Original Article

Is IR Theory White? Racialised Subject-Positioning in Three Canonical Texts

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Abstract
Racism is a historically specific structure of modern global power which generates hierarchies of the human and affirms White supremacy. This has far-reaching material and epistemological consequences in the present, one of which is the production and naturalisation of White-racialised subject positions in academic discourse. This article develops a framework for analysing Whiteness through subject-positioning, synthesising insights from critical race scholarship that seek to dismantle its epistemological tendencies. This framework identifies White subject-positioning as patterned by interlocking epistemologies of immanence, ignorance, and innocence. The article then interrogates how these epistemological tendencies produce limitations and contradictions in international theory through an analysis of three seminal and canonical texts: Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (1979), Robert Keohane's *After Hegemony* (1984) and Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999). It shows that these epistemologies produce contradictions and weaknesses within the texts by systematically severing the analysis of the international system and the 'West' from its actual imperial conditions of possibility. The article outlines pathways for overcoming these limitations and suggests that continued inattention to the epistemological consequences of race for International Relations (IR) theory is intellectually unsustainable.

¿Es la teoría de las Relaciones Internacionales blanca? El posicionamiento racializado del sujeto en tres textos canónicos

Resumen
El racismo es una estructura históricamente específica del poder mundial moderno, que produce jerarquías humanas y afirma la supremacía blanca. Esto tiene consecuencias materiales

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y epistemológicas de gran alcance en el presente, una de las cuales es la producción y la naturalización, en el discurso académico, de las posiciones de un sujeto blanco racializado. Este artículo desarrolla un marco para el análisis de la racialidad blanca a través del posicionamiento de los sujetos, sintetizando los aportes de los estudios críticos de la raza, que tienen como fin desarticular sus tendencias epistemológicas. Dicho marco detecta que el posicionamiento del sujeto blanco sigue un patrón de epistemologías entrelazadas de inmanencia, ignorancia e inocencia. Asimismo, el artículo indaga cómo estas tendencias epistemológicas producen limitaciones y contradicciones en la teoría internacional, a través del análisis de tres textos seminales y canónicos: *Theory of International Politics*, de Kenneth Waltz (1979), *After Hegemony*, de Robert Keohane (1984) y *Social Theory of International Politics*, de Alexander Wendt (1999). El análisis revela que estas epistemologías generan contradicciones y debilidades dentro de los textos, al desvincular sistemáticamente «Occidente» y el análisis del sistema internacional, por un lado, de sus condiciones imperiales de posibilidad en la realidad, por el otro. El artículo abre caminos para superar estas limitaciones y sugiere que la continua falta de atención a las consecuencias epistemológicas que la raza implica para la teoría de las Relaciones Internacionales es intelectualmente insostenible.

Palabras clave

raza, teoría de la Relaciones Internacionales, discurso

La théorie des RI est-elle blanche ? Le positionnement racisé du sujet dans trois textes canoniques

Résumé

Le racisme est une structure du pouvoir mondial moderne historiquement située qui crée des hiérarchies entre les êtres humains et affirme la suprématie de la race blanche. Cela a des conséquences matérielles et épistémologiques majeures dans le monde actuel, l'une étant la production et la naturalisation d'un positionnement du sujet racisé blanc dans le discours académique. Cet article développe un cadre d'analyse de la domination blanche à travers le positionnement du sujet et synthétise les idées des recherches critiques sur la question raciale qui cherchent à démanteler ses tendances épistémologiques. Ce cadre d'analyse identifie le positionnement du sujet blanc comme étant structuré par des épistémologies d'immanence, d'ignorance et d'innocence entrecroisées. L'article s'interroge ensuite sur la manière dont ces tendances épistémologiques engendrent des limites et des contradictions dans la théorie des relations internationales, à travers l'analyse de trois textes séminaux et canoniques: *Theory of International Politics* (1979) de Kenneth Waltz, *Après l'hégémonie* (1984) de Robert Keohane et *Social Theory of International Politics* (1999) d'Alexander Wendt. Il révèle que ces épistémologies produisent des contradictions et des insuffisances dans les textes en séparant systématiquement l'analyse du système international et de l'« Occident » de ses conditions impériales de possibilité. Cet article expose différentes façons de surmonter ces limites et suggère que l'inattention constante aux conséquences épistémologiques de la question raciale sur la théorie des relations internationales n'est pas soutenable sur le plan intellectuel.

Mots-clés

Race, théorie des relations internationales, discours

Other people are raced, we are just people.[1]

Introduction

What does it mean to say that International Relations (IR) is White? Whiteness in IR theory does not reside in authors' skin colour, conscious intentions or places of origin but rather the ways in which a set of epistemological tropes, locations, assumptions, and commitments naturalise racialised accounts of world politics – that is, ones based on hierarchies of the human.[2] In brief, Whiteness is not an 'identity' so much as a 'stand-point' rooted in structural power. This standpoint (re)produces significant flaws in the logic of IR theories, skews the supporting evidence, and has various disciplinary consequences. Thus, a regional 'diversification' of the field and a 'pluralisation' of perspectives from beyond the West – as advocated by the Global IR project for example – is an important but inadequate response to the problem of race in IR.[3] Rather, the field also needs to uncover, disrupt, and ultimately overcome the epistemologically limiting logics of Whiteness themselves.

Once upon a time, race was a central focus of the Anglo-American discipline of IR,[4] but receded from mainstream view for several decades until the 1990s as overt racism became less socially acceptable.[5] The question of IR's relationship to race and racism has been making itself more visible in the last 10 years or so as postcolonial critique has flourished and demands are made to 'decolonise' the field.[6] Most recently, the question has been energised by ongoing political struggles against racism such as the #RhodesMustFall/FeesMustFall movement in South Africa, the Black Lives Matter movement highlighting racialised state violence in the United States, and the concomitant rise of far-right political movements globally which seek to challenge anti-racism. It is in this context that questions about the Whiteness of canonical IR have become increasingly prominent and urgent, to even the most mainstream of establishments.[7]

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1. Richard Dyer, *White: Essays on Race and Culture* (London: Routledge, 1997), 1.
2. See discussion in David A. Lake, 'White Man's IR: An Intellectual Confession', *Perspectives on Politics* 14, no. 4 (2016): 1112–22.
3. For example, Amitav Acharya, 'Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds', *International Studies Quarterly* 58, no. 4 (2014): 647–59.
4. For example, Vineet Thakur, Alexander E. Davis and Peter Vale, 'Imperial Mission, "Scientific" Method: An Alternative Account of the Origins of IR', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 46, no. 1 (2017): 3–23.
5. For example, Roxanne Lynn Doty, 'The Bounds of 'Race' in International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 22, no. 3 (1993): 443–61; Alexander Anievas, Nivi Manchanda and Robbie Shilliam, *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Colour Line* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014).
6. For example, Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair, eds., *Power, Postcolonialism and International Relations: Reading Race, Gender and Class* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2002); Branwen Gruffydd Jones, *Decolonizing International Relations* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006).
7. At the time of finishing this article and in the light of the global uprisings sparked by George Floyd's killing by police, for example, *Foreign Policy* blog has published reflections on race and racism in IR.

This article seeks to progress the analysis of race within IR theory through the elaboration of a tripartite framework in which 'Whiteness' is articulated as a subject-position within discourse and the application of this to canonical texts. In the first section of the article, I look at the growing literature on race and Eurocentrism in IR, noting that this literature provides an important but still limited account of the functioning of Whiteness within IR theory. Specifically, it only partially explicates the various forms of Whiteness identified in Critical Race Theory (CRT). Accordingly, in the second section, I use CRT as a complementary starting point to synthesise a framework for mapping White-racialised subject-positioning within IR theory through discourse analysis. I argue that this subject-positioning manifests as particular epistemic patterns that functionally relate to their dominant position in this racial formation, patterns which can be marked as interlocking epistemologies of immanence, ignorance, and innocence. Building on insights of previous work, this framework illustrates more explicitly the theme of moral 'innocence' as a theme within Whiteness, hitherto under-emphasised in the literature on IR theory, and enables a more systematic empirical engagement with the texts by distinguishing between related mechanisms of racialisation.

In the light of this framework, in the third section of the article, I conduct a discourse analysis of three seminal works of Anglo-American IR theory – Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*, Robert Keohane's *After Hegemony* and Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics*.[8] These texts were selected because (1) Anglo-American IR remains globally hegemonic in terms of what it means to study IR, (2) the authors were cited as the three most influential thinkers in IR in the most recent teaching, research, and international policy (TRIP) survey,[9] (3) they are taken as foundational to three major IR theories – neorealism, neoliberalism, and constructivism, and (4) these are the authors' most cited monographs. The analysis focuses specifically on the question of racialised subject-positioning within and across the texts. It shows that epistemologies of immanence, ignorance, and innocence are central to the argument, elucidation, and logic of these texts, lending support to the interpretation that canonical IR theory is indeed underpinned by White subject-positioning. In the fourth and fifth sections, I draw out specific ways in which Whiteness generates contradictions in and limitations to this scholarship, and point to alternative starting points for IR that eschew these epistemologies. In conclusion, I call upon all colleagues working in the discipline actively to confront and transcend the limitations that derive from the naturalisation of a White-racialised subject-position in the conduct of research.

