12/13/stories/2006121303801000.htm>; Rahul Rao, 'Blenheim and Bangalore', *New Internationalist*, no. 382 (2005), [http://newint.org/columns/essays/2005/09/01/blenheim\\_and\\_bangalore/](http://newint.org/columns/essays/2005/09/01/blenheim_and_bangalore/).

<sup>130</sup> PGA, 'Brief history of PGA'.

<sup>131</sup> Interview, Trasgu, Bangalore, 20 September 2005, who informed me about one case of infiltration by a right-wing Ukrainian social movement whose representative attended several meetings posing as an anarchist. It was only when he was recognised by a fellow-national, who then informed the network as a whole and furnished proof of his true identity and ideology, that a decision was taken – collectively – to exclude him from PGA.

<sup>132</sup> See Featherstone, 'Spatialities of transnational resistance to globalisation', who writes that M. D. Nanjundaswamy's role as primary conduit between the KRRS and its international allies during the process of organisation of the ICC gave him a great deal of power, which eventually generated an acrimonious split in the movement.

by solidarity activists that the politics of the local is opened up to far greater scrutiny (despite, paradoxically, the state of siege that makes Zapatista communities physically inaccessible). Writing about the KRRS has focused mainly either on its local dynamics (Assadi, Brass) or its global framing activities (PGA literature). I have tried to think about both so as to consider the tensions between political theoretic claims that contention at each of these levels generates.

An alternative explanation for affiliation with PGA despite these disjunctions might be that PGA activists accept that their central commitments will be interpreted in diverse ways in varying organisational structures in different parts of the world. My informant argued, for example, that non-hierarchical organisation was more challenging in larger movements and had to be practised differently from the way it would be in smaller groups. Less reasonably, she suggested that notions of what qualified as ‘authoritarianism’ were ‘very cultural’.<sup>133</sup> Finally, we might simply explain acceptance of the KRRS’s presence in PGA despite ‘disjunction’ on the ground that the condition of petty capitalists in some parts of the world is seen as so abject, that their exclusion would be an indefensible act of theoretical dogmatism. The danger – as Brass alerts us – is that the abjectness of those not represented by, and worse off than, the movement, might be obscured at the global level.

Readers may be struck by the rather more instrumental fashion in which I have been speaking about cosmopolitanism and nationalism in this chapter. Instead of being constitutive of political identity, they have begun to look more like instrumental vocabularies deployed to achieve particular goals, rather like costumes that are donned for particular audiences. I have tried to avoid labelling affirmations of cosmopolitanism or nationalism as instrumental or ideational in order to take a more dynamic view of how these vocabularies might shape identities. Social movements typically resort to the more cosmopolitan vocabularies characteristic of global framing, when domestic frames have proven ineffectual or domestic spaces for contention have been blocked.<sup>134</sup> When successful, global framing attracts international allies and sometimes enables the formation of coalitions and networks, but these intentional encounters have unpredictable and open-ended outcomes. Interaction between social movement participants from different locales sometimes facilitates a diffusion of norms in both directions of the encounter. As social movements attract more attention, their global

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<sup>133</sup> Interview, Trasgu, Bangalore, 20 September 2005.

<sup>134</sup> This is the story I have told in respect of the two social movements studied in this chapter. But global frames can also be frames of first preference, particularly when the impetus for policy decisions that are being contested is seen to have come from external actors.

framing claims come under increasing scrutiny, forcing actors to live up to their rhetoric if their claims are to continue to be persuasive (although, as I have tried to show, disjunctions between rhetoric and reality can persist for a number of reasons). It is this growing tendency to frame discontent in global terms that accounts for the heightened attention to ‘the new transnational activism’, ‘global civil society’ and ‘globalisation from below’ in literature across the social sciences.

Yet underneath the cosmopolitan language of global frames lurks a distinctly nationalist discourse, typically addressed to a domestic audience. Resuscitating the old heroes and forgotten ideals of arrested revolutions, this is a nationalism that accuses the postcolonial state of having betrayed its historic promise of returning power to the people. Nationalist discourse sometimes enables interest-based social movements to reach beyond their immediate constituencies to form cross-class alliances with other groups excluded from structures of power. The movements I have been studying in this chapter have felt compelled to distinguish themselves from hegemonic nationalisms closely associated with the state, partly because state elites are one of their primary targets of contention, and partly in order to render nationalism for the home audience compatible with global framing for the world.

