CHAPTER 19

CRITICAL THEORY

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MARTIN Wight once asked the question, "why is there no international theory?" or in other words, why is there no political theory of international relations devoted to questions of the good life and the meaning of terms such as rights, freedom, order, and justice? Why is the vocabulary of international relations dominated by words such as structure, necessity, and tragedy? Wight (1967) saw the international arena as a realm of "recurrence and repetition," where the persistence of anarchy precluded the possibility of theorizing the good life. Throughout the 1980s and early 1990s, a new generation of scholars challenged Wight's account and argued that the practice and theory of international relations had always been infused with normative content and was, therefore, amenable to the vocabulary of political theory. One of the most important sources of this new vocabulary was the intellectual project of critical theory formulated by the Frankfurt School of Social Enquiry in Weimar Germany, and later in the United States. The biggest contribution of critical theory in international relations has been to challenge Wight's vision and to prevent the question of human freedom from disappearing from the language of the study of international politics.

The Frankfurt School was inspired by Karl Marx's *Thesis on Feuerbach*, that "philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it" (cited in Devetak 2001, 146). They sought to revive the classical idea of a "practical philosophy," a form of knowledge and inquiry that was directed toward understanding, evaluation, and practice (Shapcott 2004). In particular, they identified study of the meaning, conditions, and possibilities of human emancipation, or freedom, as the first priority of the human sciences. An interest in emancipation necessarily drives inquiry toward the investigation into possibilities

for positive change that may contribute to the improvement of the conditions of human existence. In the language of Kant, this is termed enlightenment, in the language of Hegel, it is spirit or history (*Geist*), and in the language of Marx, it is emancipation. For Max Horkheimer, the use of critical reason directs us to the idea of emancipation, the good society consisted of one in which the individual could realize his or her potential for autonomy (Horkheimer 1972). Critical theory in international relations seeks to develop this project in the international context by identifying "the prospects for realising higher levels of human freedom across the world society as a whole" (Linklater 1990*a*, 7). Specifically, a critical theory of international relations examines "the problem of community," understood as how the members of bounded communities (states) determine the patterns of inclusion and exclusion in the international system (Linklater 1992). This project has three components, a normative inquiry into the *meaning* of emancipation and universalism, a historical sociological inquiry into the *conditions* of emancipation, and a praxeological inquiry into the *means* of emancipation in any given order, and in particular the present.

The first of these is necessary because emancipation has both positive and negative aspects and is subject to contestation. For contemporary critical theorists, emancipation means both freedom from unnecessary suffering and freedom to partake in dialogue, consent, and deliberation concerning matters that affect everybody. As a result, critical international relations theory is committed to the cosmopolitan project of achieving higher levels of inclusion in moral and political life for everyone on the planet. However, this requires a rejection of the mode of theorizing that dominates the social sciences, and international relations in particular, because it refuses the assumption of value neutrality or objectivity while remaining committed to a comprehensive research agenda. Critical theory places the normative purpose at the center of inquiry, and as a result it is necessarily interdisciplinary, engaging in both explanatory and evaluative theorizing with a practical intent. In setting out its agenda in this way, critical theorists aim to present a challenge to the discipline to provide normative as well as methodological justifications of its insights and purposes.

Critical theory is also both an interdisciplinary and a transdisciplinary inquiry. It does not aim to replace the insights of other theories but rather to incorporate them into a more "complete" and morally defensible approach. The normative and explanatory cannot be separated analytically from each other. Therefore a sociological inquiry is required because any account of any social realm is always simultaneously an account of the potential for change and freedom, as well as a reflection upon what freedom may mean in any given or possible context. For this reason it is also difficult to categorize critical theory as "a" theory of international relations as it is conventionally understood. Its place is more complex, as it incorporates both "grand theory" and more "applied" studies.

Any inquiry into critical international relations theory has to distinguish at least two central components. The first is the epistemological and methodological, what it says about theory; and the second is the normative and substantive, what it says about the world. In other words, "why do we study international relations?" and "how do we study international relations?" This chapter demonstrates why this is so by examining, first, the nature of the critical theory theoretical project and how it differs from and challenges mainstream conceptions of international relations; and secondly, the contributions that have been made by critical international relations theory so far. The chapter begins with a brief discussion of the origins of critical theory and critical international relations theory before examining the major claims and achievements.