Racism, Whiteness, Eurocentrism, and IR theory

There is an important disjuncture between the everyday understanding of racism as the isolated behaviour of 'bad' or unreflexive individuals, and the scholarly understanding

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8. Kenneth N. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading: Addison-Wesley, 1979); Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005 [1984]); Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
9. Daniel Maliniak et al., *TRIP 2014 Faculty Survey* (Williamsburg: Institute for the Theory and Practice of International Relations, 2017). Available at: https://trip.wm.edu/data/dashboard/faculty-survey.

of it as a structural phenomenon that shapes societies and world politics in multiple dimensions.[10] The often-limited training of IR scholars in understanding racism also means that they are likely to conceive it more in the former sense than the latter, and thus fail to see its workings. Moreover, the life experiences and ideological exposures of scholars racialised as White tend to normalise and render invisible Whiteness and White supremacy.[11] Given tendencies to divert discussions of racism by locating it as a feature of the past rather than the present, it is critical to show that race and Whiteness *continue* to organise the field. A key challenge for scholars of race and IR therefore is to render the functioning of Whiteness explicit by asking 'what does it mean to say that IR is White?'

Recent literature exploring race and Whiteness in IR has developed two broad approaches to this question.[12] The first is naming these phenomena and showing their genealogical disciplinary significance. The 'norm against noticing' race identified by Morrison[13] was named in IR by Vitalis[14] but had already been investigated by Doty,[15] who observed a systematic absence of discussions about 'race' in mainstream American IR journals, in spite of attempts to introduce discussions from the late 1960s.[16] Others who have noted the absence of race but not theorised Whiteness include Ling, Hobson, Persaud and Walker.[17] As Frankenberg argues, in the context of a social order where Whiteness remains an 'unmarked' category of belonging, interventions naming Whiteness are significant, for disrupting the normative equation of Whiteness with the 'neutral',

10. See Robin DiAngelo, *White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism* (London: Penguin, 2019), chapter 5.

11. Lake, 'White Man's IR', 1112. I use the term 'Whiteness' to refer to an epistemological location or standpoint produced by the wider racial formation of 'White supremacy'. In an ontological sense, however, 'race' is the product and not the cause of 'racism'. Where both are relevant to the point at hand for readability I will often refer simply to 'Whiteness'.

12. I am not looking at Whiteness in the public political sphere but this has been excellently elaborated in, for example, Srdjan Vucetic, *The Anglosphere: A Genealogy of a Racialized Identity in International Relations* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011), Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain: Empire and the Future of World Order, 1860–1900* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007) and Clive Gabay, *Imagining Africa: Whiteness and the Western Gaze* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

13. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination*, First Printing edition (New York: Harvard University Press, 1992).

14. Robert Vitalis, 'The Graceful and Generous Liberal Gesture: Making Racism Invisible in American International Relations', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 2 (2000): 331–56.

15. Doty, 'The Bounds of 'Race' in International Relations'.

16. For example, Tilden J. LeMelle, 'Race, International Relations, U.S. Foreign Policy, and the African Liberation Struggle', *Journal of Black Studies* 3, no. 1 (1972): 95–109.

17. For example, L.H.M. Ling, 'Sex Machine: Global Hypermasculinity and Images of the Asian Woman in Modernity', *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 7, no. 2 (1999): 277–306; John M. Hobson, 'Is Critical Theory Always for the White West and for Western Imperialism? Beyond Westphilian towards a Post-Racist Critical IR', *Review of International Studies* 33, no. S1 (2007): 91–116; Randolph B. Persaud and R.B.J. Walker 'Apertura: Race in International Relations', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 26, no. 4 (2001): 373–76.

'human' or 'universal'.[18] Relatedly, recent histories of the field of IR by Vitalis and Thakur et al have demonstrated its early preoccupations with questions of global White supremacy, race war, and imperial power, which have been written out of its origin stories.[19] These histories also do not theorise race but rather approach 'Whiteness' as a category internal to and explicit within historical discourse.

However, it is possible to greet the histories of Vitalis and Thakur et al as interesting disciplinary genealogies, while denying their *contemporary* relevance. The second approach in the literature is therefore necessary – one which unpacks the ongoing theoretical significance of Whiteness in IR theory in the absence of explicit 'race-talk'. For example, Krishna examines the epistemological sanitisation of imperial history in IR, despite the central role played by racialised dispossession and violence, conducted by White sovereign states towards Black and Brown peoples in the construction of the modern international system.[20] For Krishna, IR as a field is grounded in a racialised amnesia, reinforced by its disciplinary institutions. Relatedly, Henderson elaborates the epistemological grounding of IR theory in sources that have White supremacist, dualist logics, including the social contract theory of Hobbes and Rousseau, the liberal prescriptions of Kant, and the anthropology of Nadel.[21] Drawing on Sampson, Henderson highlights the consequences for the IR theory of Waltz and Wendt, circumscribing any possible imagined futures to either 'primitive' anarchical power politics or progress through the civilising 'Kantian' force of the West.[22] Howell and Richter-Montpetit's recent work on securitisation theory sees it as reproducing civilisationist, White-centred, and anti-Black concepts and tropes.[23] These works elaborate Whiteness in IR theories by highlighting its erasures of violence and dualist logics, focusing our attention on representational practices which generate accounts of the world as divided into hierarchies of the human.

Clearly, there is a strong affinity between these discussions and critiques of Eurocentrism in IR theory. Works including those of Hobson, Ling, Barkawi, and Laffey, and Bhambra have highlighted two different ways in which IR is Eurocentric. The focus of Hobson's analysis articulates Eurocentrism principally as an excessive focus on the West in terms of its agency or historical experience, in distinction to a more passive/absent East.[24] Work which has picked up on this understanding of Eurocentrism has

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18. Ruth Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters: The Social Construction of Whiteness*, 1st ed. (London: Routledge, 1993), 6.

19. Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press), Thakur et al., 'Imperial Mission'.

20. Sankaran Krishna, 'Race, Amnesia, and the Education of International Relations', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 26, no. 4 (2001): 401–24.

21. Errol A. Henderson, 'Hidden in Plain Sight: Racism in International Relations Theory', *Cambridge Review of International Affairs* 26, no. 1 (2013): 71–92.

22. Aaron Beers Sampson, 'Tropical Anarchy: Waltz, Wendt, and the Way We Imagine International Politics', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 27, no. 4 (2002): 429–57.

23. Alison Howell and Melanie Richter-Montpetit, 'Is Securitization Theory Racist? Civilizationism, Methodological Whiteness, and Antiblack Thought in the Copenhagen School', *Security Dialogue* 51, no. 1 (February 2020): 3–22.

24. John M. Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory, 1760–2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

sought to rebalance this by developing 'non-Western' theories and perspectives, as exemplified by the 'Global IR' project, Ling's Daoist dialectics and the *Worlding Beyond the West* series.[25] While this response is important, as Murray argues the geographical imagination at work can also play into imperial categories,[26] or be appropriated in culturally essentialist ways.

For Barkawi and Laffey and Bhambra, the primary issue with Eurocentrism is not just a focus on the West but an occlusion of the imperial conditions which have shaped the modern international system.[27] The response to this problem is to advance a reading of global 'connected histories' which unpack imperial relations and show the co-constitution of core and periphery, similar to Krishna's use of contrapuntal analysis to foreground imperial violence.[28] These are critical interventions which are crucial to shifting the imaginary of IR away from its founding mythologies about the nature of sovereignty, modernity, war, international law, and so on.

The question is, then, what is at stake in moving from a discussion on Eurocentrism to one on Whiteness in IR theory? There is clearly an overlap in key parts of analysis. Some may feel that changing the principal terminology from Eurocentrism to Whiteness is simply a raising of the political stakes and the potential to offend without any important difference in content. Hobson's own equivocation around the terms – seeing racism only as 'scientific racism', but conceding that Eurocentric thought may be 'racialised' – is emblematic of the discomfort many may feel when discussing race rather than Eurocentrism.[29] Similarly, the publication of Howell and Richter-Montpetit's piece caused consternation for various reasons, one of which was the perception that authors discussed were being personally accused of being racist notwithstanding a disclaimer on this point.[30] It is worth then being clear about what is meant by race and Whiteness and why they are a necessary complement to talking about Eurocentrism.