My discussion of distinct levels, audiences and registers of protest should not be taken to imply that global framing and nationalism are separate projects pursued in isolation from one another. The same gesture of protest can often be framed in cosmopolitan and nationalist terms. The uprising in Chiapas is framed both as a revolt against ‘neoliberalismo’ and as a continuation of Zapata’s unfinished project of redistribution. The KRRS’s attacks on symbols of global capital are simultaneously cosmopolitan, in that they target actors reviled by similar interest groups in countries across the world, and nationalist, in that they raise the spectre of neo-colonial invasion in a once colonised country. Those who celebrate these social movements as the harbingers of contemporary cosmopolitanism would do well to remember that their potency rests equally on the success of global framing and nationalism within and against their respective states.<sup>135</sup> This is particularly important in states where the impetus for key policy decisions that social movements contest comes from within those states. If global framing does not generate enough of a boomerang effect to force state elites to take into account the interests of the marginalized, prospects for policy change become contingent on the effectiveness of nationalism against the state. And where the impetus for unfriendly

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<sup>135</sup> This point is eloquently made by Pheng Cheah, ‘The Cosmopolitical – Today’, in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation*, eds. Pheng Cheah & Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 33-8, who describes such contentious politics as ‘nationalisms operating in a cosmopolitical force field’.

policies comes from outside the state, both social movements studied here appear to pin their hopes on a state that might be persuaded to resist these external impositions. The rootedness of these cosmopolitans is evident in both their nationalism and their acceptance (resigned or enthusiastic) of the framework of the states-system.

There is a further point to be drawn out of the rather brutal instrumentalism of this chapter. Far from debasing cosmopolitanism as a normative ideal, the instrumental invocation of cosmopolitanism by social movements of the rooted attests to its enormous appeal to those who feel marginalized, excluded, forgotten. This enduring utility of cosmopolitanism might in fact be the most powerful evidence that could be cited in response to the arguments of critics who view it solely as a discourse of privilege. When domestic opportunity structures are hostile or unresponsive, the court of humanity is sometimes the only place left to go. 'We are like you, our struggle is yours too', social movements are compelled to say. In such circumstances, cosmopolitanism is not a choice – it is a necessity.

## *Conclusion*

Cosmopolitanism as a doctrine about justice has long been asking the question of what obligations we owe to others, particularly distant others whom we neither know nor see, and with whom we may share few of the ties of race, religion, ethnicity or language that bind us to our fellow nationals. This is a question of enormous significance for every human being, regardless of his or her station in life. Yet there is something about the way the question is framed that betrays a very particular conception of its audience. In asking what obligations ‘we’ owe to distant strangers, the operative metaphor is very often one of enlarging a circle that initially encompasses one’s family, province, nation or state to incorporate – eventually – all human beings. But framed in this way, the question seems irrelevant from the perspective of vast numbers of people.

If you live in a favela in Rio de Janeiro or a jhugi in Mumbai, if your hut is threatened with submergence by a big dam or your livelihood from fishing by commercial trawlers, if you are denied the most basic rights by a colonial occupier or the least shred of dignity by your own state, if you already have so little that you can barely survive, you are most unlikely to be thinking about your obligations to strangers, particularly distant ones. The question will remain as relevant to you as it is to anyone else, for there will always be strangers in your midst, but you are not likely to give it much thought. To ask what obligations one owes to strangers seems to presuppose an audience that can afford the luxury of thinking about strangers. Not surprisingly, it is a question most usually posed to largely satisfied communities by an admirable and beleaguered minority within, attempting to persuade the community to treat outsiders with equal respect. This is an urgent and noble endeavour, but it does not speak directly to the imperative of resistance felt by Third World subalterns.

I have been trying to sit outside this metaphorical circle of the satisfied to think about what cosmopolitanism might mean to those on the outside. To be sure, it is a friendly doctrine from their perspective. If it is persuasive, it will gain them entrance. But is that all it can mean to them? A distant promise of eventual inclusion in the circle of the satiated? In thinking about the relationship between cosmopolitanism and resistance, this thesis has argued that cosmopolitanism can do a great deal more – but it cannot do so without accommodating a certain kind of communitarianism.