Before proceeding further it should be noted that a common distinction is made between small "c" and large "C" critical theory, with only the latter referring to the Frankfurt School approaches. Small "c" includes approaches that are skeptical about the emancipatory project outlined by the Frankfurt School such as post-structuralism, (some) feminism, and critical realism. Some of the differences extend from different epistemologies, others from different ethical starting points. Many small "c" approaches reject their own assimilation into Andrew Linklater's project of community and have a philosophical resistance to talk of emancipation. Nonetheless, what is common to them all is a concern with power and freedom. In addition, critical theory has its own intellectual trajectory that continues outside of international relations. This chapter is concerned with large "C" critical theory in international relations.

1 THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL

Critical theory is first and foremost distinguished from "traditional," or problem-solving, theories. Traditional theory is modeled on the physical sciences and is concerned with explaining social processes from a disinterested or value-free position in order better to predict human behavior and therefore control it. As a result, traditional theory exhibits a system-maintenance bias because it takes the world as it finds it and investigates only how to manipulate it in order to achieve pre-given ends. At best it compares to what the Greeks called *technê*. Horkheimer argued that under modern conditions all reason had been reduced to technical, instrumental means–end rationality. As a result, the classical understanding of reason as giving rise to *thêoria* rather than *technê* had been forgotten or distorted. Critical theory sought to revive this deeper notion of a reason that inquired into the question of the "good." It asks not only how can good be achieved (*technê*) but what is the good? Or what is a good society? Such an inquiry is the jurisdiction of critical

theory with its interest in "the experience of emancipation by means of critical insight into relationships of power" (Bernstein 1976, 189). As a result, critical theory differs from traditional theory because, in Robert Cox's words (1986, 210), it "allows for a normative choice in favour of a social and political order different from the prevailing order." It also has a substantive, but indeterminate, conception that such an order would be one in which individual destiny was "within limits determined by his [sic] own activity" (Horkheimer 1972, vii).

Horkheimer's claims were revisited thirty years later by Jürgen Habermas (1972). Like Horkheimer, Habermas was concerned by the reduction of reason to *technê* and "the attempt to attain technical mastery of history by perfecting the administration of society" (Bernstein 1976, 187). He argued that different theories provided different types of knowledge of the world and were constituted by different purposes or knowledge constitutive (cognitive) interests. The "reality" perceived by theorists is dependent on their interest. All theory helps constitute the world it claims merely to depict, and consequently the knowledge produced will be incomplete or impartial. Habermas (1972, 308) identified three such interests and three corresponding modes of theorization: "The approach of the empirical–analytic sciences incorporates a technical cognitive interest: that of the historical hermeneutic sciences incorporates a practical one; and the approach of critically oriented sciences incorporates the emancipatory cognitive interest ... " Positivism, for instance, partakes of an act of wilful blindness because it contains an unacknowledged interest in the use to which its knowledge is put. The practical interest is an advance upon the technical, because it understands the intersubjective nature of social life and seeks to treat actors as participants in this world and not merely subjects of it. However, the practical interest is not enough, because it does not reflect upon the possibility of systematically distorted communication that arises from unequal power relations. This can be supplied only by a theory with an emancipatory interest. It remains disputed whether Habermas had indeed identified a fundamental cognitive relationship between theory and interests or whether he had simply provided a useful descriptive typology. Nonetheless, Habermas's framework reinforces Horkheimer's idea that a purely disinterested or detached theory, or theorist, is misleading.

Additionally, Horkheimer criticized idealist theories that ignored social contexts and realities. The inquiry into human emancipation necessarily led to a historical/sociological investigation and the material/social conditions in which reason operated. A successful critical theory must be able to provide insight into social conditions and the possibilities of freedom that can be used to inform the practice of real-world actors. To this end, Horkheimer's method was immanent critique or the analysis of the tensions within existing social arrangements and beliefs that may lead to progressive transformation. Hence, critical theory reflects upon normative and sociological, and praxeological, elements of emancipation.