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25. For example, Amitav Acharya and Barry Buzan, 'Why Is There No Non-Western International Relations Theory? An Introduction', *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific* 7, no. 3 (2007): 287–312; L.H.M. Ling, *The Dao of World Politics: Towards a Post-Westphalian, Worldist International Relations* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013).

26. Christopher Murray, 'Imperial Dialectics and Epistemic Mapping: From Decolonisation to Anti-Eurocentric IR', *European Journal of International Relations* 26, no. 2 (2020): 419–42, 424.

27. Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*, 2007 ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Tarak Barkawi and Mark Laffey, 'The Postcolonial Moment in Security Studies', *Review of International Studies* 32 (2006): 329–52; Tarak Barkawi, 'Decolonizing War', *European Journal of International Security* 1, no. 2 (2016): 199–214. Hobson sees these but puts the emphasis on the 'non-West' as the primary response.

28. Krishna, 'Race, Amnesia'.

29. John M. Hobson, 'The "R-Word" and "E-Word" Definitional Controversies: A Dialogue with My Five Interlocutors', *Postcolonial Studies* 19, no. 2 (2016): 210–26.

30. Ole Wæver and Barry Buzan, 'Racism and Responsibility – The Critical Limits of Deepfake Methodology in Security Studies: A Reply to Howell and Richter-Montpetit', Security Dialogue 51 (May 2020): 386–94.

A key point, yet one readily forgotten, is that 'the West' is on any plausible reading a racialised category indexed to 'Whiteness'.[31] Both concepts were 'invented' historically as part of European overseas expansion. Critically, the global racial formation that emerged from these processes was not only one *between* regions geographically speaking, but which contained racially hierarchical formations *within* them. In the case of Whiteness, it is codified in the settler-colonial conquest of the 'New World', which developed new hierarchies of humans (i.e. races) for the purposes of expropriating land and labour.[32] This happened alongside the pursuit of imperial advantage over other racially and civilisationally defined Others against the 'West'. 'Whiteness' and 'Westernness' then became co-mythologised in the 19th century through evolutionary, racial, and social science as the most advanced forms of human existence.[33] Much of the discussion of Eurocentrism in IR however thinks principally of 'the West' as the key discursive object of interest, and understands this in geocultural rather than expressly racial terms.

However, because of the production of 'internally' differentiated others within the racial formation, Whiteness is not just Westernness but a particular structural relationship to that Westernness compared to 'non-Whites' – a superior entitlement to the wealth and property accumulated through racialised capitalism; privileged political recognition, authenticated inherited belonging; an affinity and identification with the West as a progressive, endogenously developed, meritocratic, individualist, and liberal space; and a situatedness in its own story of innovation and overcoming.[34] This identification is available to people racialised as White even across very different economic, geographical, and social conditions. Indigeneity, Blackness, and Brownness by contrast do not have equivalent relations to the idea or material structures of the 'West', even when peoples marked as such are geographically and materially incorporated into it, and for many centuries. Rather, even in the case of Indigenous peoples in settler colonial states, they are not discursively marked as 'belonging' to the West. Thus, there is no clear separation between the 'internal' forms of racial governance and the 'external' racialisation of geopolitics.

To examine Whiteness rather than simply the West as the critical object of interest is therefore, I argue, to incorporate a fuller understanding of the complex global racial formation and its relationship with IR theory than one can with the concept of Eurocentrism alone, particularly where that is understood narrowly as a problem of

31. Patrick Jackson suggests that the racialised character of the 'West' as a category has been under-recognised in his previous work. Patrick Jackson, 'Episode 9: Race and Securitization Theory', *Whiskey and International Relations Theory*, podcast audio, May 21, 2020. Available at: https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/whiskeyindiaromeo/ episodes/2020-05-21T14_58_46-07_00.

32. Theodore W. Allen, *The Invention of the White Race Vol. 1* (London/New York: Verso, 2012); Alastair Bonnett, *The Idea of the West: Culture, Politics and History* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).

33. Branwen Gruffydd Jones, 'Definitions and Categories: Epistemologies of Race and Critique', *Postcolonial Studies* 19, no. 2 (2016): 173–84.

34. Although as Gabay argues, this can also become a source of anxiety rather than triumphalism. Gabay, *Imagining Africa*, 11–13.

provincialism rather than a particular kind of hierarchical power structure. Without necessarily conflating 'identity' and standpoint, it is nonetheless not a coincidence that authors who in other contexts are not interpellated as White, even when they are 'from' the 'West', have been more consistently attuned to these problems within IR for a long time.[35] Indeed, Bhambra, developing the themes from her work on Eurocentrism now defines the problem of 'methodological Whiteness' in social theory as a failure to acknowledge or reflect on the structuring role of race in the world, and a tendency to treat White experience as universal.[36]

By talking about Whiteness as well as Eurocentrism then we can draw attention to the ongoing and linked nature of the co-constituted racialised hierarchies within and between regions. Moreover, by understanding race through the idea of subject-positioning, as will be shown through the theoretical development in the next section, we can explore the relationship between three linked levels at which racialisation is activated in IR as a lived field: an investment in subject-positions, the plausibility of specific historical narratives and the adequacy of theory.

In the remainder of this article, I show how the theorisation and analysis of Whiteness and Eurocentrism in IR theory can be further elaborated in dialogue with CRT, along lines presaged by Vucetic.[37] Defining racism as a historically constructed social formation in the context of imperial expansion, I analyse the 'standpoint' of Whiteness,[38] as characterised by a type of subject-positioning, evidenced through forms of racialised epistemology, which can be mapped more explicitly and directly within contemporary IR theory as discourse. This furthers the present literature on race and IR theory by clearly distinguishing between three different epistemological tendencies, drawing attention in particular to the trope of 'innocence', and showing the ways in which they position authors, readers, and subject matter in canonical texts.

A Framework for Mapping Whiteness

CRT has yielded a rich and multidimensional account of race as a historically specific structure of social and political power[39] – what Omi and Winant call a 'racial formation' – with both discursive and material dimensions.[40] This literature demonstrates first that

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35. See the work of the Howard School narrated in Vitalis, *White World Order*.
36. Gurminder K. Bhambra, 'Brexit, Trump and "Methodological Whiteness": On the Misrecognition of Race and Class', *The British Journal of Sociology* 68, no. S1 (2017): S214–32.
37. For example, Srdjan Vucetic, 'Against Race Taboos: The Global Colour Line in Philosophical Discourse', in *Race and Racism in International Relations: Confronting the Global Colour Line*, eds. Anievas et al. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 97–113.
38. Frankenberg, *White Women, Race Matters*, 1.
39. For example, Dyer, *White*; Barnor Hesse, 'Racialized Modernity: An Analytics of White Mythologies', *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 30, no. 4 (July 1, 2007): 643–63.
40. Michael Omi and Howard Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States: From the 1960s to the 1990s*, (New York: Routledge, 1995 [1986]); Howard Winant, 'Race and Race Theory', *Annual Review of Sociology* 26, no. 1 (2000): 169–85.

racism is a modern but durable structure of power, resources, and violence within capitalism.[41] Second, it shows that one way in which White supremacy is systematically upheld in supposedly 'post-racial' orders is by what Mills calls 'epistemologies of ignorance' – the systematic discounting of historical and contemporary structures of racism from public knowledge.[42] Third, it highlights a hegemonic subjective and 'possessive' investment in Whiteness that is continuously defended.[43]

Here, I synthesise strands from CRT and IR for a more systematic conceptual account of Whiteness as a form of subject-positioning that are then used to support an empirical analysis of its manifestations within IR theory. Conceptually, I posit that White subject-positioning is centrally characterised within discourse by interlocking epistemologies of *ignorance*, *immanence*, and *innocence*. These forms of subject-positioning are racialised in that they assume a hierarchy of human significance, signal an identification with a set of White-racialised historical subjects, and a subjective investment in protecting or justifying extant White privilege and supremacy.

The concept of 'epistemologies of ignorance' as mentioned comes from the work of Mills, who has examined the ways in which liberal American political theory foundationally rests on what he calls the racial contract.[44] The racial contract is a tacit agreement among people racialised as White to discount the origins and functioning of White supremacy from discussions about how society is and should be organised. This is achieved through representations that obscure, exclude or exceptionalise the central role of racialised dispossession, violence, and discrimination in the making of the modern world.[45] Importantly for Mills, these forms of ignorance are not accidental or random but deliberate and *necessary* for the continued functioning of the present order as a White-dominated polity, because calls for inter-racial justice can be comfortably and systematically ignored in mainstream public life.[46] 'Ignorance' is therefore central to the reproduction of White supremacy in the United States. This analytic resonates strongly with Krishna's account of historical 'amnesia' in disciplinary IR and Bhambra's observation about the ignoring of race in methodological Whiteness.[47]

However, these epistemologies of ignorance also require some kind of other narrative about *how* and *why* White-racialised people arose to their present position of pre-eminence. These answers are supplied for the most part by what I will call epistemologies of

41. For example, Allen, *The Invention of the White Race*; Cheryl I. Harris, 'Whiteness as Property', *Harvard Law Review* 106, no. 8 (1993): 1707–91.
42. Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 18–19.
43. Shannon Sullivan, *Revealing Whiteness: The Unconscious Habits of Racial Privilege* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006); George Lipsitz, 'The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: Racialized Social Democracy and the "White" Problem in American Studies', *American Quarterly* 47, no. 3 (1995): 369–87.
44. Mills, *The Racial Contract*.
45. Ibid., 18–19, 96–106.
46. Ibid., 19.
47. Krishna, 'Race, Amnesia'; Bhambra, 'Brexit, Trump'.