Resistance in the condition of postcoloniality demands some combination of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism because the self-determination of Third World societies is under threat from sources external to the Third World state *and* from the state itself. Too often, liberal

cosmopolitans have employed highly selective geographies of culpability, taking cognisance of the threat posed to Third World societies by their own states, but failing to recognise the role played by the state (or the potential role of the state) in protecting citizens from the depredations of powerful external agents or structures such as global capitalism.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, communitarians in the Third World have tended to valorise state sovereignty by emphasising the risk of neo-colonial predation by external actors and obscuring the culpability of Third World states in impeding any meaningful exercise of self-determination by their own peoples.

The structural position of Third World states in International Society – their hierarchical insertion in that Society coupled with the incompleteness of their state- and nation-building efforts – renders the self-determination of Third World societies vulnerable to threat from multiple sources. International interstate hierarchy makes these societies vulnerable to predatory external intervention; conversely, the supposed imperatives of continually reproducing community in ways that ensure its cultural distinctiveness and cohesiveness typically has brutalising effects on Third World societies. This means that both cosmopolitans and communitarians are correct in their diagnoses of the sources from which self-determination is under threat, but both provide a highly partial and therefore misleading account of these sources.

Whatever the stories told in the academy, many voices of resistance in the Third World recognise that self-determination is under threat from multiple sources. In resisting both external and internal threats simultaneously, such voices tend to employ a combination of cosmopolitan and communitarian vocabularies. This thesis has studied two kinds of resistance, in each of which cosmopolitanism and nationalism perform distinct functions. For anti-colonial activists, nationalism is the weapon of choice against the colonial power. But there have been a few voices – admittedly a tiny minority – who whilst acknowledging explicitly or implicitly that nationalism has a role to play in the struggle, have insisted that only a cosmopolitan humanist consciousness can provide critical perspective on the injustices and oppressions wrought by nationalist resistance movements. Able to look beyond national identities, which acquire immediate and overwhelming salience in the confrontation with the colonial power, they have recognised the actual multiplicity of identities that all human beings owe allegiance to. They have understood that even within the resistance there will be winners and losers, and have lent their voices in defence of the latter, demanding their inclusion in the postcolonial nation-state.

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<sup>1</sup> See section 2.3.3.

For ‘anti-globalisation’ activists, cosmopolitanism is the language in which transnational resistance is mobilised against global targets of contention. In contrast to what might be called the cognitive cosmopolitanism of the anti-colonial nationalists studied in this thesis, this is a relational cosmopolitanism that develops out of interaction with distant others – an interaction that is in turn prompted by the blockage of domestic spaces for contention. Although this cosmopolitanism often appears instrumentalist in its origins, it has an immanent potential to reconstitute the identities of those whose interaction it enables. But the relational cosmopolitanism that develops out of ‘going global’ tells only half the story of this kind of contentious politics. Nationalism provides a locally resonant vocabulary in which resistance movements are able to reach beyond the narrow confines of particular interest groups to obscure differences of interest and forge cross-class alliances. Raising the spectre of neo-colonial incursion and resuscitating the old heroes and forgotten ideals of unfinished national revolutions, this typically takes the form of a nationalism against the state, accusing the postcolonial state of having betrayed the historic promises on the basis of which it came into existence. Yet the state continues to be viewed as a necessary component of the utopias that these movements strive towards.

International normative theory has largely been preoccupied with the debate between cosmopolitans and communitarians, with each side trying to convince the other that its view of the scope of justice is ethically preferable and/or psychologically more feasible. There has been little recognition of the combination of these normative optics in the actual practice of resistance. Indeed, commentators such as Brown have gone so far as to insist that ‘all variants of international relations theory can be seen as falling into one or the other camp without too much violence being done to the intentions of the theorist’.<sup>2</sup> Nor has there been sufficient attention to the relationship between normative ideas and the deployment of power to implement those ideas in the state system. Part I of the thesis has tried to demonstrate that both cosmopolitanism and communitarianism are vulnerable to abuse by states. In the absence of any meaningful institutional cosmopolitanism, states at the apex of the hierarchical state system have been able to appropriate the imperatives of moral cosmopolitanism to mask the pursuit of their special interests. Similarly, nationalism yoked to the territorial state has been used to legitimate the state-managed production of particularity in ways that have tyrannised Third World societies. It is simply not possible to adjudicate between cosmopolitanism and communitarianism in any simple fashion without paying attention to the ways in which these worldviews are related to the projection of power and to practices within the state system.