The term "emancipation" necessarily invokes the question of emancipation from what? There is a good case for emancipation as an essentially contested concept

and it remains one of the most difficult philosophical terms in critical theory. The term implies a privileged position for the theorist who can provide emancipating insights, and who can presumably identify when emancipation has been achieved, much like a psychiatrist. The challenge set forth by Kant, Marx, and Hegel was to use reason to reflect upon, in Kant's words, "mankind's self-incurred immaturity," and to subject social institutions to critical scrutiny in order that humankind could "actively determine its own way of life" (Horkheimer, quoted in Bernstein 1976, 181). By applying reason to social situations that were taken for granted, or appeared to be the manifestation of nature-like laws, such as gender inequality or slavery, it is possible to determine if they are in fact "lawlike." The Frankfurt School, and especially later theorists such as Habermas and Axel Honneth, argue that the obstacles to this goal lie in distorted or pathological self-understandings and forms of communication (Honneth 2004) and, in particular, in communication distorted by power and interests. Emancipation lies in the removal or correction of these distortions. However, this is a constant task; we can never be assured that our understandings are or are not distorted. So what matters is the questioning rather than any specific answer that we may arrive at. Emancipation is never realized; it is instead a motivating ideal. Furthermore, the best means we have for assessing our understandings is to test them discursively deliberatively in public—that is, with other people in free and open discussion. In this understanding, emancipation lies not so much in one's consciousness but in the creation of social and political conditions that permit one to partake in open dialogue.

2 THE CRITIQUE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

If Horkheimer was influenced by the intellectual and political developments of the 1920s and 1930s, the critical turn in international relations was influenced by the legacy of the Vietnam War and the tensions created by the second cold war. Positivism was seen to be complicit in the political and moral disaster that was the American war in Vietnam and as testimony to the failure of technical reasoning in international affairs (a concern shared by some realists, notably Hans Morgenthau) and a direct result of the triumph of the idea of policy "science." Likewise, in the early 1980s, there was concern about the renewed level of tension in the superpower relationship and the nuclear arms race. Some writers asked whether the academic discipline of international relations was contributing to the problems facing the international realm. International relations scholars were challenged to reflect on Robert Cox's much quoted observation (1981, 128) that "theory is always

for someone and *for* some purpose" (emphasis in original), and thus to reflect on their own "cognitive interests" and purposes. Critical theory's concern with emancipation was used to challenge the self-definition of international relations as "social science" and also the constitution of international relations as a distinct discipline untouched by and unrelated to others.

This self-definition was epitomized for many by the articulation of neo-, or structural, realism, in the work of Kenneth Waltz. Feminists, post-structuralists, and later constructivists all took issue with the research agenda and the philosophy of science established by neorealists. Both Richard Ashley and Cox employed Horkheimer's categories to depict neorealism as technical or problem-solving theory (while also identifying the critical potential of traditional or classical realism). By virtue of "parsimony," neorealism necessarily restricted the object of its inquiry and consequently saw only the continuities of war, great-power rivalry, and systemic reproduction, and ignored those developments that might serve to generate transformation. Not only did it filter out transformative possibilities, but it also advocated policies that conformed to its depiction of reality, thus contributing to the continuity it sought to explain. Neorealism not only endorsed the status quo of nuclear terror, but also failed to see this terror as a moral, rather than merely a technical, problem.

In addition, neorealism depicted a world in which anarchy, necessity, and sovereignty, rather than reason, determine human destiny. From the perspective of critical theory, however, humans are unemancipated so long as war and the reproduction of the international realm are seen as beyond human control and as subject to nature-like immutable laws. A critical theoretical approach to the study of war would investigate whether neorealism, and war itself, are instead ideologies exhibiting the bias of problem-solving theories in favor of the status quo.

This meta-analysis was not restricted to neorealism alone, but extended to the mainstream as a whole. In interpreting the Frankfurt School for international relations, Linklater argued that Habermas's threefold distinction corresponds with Wight's three traditions: realism, rationalism (Grotianism), and revolutionism (which he renames critical theory). Like Habermas, Linklater (1990*b*, 10) argued that:

> a theory which analyses the language and culture of diplomatic interaction in order to promote international consensus is an advance beyond a theory of recurrent forces constituted by an interest in manipulation and control ... [However] an enquiry which seeks to understand the prospects for extending the human capacity for self-determination is an even greater advance.

Hermeneutic approaches argue that language and communication give material conditions meaning for humans. These approaches understand or "recover" the meanings common to actors by interpreting and understanding the self-understanding of actors' others, rather than "explanation" of independent

mechanistic process. Linklater therefore identified both liberal institutionalism and the so-called English School, or Grotian approach, with Habermas's "practical interest." Thus, while neoliberal institutionalism has a purported interest in bringing about change (see Keohane 1988)—its presuppositions are such that it is limited to change within, but not of, the international system—it likewise displays a system-maintenance bias. Liberal institutionalism is not addressed to questioning the system of states or bringing into being a different, arguably more "political," world order. The shift from a pure anarchy to a highly reflexive institutionalized or mature anarchy depicted by institutionalists represents a shift from one form of technical rationality, strategic, to another, cooperative. The international realm could, therefore, become more predictable but still not subject to "critical reasoning."