'immanence', which I adapt from the critiques of Eurocentrism by Bhambra of historical sociology and Hobson of IR.[48] This is essentially the claim that 'modernity' is *immanent* or endogenous uniquely to the 'West' (as argued by Bhambra), which is seen as the primary agent and subject matter of politics (as argued by Hobson). In this discursive formation, the 'West', itself a discursive object racialised as White, is an auto-generative entity whose own genius and social conditions drove a rapid but autonomous form of modernisation, meaning it surpassed historical competitors in achieving the advances in political, economic, social, technological, and cultural spheres.

This narrative has been substantively refuted by historical inquiry into constituent elements of 'modernity', such as the origins of modern revolutions, capitalism, and human rights.[49] Despite this, the epistemology of 'immanence' plays an important role in stabilising and justifying racialised global inequalities by disconnecting the successes (and catastrophes) of the White West from their imperial conditions of possibility. It also provides a basis for the discursive relation of equivalence between Whiteness and authentic or universal humanness, because White 'modernity' is conceived as an irresistible and universal historical dynamic.[50]

To the epistemologies of 'ignorance' and 'immanence', however, we need to add an analytic of 'innocence' as characteristic of Whiteness. This is partially subsumed under 'ignorance' in the work of Krishna but deserves attention in its own right. Wekker's work draws attention to the projection of 'White innocence' within the Netherlands around racism.[51] Epistemologies of innocence seek to emphasise the *inadvertent*, *unintentional*, and *exceptional* character of racist behaviours or practices. These claims to innocence often emerge directly in response to accusations or discussions of racism.[52] For Wekker, the trope of innocence is central to White subject-positioning through the profession of *good faith* and moral respectability. This is because it functions to separate White-racialised populations from both histories of colonial and imperial domination and contemporary practices of racialised discrimination.[53] Innocence discourse instead locates racism as a matter of exceptional behaviour rooted in personal and conscious forms of discrimination which have mostly been overcome. This means engagement with racism as a structural phenomenon is systematically repressed, accompanied by forms of denial, hurt, outrage, and backlash where this is questioned, often evidencing a subjective investment in Whiteness itself.

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48. Gurminder K. Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination*, 2007 ed. (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*. See also Hesse, 'Racialized Modernity'.

49. Beyond the worked examples given in Bhambra's book, see for example, C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution*, ed. James Walvin, New Ed edition (London: Penguin, 2001 [1938]); Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Cape Town: Pambazuka Press, 1981).

50. See Dyer, *White*.

51. Gloria Wekker, *White Innocence: Paradoxes of Colonialism and Race* (Durham: Duke University Press Books, 2016).

52. See also DiAngelo, *White Fragility*.

53. Wekker, *White Innocence*, 16–18.

To go back to the understanding of race as a specific historical transnational social formation or social system,[54] we can see that epistemologies of innocence preserve a particular collective mapping of political belonging, responsibility, and justice; one which consistently separates racially privileged peoples from the historical and contemporary production of their privilege or consequences of their actions. There is a contradiction, however, because this deflection of blame for past evils is *not* complemented by a refusal to take ownership of appropriated land, wealth or property – that is, the material bases of racialised privilege, or of cultural credit for political ideas or historical developments. Discourses of White innocence and good faith instead make possible and manage these contradictions of racialised political governance in society.

Taken together, I argue that these epistemologies – of immanence, ignorance, and innocence – mark out detectable co-ordinates of White subject-positioning within discourse and can be used as methodological anchors for investigating Whiteness. Put otherwise, if White-racialised subject-positioning was *not* a significant feature in these works and in the world, we might expect a more reflexive and balanced interpretation – forms of 'ignorance' might be most visible where there were holes in the historical record, for example, or we might expect forms of (post)colonial co-operation to more readily acknowledge historical responsibilities and entanglements. Where they consistently and systematically converge around particular tropes in the face of other evidence and narratives, there is a deeper subjective identification at work which needs to be explained and analysed. To look at this, we can use the methodological framework of subject-positioning.

Subject positioning

Subject positioning emerges as a concept within discourse analysis.[55] Discourse analysis is concerned with the conditions of possibility of particular discursive productions, such as texts of IR theory for example. It is also concerned with how discourses such as Eurocentrism are naturalised in such a way as to become common-sensical accounts of how the world works. It is specifically interested in the production of meaning through forms of discursive *contrast* and the production of *subjects* through positioning vis-à-vis other subjects and other objects. In studying race, the key proposition is that a racialised social formation generates racialised subject-positions through discourse that help subjects make sense of the world in terms which anchor their social positions within it.[56]

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54. Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, 'Rethinking Racism: Towards a Structural Interpretation', *American Sociological Review* 62, no. 3 (1997): 465–80.

55. In IR, see Jutta Weldes, 'Constructing National Interests', *European Journal of International Relations* 2, no. 3 (1996): 275–318; Jennifer Milliken, 'The Study of Discourse in International Relations: A Critique of Research and Methods', *European Journal of International Relations* 5, no. 2 (June 1, 1999): 225–54; Roxanne Doty, *Imperial Encounters: The Politics of Representation in North-South Relations* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996). The summary here follows Mark Laffey and Jutta Weldes, 'Methodological Reflections on Discourse Analysis', *Qualitative Methods* 2, no. 1 (2004): 28–30.

56. Doty, *Imperial Encounters*, 10–12.

There is, therefore, an ongoing investment in a particular subject position. In turn, the plausibility and adequacy of specific narratives about the world are also shaped by discourse.

Subject-positioning works through mechanisms of articulation and interpellation. Articulation refers to the making of meaning through the contingent linking of specific signifying elements, such as the attachment of predicates, such as 'liberal', to a particular subject, such as 'the United States' or 'the West'. Interpellation refers to a dual process whereby subject positions are created in discourse and concrete individuals are 'hailed' into them. These positions are created when social relations are represented through processes of articulation. In turn, different representations make sense from or entail a particular interpretive position of the author and/or the reader – they locate the subject within particular power relations and make possible certain interests. Interpellation is successful to the extent that concrete individuals come to identify with and invest themselves in these subject-positions, such that they see themselves and their relations to the world in these terms.

As such, subject-positioning provides methodological clarity for explaining both how texts of IR theory work to produce accounts of the world and why those accounts might be labelled as 'White': Whiteness emerges as an effect of specific practices of representation and also of the ways in which said representations position the subject in relation to a world constituted and produced through sets of racialised practices and relations. However, not all representations cohere with the life-experiences of their subjects; for many, even in the 'West', not racialised as White in other settings, there is frequently a failure of interpellation due to the disjuncture between the productive discourses of IR theory and countervailing histories, identities, and interpretations.[57] Conversely, racial crises can also take place among those interpellated as White, where particular subjects feel they are not experiencing the expected benefits of Whiteness resulting in anxiety or resentment.[58] Yet, as will be discussed towards the end of this piece, it is precisely by deconstructing and refusing these subject-positions, as many have done, that racism can be resisted.

Having now established a framework for mapping Whiteness, the next section turns to a discourse analysis of the texts in question, demonstrating that White-subject positioning fundamentally affects the working of the theories, the empirical support offered and their analytic consequences. While discourses are not reducible to an individual text, I analyse each of these texts as sites where the wider discourse of IR is reproduced. The presence of the three epistemologies in each text is evidence for the existence of the larger discursive structure and the mechanisms within it.[59]

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57. The concept of 'double consciousness' can speak to this instability of interpellation. See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993).

58. Gabay, *Imagining Africa*. British historian David Starkey famously commented in 2011 on BBC's Newsnight that by rioting that 'the Whites have become black'.

59. Although such a clarification should be unnecessary, this examination does not constitute a critique of the texts' authors as individuals nor of their private beliefs. The texts are taken as social objects which are hegemonic in the wider discipline – it is for this reason that they are presented through abbreviations of the book titles rather than through the authors' names.