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<sup>2</sup> Brown, *International Relations Theory*, 27.

Part II has argued that the defence of the self-determination of Third World societies calls for resistance against both cosmopolitanism and communitarianism in their manifestations as coercive solidarism and authoritarian pluralism respectively, and that such resistance itself demands a combination of cosmopolitan and communitarian sensibilities. Amongst liberal cosmopolitans, Kwame Anthony Appiah has come closest to recognising this, writing movingly about the necessity for, and the possibility of, ‘cosmopolitan patriotism’. He insists that ‘you can be cosmopolitan – celebrating the variety of human cultures; rooted – loyal to one local society (or a few) that you count as home; liberal – convinced of the value of the individual, and patriotic – celebrating the institutions of the state (or states) within which you live.’<sup>3</sup> But Appiah makes cosmopolitan patriotism sound easy. It is difficult to be all of these things in a time and place of resistance, particularly if – far from having the luxury of being able to call many places home – you are fighting to secure just *one* that you might safely consider home. We get very little sense, from Appiah, of the dissonances, contradictions, silences and schizophrenias that cosmopolitan patriotism typically entails.

Much of Part II of this thesis has been concerned with demonstrating the untidiness of being both cosmopolitan and communitarian, even as this is urgently demanded by the condition of postcoloniality. Each portrait of resistance in Part II is troubled by vulnerabilities and contradictions that threaten the coherence of the overall worldview sketched out. For example, it is not entirely clear how Tagore viewed the relationship between politics and culture. Notwithstanding his essentially cosmopolitan view of culture and for all his diatribes against political nationalism, he saw the case for some measure of what can only be called cultural nationalism as a means of restoring the self-respect of a colonised people.<sup>4</sup> And there is a broader tension within the base / superstructure imagery that animated much of his thinking: could reform really be accomplished within the social base, independently of institutions in the allegedly superstructural realm of politics? Said is more explicit about the tensions between his many political and intellectual projects, even acknowledging that politics is sometimes tragic – we cannot have everything we want.<sup>5</sup> And yet it is this very willingness to own up to the tensions – to unmask nationalism as discourse even as he tries to strengthen Palestinian nationalism – that many would see as subversive (though Said would of course insist that this is the intellectual’s task). As far as the ‘anti-globalisation’ activists are concerned, on a crudely instrumentalist view of their discourse, cosmopolitanism and nationalism can appear to be simply propaganda intended for consumption by global and local

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<sup>3</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah, ‘Cosmopolitan Patriots’, in *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation*, eds. Pheng Cheah & Bruce Robbins (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 106.

<sup>4</sup> See section 4.1.4, and the text accompanying footnotes 107-15.

<sup>5</sup> See section 4.2.3.

audiences respectively. I have argued that interaction with distant others even for initially instrumental purposes, can precipitate mutually unsettling engagements that reconstitute identities. But the simultaneous effort at both global framing and nationalism against the state is a difficult tightrope, fraught with contradictions and constantly threatening to erode the credibility of the actors implicated.

Perhaps most unsettling of all is the radical ambivalence towards the postcolonial state running through each portrait of resistance in Part II. Each voice is critical of the state, or of elites poised to take over the reins of state. But each, explicitly or implicitly, sees postcolonial sovereignty as indispensable. Perhaps this ambivalence is compatible with the instrumentalist defence of sovereignty offered by many liberal cosmopolitans. But that defence leaves unresolved the issue of whether we can really pick and choose when to be sovereigntist: if we were to disregard sovereignty when it is exercised oppressively, will there be anything left to shelter behind in times of risk from external predation? That is a question for another thesis.

In this thesis, I have tried to develop a sensibility appropriate to resistance in the condition of postcoloniality. Such a sensibility would recognise the multiple ways in which self-determination is under threat from both within and outside political communities. In doing so it would have to shed a dichotomous view of cosmopolitanism and communitarianism, recognising that normative theory that does not hold both in tension fails the needs of our non-ideal world. It would have to be critical of both home and the world, never giving its unthinking allegiance to either.

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