The English School is traditionally identified with the idea of an international *society* of states who not only coexist but recognize each other's right to coexist and develop rules of behavior based on this recognition. The English School therefore emphasizes communication and agreement between actors and examines the ways in which systems transform into societies, with more "civilized," rule-governed interactions between states. In forming an international society, states are able to develop a shared realm of meaning that increases the range and possibilities of moral progress. The English School has, for Linklater, an advantage because it is more inclined toward normative reflection and prescription, no matter how circumscribed (Bull 1983; Jackson 2000; Shapcott 2004).

The "practical" cognitive interest also corresponds to the *verstehen* approach of interpretative, or hermeneutic, sciences and the constructivist insight, that "anarchy is what states make it" (Wendt 1992), a realm of meaning and not just material power. Constructivism in international relations is concerned with understanding and explaining the norms that operate in the international realm and the constitution of that realm by these norms. However, from a Habermasian perspective, constructivism suffers because it retains the fact/value distinction of *verstehen* social sciences and in so doing separates questions of "is" from "ought." For the critical theorist, one of the problems associated with maintaining the distinction between fact and value is that, "while such an analysis might reveal how such norms are constituted, it lacks the intellectual resources for rational critical evaluation of these norms" (Bernstein 1976, 168). That is, it provides few, if any, criteria with which to evaluate the information it provides. For this reason, Richard Price and Christian Reus-Smit's claims (1998, 288) that constructivism is "*necessarily* 'critical' in the sense meant by Habermas ... " (emphasis added) is perhaps overly optimistic. Therefore, while interpretative approaches were an advance, they remain insufficient for a suitably critical theoretical approach to develop.

The greatest contributions of the early stage of the debate lay in establishing the nature of the emancipatory research agenda and in criticizing the epistemological assumptions of the discipline. Since its inception in international relations, critical theory has faced a number of common objections—for example, that it was

preoccupied with agenda setting and metatheoretical reflection but unwilling or unable to produce "substantive" work in international relations. Robert Keohane (1988) argued that "reflectivist" paradigms lacked a coherent research agenda that could structure their contribution to the discipline, and by implication provide real knowledge. John Mearsheimer's claim (1995) that critical international relations theory had failed to deliver much in the way of empirical research was later echoed by Price and Reus-Smit (1998), who compared it unfavorably to constructivism's success in this regard. However, for critical theory proper, normative and metatheoretical groundwork is fundamental, and empirical studies ought not be begun until this preparation has been laid—that is, until the project can be defended normatively. This requires an engagement with moral and philosophical traditions outside international relations. The criticisms arguably reflect the general trend toward caricature in the depictions of alternatives to the mainstream and a recurring failure to distinguish adequately between small "c" and large "C" approaches, or between critical theory and historical materialism. Arguably they also reflect the nature of the Frankfurt School challenge to mainstream international relations discipline and its resistance to doing normative and interdisciplinary theorizing.

3 CRITICAL INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY TODAY

This section sets out the major achievements in generating normatively and empirically informed theory in international relations. In addition to the distinction between small and large "c" theories, the agenda of Frankfurt School-inspired works has diversified into at least two veins. These can be broadly characterized as those that *apply* the insights of critical theory to the field of international relations; and those that aspire to develop *a* critical theory of international relations. Critical theory in the latter sense is "grand theory" seeking to provide a comprehensive account of the emancipatory potentials of the present era. Within international relations there is, at this stage, really only one contributor to this project, and that is Linklater. The following discussion uses Linklater's framework to set out his "grand theory" and to outline the principal contributions of critical international relations theory.