Mapping White Subject-Positioning in IR Theory

Epistemologies of immanence

The analysis of *Theory of International Politics* (ToIP), *After Hegemony* (AH) and *Social Theory of International Politics* (SToIP) begins with epistemologies of immanence, working from but extending existing critiques of Eurocentrism in IR, particularly that of Hobson.[60] This is the shared sensibility that an understanding of 'international politics' can be achieved adequately through theorising the politics of Western/White states, and that the key concerns relevant to IR are generated endogenously to this configuration, including the distribution of power, conflict, co-operation, and socialisation. These epistemologies are particularly visible in texts' subject selection, circumscription of subject matter and asserted lineages. Nonetheless, central to the immanence tendency is also a set of presumptions about the *universal* significance of these dynamics theoretically speaking.

It should be by now fairly uncontroversial to observe that these texts are overwhelmingly populated with Western/White states as their primary 'subjects' of interest. For *ToIP*, in formal terms the units of analysis are, abstractly, 'states' defined by their internally hierarchical form within an anarchical structure.[61] However, the real subjects of the theory are 'Great Powers' because, reasoning more consequentially, their behaviour is what has an impact on the distribution of power in the system, and this system is the European-centred system from 1700 onwards.[62] Accordingly, the great majority of illustrative examples of the dynamics of international politics which have significance are drawn from Europe. The only non-White-racialised Great Powers included in the list are Turkey (whose relevance after 1700 drops out) and Japan (which is powerful in 1910 and 1935 but not before or after).[63] There is no attempt to engage with a number of large, long-standing non-Western non-White 'Great Powers' at all, despite their significant power in the time period in question (1700–1970) – such a list might minimally include Imperial China, Persia, and Mughal India.

For *AH*, which presents its analysis as an alternative to neorealism, a similar selection pattern obtains but from different selection criteria – it is specified that the scope is advanced capitalist states, because these are where 'common interests' are greatest, and because they are 'interdependent' and share views on how to organise the economy.[64] In practice, the overwhelming focus is on the United States, Europe, and Japan; although the inclusion of the latter is often as a somewhat dependent appendage to the United States. Other 'interdependent' states within these institutional structures of co-operation from the outset such as Brazil and India are however mentioned only occasionally and in passing.

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60. Hobson, *Eurocentric Conception*, 203–213 on Waltz; 216–222 on Keohane.
61. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 96–97. Russia may be only liminally 'Western', but it is understood as racially 'White'.
62. Ibid., 72, 144, 162.
63. Whilst at certain historical moments, the Ottoman Empire and Japan are treated by the Western powers as 'semi-civilised', they were not dominantly identified as 'White', even when they sought and expressed this identification. See Murat Ergin, *Is the Turk a White Man?* Reprint ed. (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2018). Thanks to a reviewer for this point.
64. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 6.

For *SToIP*, while there are no explicit criteria for the selection of relevant 'subjects' of the theoretical approach, its focus on the White West emerges through the weight of examples deployed throughout the text, the temporal separation of the 'cultures of anarchy' into periods defined by dates which conventionally refer to the historiography of Western relations (e.g. 1648 as a transition from feudal to sovereign states) and the recognition that Western 'standards of civilisation' set the limits for socialisation into at least one of the international 'cultures'.[65] Practically speaking, then, relatively strong relations of discursive equivalence are established among objects which are identified with the West.

Beyond this, in the imaginative horizon of the texts, the epistemology of immanence also circumscribes the way in which IR's subject matter is presented. Specifically, the most significant episodes of international violence, warfare, systemic change, international co-operation, and cultural change are also located in terms of their effect on and significance for the White-racialised states of the West. For *ToIP* these are, in the case of major war specifically the Napoleonic Wars, the First World War (1914–1918) and the Second World War (1939–1945), which are understood as having *systemic* importance. 'National' or 'civil' violence is expressly excluded as relevant by *ToIP*, even where the legitimacy of a state itself is been called into question or millions die.[66] What matters for international politics is not the scope of violence or war itself, but only some of its effects on Great Powers' relative capabilities. Thus, efforts by the global South to co-operate in the face of imperial power are dismissed as irrelevant to such matters: 'Misery may like company, but when the poor and the weak join hands they gain little if anything in prosperity and strength'.[67]

For *AH*, and as presaged by the subject selection, there is also primary interest in specific forms of institutional co-operation that have been established among the 'advanced' countries, specifically their regimes for co-operation on oil, trade, and money. While the Organization of the Petroleum-Exporting Countries (OPEC), for example, appears in the historical narrative, its relevance is principally about the difference it makes to Western oil consumers.[68] *AH* makes gestures towards the possibilities for expanding the analysis to North-South,[69] but parking this question, the analysis goes on to treat its subjects as prospectively standing in for all states. While it is presented as rational that Western states would co-operate with each other because they are interdependent and similar, to identify with states beyond the West is seen to require an extension of 'empathy'[70] that is assumed to be lacking.

In its study of 'cultures of anarchy', *SToIP* also takes for granted that the key moments of normative change in the international system are those that relate to the relations of White Western states with each other, producing Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian cultures which are governed by processes of selection and social learning.[71] The argument

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65. Wendt, *Social Theory*, 292–93.
66. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 103.
67. Ibid., 35.
68. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 202–205.
69. Ibid., 7.
70. Ibid., 256.
71. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Chapter 7.

is that over a historical period, it has become possible for Western states specifically to develop a form of social ordering which allows them to identify with each other deeply, as a kind of collective 'we'. While the text opens up the possibility that this kind of 'group-identification' may also occur in other 'regional subsystems',[72] the overwhelming weight of analytic concern for the book as a whole is on the emergence of a 'Kantian' culture of anarchy among states who are self-identified as being of the 'West'.[73]

Beyond this, however, all the texts interpellate themselves – and the reader – within a stylised 'Western' ancestral lineage. Within *ToIP*, although the claim is made that patterns in international politics are recurrent and transhistorical,[74] the only reference point for historical events outside the post-1700 period is the interactions between the ancient Greek city-states of Athens and Sparta.[75] *AH*, following Gilpin, maps an imagined lineage of hegemonies from the *Pax Romana* to the *Pax Britannica* and the *Pax Americana*.[76] *SToIP* characterises different cultures of anarchy as 'Hobbesian', 'Lockean' and 'Kantian', although clarifies that these are stylised representations[77] rather than specific engagements with the thought of the eponymous figures. These labels nonetheless have the effect of discursively situating the research within a particular ancestral lineage in Enlightenment thinking. The text is explicit on this point: 'Asking embarrassing questions embodies the reflexive, self-critical mindset of the Enlightenment at its best'.[78] The establishment of a relationship with a classical/Enlightenment genealogy, even where, upon closer inspection, the strict relevance of such associations might dissolve, nonetheless establishes a set of interpellating co-ordinates for the collective racialised subject-positioning of the authors and readers.

Thus, for all the texts in question, the international order, its subjects, its dynamics, and its achievements are articulated as immanently 'Western' in scope and lineage, produced by and for states which, with the liminal exception of Japan, are European by geography or lineage. These states are not understood as parochial or esoteric but the model for international-political actors, with the occasionally acknowledged possibility that the insights generated by these theories might be applicable elsewhere. Their relations are seen to be the often 'rational' or 'normal' consequence of how polities should interact with each other, according to the various logics specified by the theories. The key events occurring within international history are depicted as those in which these subjects interact with each other.

These logics of Western immanence make sense from the perspective of a White-racialised subject-position, insofar as they naturalise a focus on a historically exceptional Western 'self', which is distinctive and special, but also can form the basis for general and/or objective accounts of international politics. These assumptions are both banal and very important for how the texts create specific subject-positions and relations to the

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72. Ibid., 301.
73. See discussion of this in Sampson, 'Tropical Anarchy'.
74. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 66.
75. Ibid., 127. See also Hobson's discussion of this with respect to Waltz's treatment of Western agency in *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, 203–13.
76. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 31.
77. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 247.
78. Ibid., 89.

world. Note that even where questions of 'interdependence' or 'identity' arise, these are considered to be constituted *immanently* to the Western sphere. In combination with the other epistemological features to be described, this is a powerful mechanism through which the racialised subject-positions of both authors and readers are created.

Epistemologies of ignorance

The limitations of IR theory that are generated by epistemologies of immanence become more visible when examining epistemologies of ignorance within these texts – specifically, the discounting of factors which draw attention to the origins and reproduction of racialised political hierarchies in the modern international system.[79] Such structures are both hidden and 'naturalised' as part of the landscape of international politics, rather than forming part of the phenomena worthy of investigation. The logic of ignorance thus complements the logic of immanence, protecting, and defending the assumed subject-positioning and analytic narrative from disruption or intrusion. I argue that although racialised imperial and colonial relations are *foundational* to the specific phenomena these texts examine – Great Power competition, regimes of co-operation and the emergence of collective identities – they are ignored, obscured or resisted in the texts themselves.