The most significant contributions of the first type have studied the evolution of the international system and its components (historical sociology), international political economy, or the role of gender and security in the emancipatory project. Critical theory is the natural ally of feminist thought and as a result has

had a considerable influence on feminist international relations. While feminist thought in international relations has its own intellectual history that is independent of Frankfurt School theorizing, the overall thrust of feminist work is "transformative" or "critical" (J. Ann Tickner's early reading (1995) of Morgenthau could easily be read as a first piece on critical theory). Most feminist scholars are doing theory from a standpoint concerned with emancipation and the ending of unnecessary suffering for both men and women. Most obviously, feminists are concerned to denaturalize gender differences that are taken for granted and problematize many of the masculine assumptions of Frankfurt School critical theory and of Habermas in particular (see Hutchings 1996, 98). This has led Brooke Ackerly, Maria Stern, and Jacqui True (2006), for instance, to develop a critical feminist methodology. Critical security studies has sought to engage traditional thinking about the meaning and practices of security with the aim of addressing the emancipation of "those who are made insecure by the prevailing order" (Wyn Jones 1999, 118; 2001). It presents a challenge to the mainstream of international relations by undermining claims that the strategic realm is a realm apart, immune to moral progress. In denaturalizing the strategic/security realm it simultaneously demonstrates the way in which security studies makes the world in its own image and represents an interest in maintaining the status quo.

However, in beginning with an international perspective and from within the discipline of international relations, Linklater stands largely unrivalled in developing the Frankfurt School project of a "critical theory of society." At its most ambitious it deploys historical sociological insights to provide an account of a moral and political theory that aspires to give direction to the discipline as whole. What distinguishes Linklater's approach from other approaches to critical theory in international relations is the comprehensiveness of his account, its engagement with contemporary debates in social and political theory and philosophy, and the scope of his vision.

4 THE NORMATIVE PROJECT

While normative theory remains largely excluded from international relations' self-understanding (most contributions come from political theory and philosophy—for example, see Beitz 1979), there is an emerging field of international political theory, or normative international relations, that was largely absent even twenty years ago (Frost 1996; 2000; Hutchings 1996; Cochran 1999; Shapcott 2001; Brown 2002). It is no accident then that critical international relations theory has made its largest contributions in the area of systematic reflection upon the meaning of

emancipation and upon normative foundations of the current order and desirable possible future orders. In keeping with the agenda of returning to political theory, Linklater (1992, 92) argued that "the normative purpose of social inquiry should be considered before all else. Clarifying the purpose of the inquiry precedes and facilitates the definition of the object of inquiry." Linklater's application of Habermas has been central to this clarification. The dialogical principle provides the basis for moral universalism and requires the "triple" transformation of political community. The goal of emancipation is understood as freedom to consent or to be included in open dialogue in relation to the actions of all others. Emancipation remains tied to universalizability, to rules that everyone could agree to under conditions of free communication (see Eckersley, this volume). Recognition of the moral quality of dialogue means that to emancipate:

is to increase the spheres of social interaction that are governed by dialogue and consent rather than power and force; to expand the number of human beings who have access to a speech community that has the potential to become universal; and to create the socioeconomic preconditions of effective, as opposed to nominal, involvement for all members of that community. (Linklater 2001, 31)

Such a project requires, at the normative level, reflection upon the nature of dialogue and consent, reflection upon the relationship between identity and difference, and between universal and particular, and reflection upon the moral significance of boundaries. By providing one of the strongest arguments for cosmopolitan ethics, Linklater and Habermas have advanced the debates about the nature and possibilities of the current international order.

At this point, critical theory meets some of its most important criticisms from anticosmopolitans skeptical of its universalism. The most important of these are that its notion of emancipation is too culturally specific, reflecting only the values of the European enlightenment. This gives rise, at the very least, to a problematic universalism that threatens to assimilate and legislate out of existence all significant differences (Hopgood 2000; Inayatullah and Blaney 2004). The contentious aspect of this account is whether or not any cosmopolitan ethics can do significant justice to difference, or whether the most significant problems occur only in the interpretation of cosmopolitan dialogue (Shapcott 2001).

In turn, Linklater has incorporated these insights by marrying Habermas's theory with a cosmopolitan harm principle (Linklater 2006). In this modification, emancipation is ultimately concerned with the prevention of unnecessary suffering, as much as with the idea of individual rationality. Emphasizing the necessity of developing cosmopolitan harm principles, which extends concern about harm to all human beings, follows from this recognition. It is also commensurate with the dialogic ethic because the interpretation of the meaning of harm and consent in relation to potentially and presently harmful practices, requires open dialogue between all those possibly affected by an action.

5 THE SOCIOLOGICAL PROJECT

The sociological dimension of critical theory is that aspect most closely related to the traditional interests in explaining and understanding the forces that shape the international order. The realist charge against idealism was that it did not take seriously the restraints of the era. Idealists and utopians underestimated the tendency of the international realm to reproduce itself and its resistance to reformist ideologies. However, because critical theory is informed by a practical goal, it studies not just the world as it is but "how it got that way," "how it ought to be," and what possibilities there may be for transforming it. The prospects for emancipation are conditional upon tendencies within the existing world order, and any change can come about only as a development of that order. Critical theory's normative agenda requires an accompanying social theory that takes the conditions of the age into account without reifying them. It has drawn upon constructivist and sociological work, on the spread of humanitarian, democratic, and human rights norms, and historical sociology of state building, thus confirming Price and Reus-Smit's claim that critical and constructivist approaches can be mutually supportive. It is worth noting that the critical theory of international relations has remained largely unconcerned with Habermas's own sociological theory, which addresses the "colonization" of the life world by technical instrumental rationality and the rationality of money and productive exchange. Such colonization provides both threats to freedom and the risk of overadministration, as well as opportunities for more universal forms of association (Weber 2005).

Marx's observation that humans make the world but not under conditions of their own choosing is the appropriate starting point for this aspect of the critical project. The mundane but profound insight that the world has not always been divided into sovereign states raises the possibility of an inquiry into how that world came to be and how it might transform in the future. This in turn involves identification of the forces that have worked in favor of and against universalism in any given order. According to Linklater, the interest in emancipation requires an investigation into how human history has witnessed different levels of commitment to universalistic practices—that is, a comparative sociology of states systems "which focuses on long-term historical approaches in which visions of the unity of the human race influence the development of states-systems" (Linklater and Suganami 2006, 231).

Elements of this type of investigation are present in the work of both Heather Rae (2002) and Paul Keal (2003). Rae addresses Theodor Adorno and Horkheimer's concern in the *Dialectic of Enlightenment* with the dark, as well as progressive, capacities of modernity and raises questions about the emancipatory possibilities of states that are premised upon violent exclusion. Rae claims that the evolution of

the sovereign state with exclusive territorial jurisdiction is related to the exclusion of minority nonconformist identities from the body politic. State-builders identify sub-groups who do not conform to their ideal or whose identity is perceived to threaten their territorial authority. In the context of international competition and insecurity, many states adopt "pathological"—that is, murderous and genocidal—practices against these internal "threats," culminating, of course, in the Holocaust and Armenian genocides of the twentieth century. Rae also identifies the praxeological possibilities of a critical study of this subject by examining a recent case of potential pathological practices that was circumvented by domestic and international action.

Keal's work is informed by an emancipatory interest in understanding the way in which international society has harmed indigenous peoples by dispossessing, subordinating, or forcibly assimilating them to European practices. Fundamental to Keal's inquiry are the implications of the earlier dispossession of the indigenous peoples for the legitimacy of many states and international society today. Colonial settler states such as Australia, Canada, and the United States are vulnerable to the claim that they rest on illegitimate foundations stemming from this dispossession. The historical/empirical aspect of his work does not prevent reflection upon alternative practices that might make contemporary states and the international society of states more legitimate from the position of all those affected by them.

Preliminary work on the comparative historical sociology of states systems suggests, for Linklater, that the evolution of an international society of states provides some of the strongest evidence that the contemporary order has been uniquely successful in institutionalizing greater levels of concern for humanity as whole. He identifies the norm of national self-determination and the continuing progress in drafting and enforcing international human rights norms, in the laws of war, on the targeting of civilians, the ban on nondiscriminatory weapons such as landmines, and criminalizing of rape as a weapon of war, as indicators of cosmopolitan commitments to restrict the range of permissible harms against individuals. Universal harm conventions involve recognition of a substantive conception of humanity in which suffering is recognized as an assault on what it is to be human, individual, and autonomous. In addition, the possible "pacification" of the relations between core industrial states raises the argument that more profound transformations of inter-state relations are possible under conditions of anarchy than is often portrayed. These developments raise the possibility of an account whereby humankind progresses first from an international system to a society of states, and then from a "pluralist" to a "solidarist" international society. If this is the case, it may be possible to move from a solidarist society of states to a cosmopolitan society.

The importance of these norms should not be underestimated, as there is little evidence that cosmopolitan thought has had such an impact in the past or in other

international orders. At the same time, the relative success in institutionalizing cosmopolitan harm principles in the current international order exists in tension with the tendency of global economic relations to contribute to the suffering of the poor. However, a general decline in the tolerance of unnecessary suffering and the spread of a belief in equality may contribute to a decline in tolerance for an international economic order that is imposed by the rich upon the poorest members of humanity (Pogge 2002).