ToIP, for example, is centrally interested in the dynamics of (Western) Great Powers in the period 1700–1970 but in the analysis, there is no serious engagement with the imperial, colonial, and racial constitution of these powers during this entire period. Rather, the text by turns ignores or discounts these conditions. *ToIP* instead spends a large section of Chapter 2 seeking to discredit *theories* of imperialism as linked to capitalism, and acknowledges a likely link between being a 'great power' and being imperialist.[80] Thereafter however, 'Great Powers' is the term invoked to describe the states of interest. This is despite their 'Great Power' status being strongly linked to their imperial standing, and imperial practices including racial ones being central to the re-ordering and disruption of the balance of power itself in this period.

For example, while Britain and France appear to balance peacefully within Europe during the 19th century – a key element of *ToIP*'s argument around the balance of power – both pursued expansionist imperial policies resulting in military clashes abroad. While Hitler (along with Napoleon) is characterised as a major *disturber* of international order,[81] there is no acknowledgement that the policy of *Lebensraum* in Eastern Europe had been based on the success of Anglo-settler-colonialism in the Americas and in Australasia, or indeed, the racial lenses through which Poles and Slavs were framed by Germany.[82] An acknowledgement of the imperial context of Hitler's project including its racialised

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79. As noted, Krishna links such discounting to strategies of 'abstraction' in theory. Krishna, 'Race, Amnesia'.
80. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 26.
81. Ibid., 42.
82. Noted by Mills in *The Racial Contract*, 106. See Norman G. Finkelstein, *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict* (London: Verso, 2003), 92 and Kristin Kopp, *Germany's Wild East: Constructing Poland as Colonial Space*, Reprint ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2017).

elements makes such behaviour rather less exceptional than is conventionally understood. Emblematic of this tendency to diminish the imperial basis of international politics is *ToIP*'s characterisation of Britain's power in the 19th century: 'Throughout a century that ended in 1914, the British navy was powerful enough to scare off all comers, while Britain carried out occasional imperial ventures in odd parts of the world'.[83] In this portrait, Britain's navy is principally defensive in character, if strong, with its capability for the wielding of imperial power apparently less important. Yet, it is precisely the attempt by Germany to emulate Britain's imperial military standing, achieved through naval power, and legitimated in racialised terms, that is one of the causes of the disruptions to the 'balance of power' extant in the early-20th century.

AH is interested in analysing international economic co-operation in the West, but also occludes the inter-imperial origins, purposes and violence of these arrangements. In contemplating hegemony, the text states, 'It is common today for troubled supporters of liberal capitalism to look back with nostalgia on British preponderance in the nineteenth century and American dominance after World War II'.[84] The designator 'troubled supporters of liberal capitalism' seems to define the subject-positioning of both the author and the readers. In this context, *AH* describes Britain in the 19th century as a 'hegemon', 'leader', 'liberal', and 'preponderant'[85]– but only rarely 'imperial' – with its colonies mentioned effectively in passing as a space of strategic 'retreat'.[86] This framing renders the workings of the British Empire and its racialised ordering – arguably the basis of its preponderance – effectively invisible. In assessing the last 150 years, for example, it is argued that international economic relations were 'relatively cooperative'.[87] Yet, this is a period in which, for example, gunboat diplomacy buttressed free trade, particularly across Asia. While the possibility for coercion is acknowledged, in theoretical terms, the violence at the centre of hegemonic arrangements is consciously discounted from their functioning.[88]

More recent arrangements also have their imperial origins and purposes effaced. In *AH*'s account of 20th century oil regimes, there is scant attention to imperial occupation of the Middle East and its racialised justifications, military control, and support for the oil companies, nor of the political independence of states, nor of the anti-colonial Third World revolutions of the 1950s and 1960s as explanations of why these states suddenly became 'assertive'.[89] The narrative rather limits itself to the observation that in the 1950s Iranian oil production was controlled by British companies, and it later becomes controlled by the United States which set up a set of arrangements for co-operation around access to oil. The ways in which General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) broke down but replaced earlier imperial trade arrangements are also obscured.[90] The imperial and extractive context of both hegemony and co-operation thus remains discursively

83.   Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 186.
84.   Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 31.
85.   Ibid., 31–37.
86.   Ibid., 37.
87.   Ibid., 35.
88.   Ibid., 40–41.
89.   Ibid., 60.
90.   See Thomas W. Zeiler, 'GATT Fifty Years Ago: U.S. Trade Policy and Imperial Tariff Preferences', *Business and Economic History* 26, no. 2 (1997): 709–17.

effaced. This is despite it appearing to be an important part of the answer to the question 'why co-operate?'.

Finally, *SToIP*'s central argument about the emergence of different cultures of anarchy substantially ignores the roles of Western imperialism, colonialism, and racism in generating the Self-Other relationships governing modern world order. It does not do this by erasing all references to colonialism and imperialism; indeed *SToIP* acknowledges the engagement between European colonial powers and non-Europeans as Hobbesian (within a longer list of Hobbesian relations, including the Mongols and the Huns), and also repeatedly uses the idea of the 'First Encounter' between the Spanish and the Indigenous peoples of the Americas in order to illustrate the Hobbesian dynamics resulting from radical alterity.[91] It also acknowledges that Lockean recognition among states was based on the 'standard of civilisation'.[92] In this sense, the quality of epistemological 'ignorance' in *SToIP*'s text is different to those of *ToIP* and *AH*.

However, the account substantially obscures the significance of colonial and imperial relations in two ways. First, the argument is pitched at a high level of theoretical abstraction, into the language of 'Self' and 'Other', or 'Ego' and 'Alter' and through the language of social 'roles'. This has the effect of naturalising the emergent dynamics which are described as the natural consequence of hypothetical dynamics of socialisation. Historical material by contrast is thrown in for illustrative colour rather than being grounds for building theory. As such, it is possible to gloss the Hun invasion of Rome as essentially the same kind of phenomenon as the European colonisation of non-European powers a 1000 years later. The historical material is presented in lists of named examples, but the meanings of specific episodes are never interrogated.

Second, this treatment of the material obscures the specific role of European colonialism and imperialism in generating the racialised global structures in which the standard of civilisation was produced, which is identified as the root of the Lockean culture of recognition. This is because *SToIP* presents the standard of civilisation as a set of technical concerns – perhaps even reasonable and legitimate ones – about the organisation of society:

> requiring that states' political authority be organized domestically in a certain way, namely like the hierarchical, bureaucratic, and (initially) Christian and monarchical authority of European states. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many non-European politics were empirically sovereign, but because they did not organize their authority in this manner they were not considered civilized – and therefore to have sovereign rights.[93]

The argument that it was a keen eye for bureaucracy, faith, and monarchy that separated European states from others is not only historically problematic but completely erases the manifest presumptions of cultural and racial superiority that were key dynamics within the 'standard of civilisation' and the forms of collective self-identification that resulted from it.[94]

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91. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 267.
92. Ibid., 292.
93. Ibid., 292.
94. Cf., Robbie Shilliam, 'Intervention and Colonial-Modernity: Decolonising the Italy/Ethiopia Conflict through Psalms 68:31', *Review of International Studies* 39, no. 5 (2013): 1131–47.

Overall, the epistemic patterns of ignorance displayed in the texts contribute to the White-racialised subject-positioning of IR both through obscuring of non-White subjects in general, and through obscuring the ways in which forms of imperial violence and relations of racialised hierarchy underpin the salient dynamics of modern international politics. Through their patterns of abstraction and erasure from the historical record, these texts instead construct a world in which a selected set of 'states' and their behaviour can be mapped as anonymously rational, reasonable, natural or socialised responses to general conditions or stimuli in a way that appears fundamentally *indifferent* to questions of race. Yet, as indicated here, racialised imperial forms of violence, entitlement, and belonging have deeply shaped the modern international order in ways which are central to the concerns of these texts.

Epistemologies of innocence

The racialised subject-positions (re)produced in these texts are perhaps most obvious where they deal with the pressure to explain Western 'greatness' in a way which does not concede a potentially *illegitimate* basis for it in this 'post-colonial' era – in short where they deploy epistemologies of innocence. This manifests as a need to assert and defend the moral respectability and good faith of the West – one which signifies an epistemic location and subjective investment in Whiteness.

It seems counter-intuitive that this moral investment might be present within realist scholarship, which is ostensibly at home with the brute facts of power and violence, as well as with an unsentimental 'scientific' approach. Yet, within *ToIP* at various times, there surfaces a clear moral defence of Western political practice – what might be seen as an animating ethos of anti-imperialism. Beyond the theoretical critique of Marxism in Chapter 2, *ToIP* attempts to retrieve the moral standing of Western states through a variety of contradictory argumentative moves. One is an attempt to redeem Western capitalism as a benevolent force in the Global South. On one hand, it is suggested that all great powers are effectively 'imperialist' by virtue of being great powers.[95] However, it simultaneously argues that capitalist powers are both pacifistic and anti-colonial[96] in their tendencies – therefore, not really imperialist. Indeed, for *ToIP*, the United States' extended military involvement in Vietnam and other 'peripheral places'[97] is seen as largely irrelevant politically speaking (despite what elites at the time argued);[98] indeed, it is an aberration (albeit a rather frequent one) from the pacifism of capitalist powers. There is a deep contradiction in a realist account of pacific tendencies among Great Powers in imperial contexts, but not in intra-Great Power conflicts.

Where it is necessary to engage with the experiences of the global South, however, *ToIP*'s characterisation of imperial practice is also surprisingly defensive – essentially exhorting critics of the West to be grateful for colonialism's transformative effects:

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95. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 26.
96. Ibid., 28.
97. Ibid., 190.
98. Ibid., 172.

> One must then ask whether the northern and the western parts of the world have indeed impoverished the southern and eastern ones, and whether exploitation of the latter in turn enriched the former . . . Those who attribute disunity to imperialism might well recall the earlier condition of most colonial people. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, moreover, nearly everyone everywhere lived at a subsistence level or very close to it.[99]

At the same time, however, it is asserted that such relations – even if they were beneficial for 'colonial people' – were really only *incidental* to imperial powers' 'greatness': 'the major reasons for the material well-being of rich states are found within their own borders – in their use of technology and in their ability to organize their economies on a national scale'.[100] Why then there would be such an interest in global capitalist expansion by them is a mystery left unsolved.

Such claims and forms of argument – apart from being historically unconvincing[101] – look odd in relation to *ToIP*'s wider claims about the competitive tendencies of states and the significance of their underlying capabilities – that is, unless interpreted through the framework of a subjective investment in a specific subject-position that seeks to deny, or if not severely mitigate, the racialised nature of world order. A similar kind of euphemistic approach is evident in the characterisation of the achievement of civil rights for Black citizens in the United States as the effort 'to get persons of different color to accept each other as equals', at best a partial if not straightforwardly misleading view of race relations in the country.[102]

This investment in the moral respectability of White-racialised states and peoples skews *ToIP*'s theory in a number of consequential ways. We may note that in order to 'save' capitalist powers from being polluted by the critique of imperialism, it is necessary for *ToIP* to disturb the focus on system-level attributes central to the theory and move to unit-level attributes such as the pacifying effects of capitalism.[103] Moreover, the 'units' within the theory have to engage in behaviour (quasi-altruistic forms of capitalism) for which there is no particular conceptual basis – either within the logic of the system or the constitutive characteristic of units. Finally, although *ToIP* claims to be centrally concerned with 'inequalities' as the foundation of international politics,[104] it rules out looking at the phenomena which concretely produced them in the modern world at an international level.

AH also argues that the co-operation regimes, it examines have some moral worth in mitigating some global inequities, even if they fall short by 'cosmopolitan' standards.[105]

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99. Ibid., 33.
100. Ibid.
101. See, for example, Mike Davis, *Late Victorian Holocausts: El Nino Famines and the Making of the Third World* (London: Verso, 2002).
102. Ibid., 204. cf. Loïc Wacquant, 'From Slavery to Mass Incarceration: Rethinking the "Race Question" in the US', *New Left Review* 13 (2002): 41–60.
103. See also Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, 213.
104. Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, 142–43.
105. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, 255–56. The excess of optimism about international regimes' effect on poorer countries is acknowledged in the preface to the 2005 edition of the book: Keohane, *After Hegemony*, xiv–xv.

The book's overall narrative is that the United States has taken up a role as a responsible leader for its post-war allies, institutionalising regimes of mutually advantageous co-operation which will outlive its own hegemony, even among 'self-interested' states. Regimes function by creating sets of rules, principles, and expectations that operate as standards of behaviour.[106] At various points, the text implies that there may well be moral hazards associated with these kinds of arrangements. When discussing the oil regime – the book's most important case – the prospect that hegemonic co-operation could be exploitative is present however only hypothetically:

> The proposed petroleum agreement was a bold plan for a formal international oil regime dominated by the United States. The fact that it *could* have been used as a device to exploit poorer and weaker states – consumers as well as producers of oil – reminds us that cooperation is not necessarily benign.[107]

As with *ToIP*, there is clearly an awareness of the kinds of criticisms that have been made about Western political and economic interventions, and within the text is manifest a desire to manage these troubling claims. Yet there is no serious attempt to investigate any of these 'hypothetical' problems in the context of the *actual* historical analysis conducted of international regimes, which glosses behaviour as having some integrity and purpose by virtue of following rules, norms or principles.

Underpinning this is a narrative about the economic *entitlement* of 'the West' vis-à-vis the rest of the world:

> The military conditions for economic hegemony are met if the economically preponderant country has sufficient military capabilities to *prevent incursions by others that would deny it access to major areas of its economic activity* . . . The sources of hegemony therefore include sufficient military power to *deter or rebuff attempts to capture and close off important areas of the world political economy*.[108]

The use of the territorial metaphor 'incursions' here is interesting but not accidental – it morally naturalises the right to possession and control over economic resources and domains by the hegemon and its allies. Where organised resistance to this emerges through the New International Economic Order (NIEO) proposals, it is portrayed as an exception to what is otherwise understood as international legitimacy for the hegemon.[109]

A clear example of the epistemology of innocence underpinning the text is provided in the book's narration of the CIA's intervention in Iran. This intervention supported a military coup against Prime Minister Mossadegh after his government nationalised the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company's assets. *AH* represents this coup as a 'political intervention' by the United States against a 'Soviet-backed party' which led to a 'revolution' in Iranian politics through the restoration of an absolute monarch.[110] While there seems to be an

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106.   Ibid., 57.
107.   Ibid., 153, emphasis added.
108.   Ibid., 39–40, emphasis added.
109.   Ibid., 46.
110.   Ibid., 167.

understanding of the 'trick'[111] performed by the US government, the text avoids representing this specific historical behaviour as problematic. Instead, for *AH*, the analytic payoff is to demonstrate just how valuable such action can be:

> The Iranian episode illustrates the variety of instruments at the disposal of the US government . . . the United States was nevertheless able, through political intervention and its links with the Iranian military, to bring about a revolution in Iranian politics. It then secured the establishment of a new oil consortium that provided American companies with 40% of Iranian production for a relatively small outlay of funds . . . Hegemonic leadership was never more rewarding than this![112]

There is no attention to the imperial conditions under which Britain was able to secure concessions for oil extraction and how this passed to the United States, the violation of Iran as a sovereign and democratic state in the middle of the 20th century, the perceptions of the coup as illegitimate and the ways in which such action represented the emergence of interventionist imperialism by the United States in the Middle East.[113] It is implausible that these factors are *irrelevant* to the politics of the international oil regime; rather, as with *ToIP*, we can best make sense of the narrative through subject-positioning that is embedded in the narratives which at least do not embarrass the West. The idea that co-operation could be 'extended' to non-Western states thus ring hollow – they are often already materially incorporated into such regimes, willingly or not.[114]

SToIP also works to defend the moral respectability of the West within its imaginative landscape. In comparison with the other texts discussed, *SToIP* acknowledges a wider range of colonial and imperial engagements, is more explicit about their violent character, and seeks to offer a theoretical explanation for the destructive character of such engagements. This is in the context of narrating an essentially positive historical momentum within cultures of anarchy, and the role of the 'standard of civilisation' and forms of mutual identification in setting a framework for self-restraint in regard to violence.[115] Despite these acknowledgements, an analysis of White supremacy and racialised hierarchy as a factor in these cultures of anarchy is avoided. This is because *SToIP*'s theoretical framework renders such forms of violent interaction both effectively *accidental* and *short-lived*:

> The archetype is the Hobbesian 'First Encounter', in which an aggressive state tries to conquer *another, previously unknown* state. Huns emerging from the steppes to conquer and kill Romans, Mongols doing the same to medieval Europeans, Europeans colonizing non-Europeans, and so on are all examples of states operating in a world of private, domestically constituted meanings trying to conquer or enslave an Other.[116]

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111. Ibid., 169.
112. Ibid., 169.
113. For example, Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*, Reprint ed. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2005).
114. Hobson sees international financial institutions (IFIs) in Keohane's framework as a prospectively 'civilising' force. See Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, 219–21.
115. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, 261.
116. Ibid., 267, emphasis added.

The text argues that such aberrant 'private meanings' cannot last long. A recurring trope within this narrative is a stylised, pseudo-anthropological thought experiment about the 'First Encounter' between the Spanish and the Aztecs which explains how and where 'Hobbesian' cultures of anarchy obtain.[117] Lacking appropriate norms of engagement or recognition, or a 'shared culture', the Spanish and Aztecs are assumed to engage in 'Hobbesian' violence without restraint because of their radically different identities, naturalising violence as the consequence of unfamiliarity and relations of enmity.