The sociological dimensions of critical theory in international relations belie the claims that it is uninterested in empirical work. More importantly, they indicate that it necessarily incorporates insights drawn from a variety of approaches. For instance, Marxism added the realm of production and the processes of state-building to the understanding of the state system, offering an explanation of relations of material reproduction and the development of capitalism on a world scale. On the other hand, the methodological limitations of historical materialism meant that it was insufficient for the purposes of a comprehensive critical international relations theory.[1] Marxism's emphasis on the capitalist "base" rendered it effectively blind to the possiblity of a separate logic of inter-state insecurity that might run counter to capitalism's universalizing potential, as depicted by realism.

Linklater (1990b) claims that realism identifies how the logic of geopolitics, state-building, and war contribute to the maintenance of particularistic forms of association such as tribe, nation, or state. In a threatening international environment, appeals to universalism are likely to be overridden or come behind appeals to security and stability. The discourse of the "war on terror" illustrates this tendency. Under the condition of a perceived existential and "civilizational" crisis, there is pressure to retreat from universalistic norms and forms of association, including the United Nations, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and the Geneva Conventions. The necessity for state survival in an uncertain anarchic environment therefore provides a brake on universalizing forces that emerged from modernity, the Enlightenment, and later, globalization.

Likewise, realist moral skepticism also provides a useful normative contribution by focusing on the clear cases of false universalism that accompany hegemony and great power hubris. The realist critique of American foreign policy's universalist pretensions provides an appropriate illustration. The identification of American values with universal ones is misplaced and likely to meet with hostility and provoke resistance abroad. Nonetheless, both the realist and "Grotian" emphasis on the role of the great powers also reveals sources of stability in inter-state relationships.

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[1] It is worth noting that, while it is perhaps Cox's account (1986) of the relationship between states, social forces (class, production), and world orders that is most associated with critical international relations theory, it is only marginally influenced by the Frankfurt School.

In turn, this suggests that cosmopolitanism is likely to find a more conducive environment where the great powers are in concert and committed to universalism.

The insights of a preliminary cosmopolitan sociology of states systems provide the conditions for the third part of the critical international relations theory project. The praxeology, referring to the relationship between norms and practices, or the practice of norms, requires an understanding of the social, material, and normative conditions in which the pursuit of the project of emancipation can occur. The subject of this praxis is taken up next.

6 THE PRAXEOLOGICAL PROJECT

The praxeological research program extends from understanding critical theory as a "practical philosophy" involving a normative critique of the present, a sketch of an alternative and better normative future, and a responsibility to inform praxis in the present. In other words, it involves the attempt to theorize how the cosmopolitan emancipatory values defended in the first agenda, and situated in the conditions identified in the second, can be developed or institutionalized in the present. The praxeological is perhaps the least developed aspect of critical international relations theory, in part because it is dependent upon progress in the normative and socio-logical realms. However, for a school that is ultimately concerned with changing the world and not just understanding it, more clearly needs to be done. The philosoph-ical difficulty here is how to provide insight that can guide action without it turning into instrumentalism or a "program." As one commentator has observed, this very tension may prove irresolvable, making any contribution to praxis severely limited (Rengger 2001).

Critical theory is not the only tradition engaged in thinking about the practice of freedom and equality. Without a doubt, liberalism, in all its varieties, has been the most successful at putting theory into praxis. Critical theory has been successful at mounting a normative and sociological critique of liberalism but has yet to be able to equal its success in informing institutional design and political practice. Investigating how the practice of emancipation goes beyond liberalism's emphasis on positive individual human freedom remains the unfulfilled promise of critical international relations theory.

Nonetheless, several aspects of how an emancipatory interest may be played out in praxis are emerging. For Linklater, the praxis of emancipation requires "alleviat-ing the varieties of human suffering that arise in the conditions of globalization. It involves building a global community that institutionalizes respect for the harm principle and grants all human beings the right to express their concerns and

fears about injury vulnerability and suffering" (Linklater and Suganami 2006, 277). This praxis has two major concerns—identifying avenues for greater inclusion in international and global decision-making, and remedying the varieties of avoidable human suffering characterizing current global relationships.

The normative and sociological concerns of critical theory direct attention toward identification of both actors and policies or practices that help advance the "triple transformation" of community. Without a doubt, the state and, by extension, the society of states are the most important agents in this process. Therefore, among the aims of critical praxeology is an effort to identify cosmopolitan policies and practices available to states and international society. While global civil society has a role to play in emancipation of the human species, it is states, and great powers in particular, that have the greatest potential for moving the international order in a progressive direction.

The first element of such a praxis, therefore, is to raise the possibility of states as good international citizens or, in Hedley Bull's terms, local agents of the world common good who recognize that "it is wrong to promote the interest of our [sic] own society ... by exporting suffering to others, colluding in their suffering or benefiting from the ways in which others exploit the weakness of the vulnerable" (Linklater 2002a, 145). Beyond that, states are challenged to develop harm conventions in relation to three categories. First, bilateral relationships: what "we" do to "them" and vice versa. Secondly, third-party relationships: what they do to each other. Thirdly, global relationships: what we all do to each other (Linklater 2002b). Examples of the first are cases where one community "exports" damaging practices, goods, or byproducts to another. In this case, states have a duty to consider the negative effects they have on each other, as well as a duty to prevent and punish harmful actions of nonstate actors and individuals for whom they are directly responsible. An example of the second is when a state is involved in harming either members of its own community or its neighbor's, such as in cases of genocide. Third-party states and the international community also have duties to prevent, stop, or punish the perpetrators of these harms. The third relationship refers to practices to which many communities contribute, often in different proportions, such as in the case of global warming. States have a negative duty not to export harm to the world as a whole and a positive duty to contribute to the resolution of issues arising from such harms. A cosmopolitan foreign policy should be committed to the possibility of developing more universally inclusive arrangements for democratic governance of the international, regional, and national orders. The democratic project requires a democratization of the international realm in order to make it more accountable but also more representative of the interests of each and every member of the human species. In other words, good international citizens should be concerned not only to alter their own practices but also to seek to transform the institutions of international order so that they do not cause, participate in, or benefit from unnecessary suffering.

7 CONCLUSION: THE CONTRIBUTION
OF CRITICAL TEORY

The question of freedom and the relationship of the individual to humanity has been central to the discourses of political theory in Western history. Critical theory has sought to provide a further elaboration on the nature and possibilities of freedom understood as moral universalism in the international realm. Such a defence challenges the status quo of international politics, not from the outside, but rather from within the tradition of Western enlightenment. The biggest contribution of critical international relations theory is that it keeps the question of individual human freedom and its relationship to political community from disappearing from the language of the study of international politics.

This chapter provided an overview of the most important elements of the critical theory of international relations and therefore it has not been possible to elaborate on the criticisms or problems of critical theory. However, a number of points can be noted briefly. Frankfurt School critical theory in international relations remains a fairly select group and this may or may not reflect the limits of this mode of theorizing. It is not currently fashionable to engage in constructing "metanarratives" of emancipation; the term evokes the idea that it is the theorist's job to emancipate the enslaved and to instil a single model of the human agent. While critical theorists have done much to try to dispel this understanding, Habermas himself rejecting its use, it remains a problematic term for many. On the other hand, the vast majority of international relations continues to see normative reflection as "somebody else's business" and not what we do. Such a self-understanding clearly limits the avenues for critical international relations for many and is likely to continue to do so.

What has been emphasized are the achievements in challenging the dominant understanding of the discipline of international relations as a social science and the success in setting forth an alternative research program. Because it constitutes itself outside the mainstream understanding of social science, it appears that the contributions and insights provided by critical theory cannot count as real knowledge for most social scientists. However, if we take the insights of the Frankfurt School seriously, then it is the mainstream that provides "limited" or incomplete accounts both of the world and of the nature of its own insights. In particular, a challenge has been raised to mainstream and positivist approaches to provide more coherent accounts of their own methodological, epistemological, and normative positions. From a critical theory perspective, the weight of argument is against any continuation of the fact/value distinction, and as a consequence the onus of proof, so to speak, lies with the mainstream. Positivist-influenced approaches need to demonstrate either the inaccuracy of the division between traditional and critical theory, or to defend the separation of purpose from interests and the necessity and desirability of an instrumental account of reason. In addition, the force of the

argument necessarily draws mainstream approaches to address normative issues, both in the substance of world politics and also insofar as they relate to underlying purposes of inquiry. Thus either they must reject the claim that their epistemology biases the status quo, or alternatively must defend that bias. Whichever way they respond, they nonetheless will be drawn to certain normative issues about the nature of social sciences and about the purposes to which they are put. Ultimately they will be drawn to the terrain of evaluative questions about the quality and nature of freedom and political community. The very structure and themes of this *Handbook* testify to the fertility and success of the critical theory of international relations in advancing this agenda.

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