However, this interpretation is not sustained by the historical evidence, which demonstrates that across various colonial contexts, violence came *after* 'Lockean' relations of trade, dialogue, and diplomacy had failed, in processes that occurred over decades and centuries, and which were sustained by forms of racialised identity-formation that *intensified* over this period before coming to an end.[118] By representing colonial violence and other forms of genocide as encounters between 'Others' who lacked forms of socialisation is to suggest that recognition had not been achieved, rather than achieved but abandoned for more violent practices.

SToIP's interpreting European colonialism as an effectively 'inadvertent' type of alien encounter – the 'oops' theory of colonialism – chimes with Wekker's trope of White 'innocence' through establishing a claim to good faith.[119] A narrative noting an elaborate structure of racialised hierarchies would, of course, disrupt the presentation of the formation of Western identity as being on balance a progressive development within international cultures of anarchy, or at very least point to the constitutive forms of exclusion that made such an identity possible.

For each of these texts, then, a continued fidelity to epistemologies of 'innocence' – established through a moral distancing from imperialism, colonialism, and racism – actually undermines their conceptual reasoning. They have to fall back on ignoring or explaining away significant historical structures inconsistent with their expressed theoretical concerns. These tendencies towards disavowal, or in *ToIP*'s case outright defensiveness, strongly resonate with manifestations of 'White innocence' or 'White fragility' – a consistent tendency of White subject-positions to reject or disavow racism as a structural phenomenon. We can see how, together with epistemologies of immanence and ignorance, epistemologies of innocence provide an important set of protections against the interrogation and dismantling of racialised privileges.

How White Subject-Positions Limit IR Theory

In each of these texts, it is argued that a specific kind of White-racialised subject-position both underpins and restricts the ways in which the theories are set up and that this also has distorting effects for their primary lines of argument. In this section, I briefly summarise the imaginative limits posed by Whiteness for these theoretical frameworks and imagine how these might have looked from alternative starting points.

117. Ibid., x, 141, 158, 208.
118. See Andrew Phillips and J.C. Sharman, *International Order in Diversity: War, Trade and Rule in the Indian Ocean* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).
119. Wekker, *White Innocence*.

ToIP, although theorising the interaction of Great Powers in a specific historical period, cannot recognise many of them, nor understand fully the sources of their 'greatness' in economic or military terms, nor the kinds of interactions in which they are engaged, nor think about how 'balancing' is achieved and so on, because it does not want to concede – or refuses to see – the racially hierarchical character of modern imperialism and the kinds of political order it set up. The issue is not necessarily, as a number of previous critiques of *ToIP* have suggested, about the *general* treatment of history and theory,[120] but rather the *selectivity* around questions of power which are better explained by a particular kind of racialised subject-positioning.

AH seeks to examine intra-Western co-operation in the post-war era around economic issues as a dynamic of enlightened self-interest among 'similar' and 'interdependent' states but without seriously engaging the (post)imperial historical conditions impelling Western unity: the threats to the privileged access to resources hitherto enjoyed by Western imperial powers, the tumultuous military and political challenges of decolonisation, the ongoing 'interdependence' of neo-colonial co-operation and the kinds of anti-imperial co-operation attempted within OPEC or the NIEO. Western co-operation seen in this light is effectively a kind of post-imperial counter-insurgency. These issues are central to the kinds of co-operation undertaken and the structures developed, but the theory deliberately abstracts away from all of these *political* issues in order to render co-operation more abstractly 'functional'. This approach thus manages to be more polite about the contradictions of (post)imperialism within the West – readily apparent to decolonised states in the global South – through selective elision of key issues – elisions which align with a particular racialised subject-position.

Finally, *SToIP*'s key concerns are with the ways in which states socialise each other into collective identity formations through relations of recognition and the negotiation of Self/Other boundaries. However, it is a story which fails to reckon with the hierarchical, violent, and exclusionary nature of Othering underpinning the rise of the West, as well as with the historical conditions of empire underpinning the shifts between the different 'cultures of anarchy'. By abstracting processes of socialisation from their historical conditions, however, *SToIP* is able to preserve a moral optimism about the nature and effects of these relations which evades the dilemmas posed by the violent constitution of the 'West' as a colonising Self. Across these three texts, then, White subject-positioning produces a set of intellectual limits that foreclose the scope and nature of inquiry.

Beyond White Subject-Positioning in IR

Given this, what would it mean to re-imagine the study of IR in a way that attempted to overcome epistemologies of immanence, ignorance, and innocence? While it is impossible to do justice here to the wide range of traditions that have alternative starting points, as scholars of IR our priorities should be to (1) 'de-mythologise'[121] and (2) 'de-centre'

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120. For example, Richard K. Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neorealism', *International Organisation* 38, no. 2 (1984): 225–86.

121. Olivia Umurerwa Rutazibwa, 'From the Everyday to IR: In Defence of the Strategic Use of the R-Word', *Postcolonial Studies* 19, no. 2 (2016): 191–200.

this racialised standpoint. Both require a more sophisticated awareness of epistemological situatedness, a better global-historical education and a wider ethical and political vocabulary and universe. It requires an alertness not just to the intellectual contours of Eurocentrism, but the interlocking moral and epistemological consequences of White subject-positioning. They may be animated by the abolitionist principle that 'treason to Whiteness is loyalty to humanity'.[122] This principle does not build the grounds for a 'redeemed' or 'modified' Whiteness but totally deconstructs it analytically and ethically.

A 'de-mythologising' strategy challenges epistemologies of immanence and ignorance – the specific racialised metahistorical narratives and myths about the exceptional, vanguardist, and progressive character of the 'West' and its peoples as a point of departure for building international theory. Alternative accounts are already available to us which emphasise the uneven but interconnected ways in which the modern international system came to be. These look at the contributions of the 'non-West' to the rise of the 'West',[123] the role of transnational networks as drivers of development,[124] the enduring role of hierarchies as an organising principle of global order,[125] the colonial origins of sovereignty practices[126] and the transnational character of political thought.[127] There is considerable scope for more historically oriented work which excavates in particular the relation between the 'colonial' and the 'modern'.

Another way of 'de-mythologising' Whiteness in IR is to re-think the discipline's constitutive distinction between 'war' and 'violence', particularly where the coding of historical events into one or another category have been as a result of racialised categorisations and thinking about whose deaths count, thus enabling an epistemology of 'innocence'.[128] Withholding the assumption that 'war' (meaning wars as recognised by and between Western powers) rather than 'violence' should be studied in IR – as in peace studies, for example[129] – offers considerable scope for contemplating the rich web of interconnections and entanglements that constitute the international system, and particularly its colonial, imperial and racialised inheritances. It is a particularly productive point

122.   Noel Ignatiev and John Garvey, eds., *Race Traitor*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 1996), 10. See Linda Martín Alcoff, *The Future of Whiteness* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015) for an alternative take.

123.   For example, Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, *How the West Came to Rule: The Geopolitical Origins of Capitalism* (London: Pluto Press, 2015).

124.   For example, Sandra Halperin, *Re-Envisioning Global Development: A Horizontal Perspective*, 1st ed. (New York: Routledge, 2013).

125.   For example, Ayşe Zarakol, *Hierarchies in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

126.   For example, Jordan Branch, '"Colonial Reflection" and Territoriality: The Peripheral Origins of Sovereign Statehood', *European Journal of International Relations* 18, no. 2 (2012): 277–97.

127.   For example, Domenico Losurdo, *Liberalism: A Counter-History* (London: Verso, 2011).

128.   For example, Barkawi, 'Decolonising War'. But see also Errol Anthony Henderson, *Democracy and War: The End of an Illusion?* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002).

129.   For example, Johan Galtung, 'Violence, Peace, and Peace Research', *Journal of Peace Research* 6, no. 3 (1969): 167–91.

of departure for conceiving of questions of consent and sovereignty under radical inequalities of power globally, and potential shared forms of theorising among feminist approaches,[130] critical environmentalisms,[131] Indigenous political thought,[132] and so on.

'De-centring' Whiteness means not only a regional expansion of IR's gaze but more profoundly a re-locating of its intellectual and ethical centre of gravity away from its stories of 'immanence' and 'innocence'. One way of doing this might be, as Wynter does, to re-centre Blackness as the starting point for the embrace of the 'human' in all its multiple potentialities, given that Blackness has been historically overdetermined by experiences and epistemes which locate it at the underside of humanity.[133] This radical shaking-up of IR's epistemological orientations would be particularly productive in dismantling the limits identified here. This could connect them to forms of worldly politics rooted in experiences of diasporic connectivity and suffering, and creativity and solidarity.[134] These signal different sites of sovereignty, rights, borders, and power,[135] and open up questions of historical injustice, responsibility, and reparations. It could conceive of more 'conventional' IR theory that began with African presence rather than absence.[136] Finally, working with and through Blackness would give an important corrective to debates on the 'post-human' which have not always contemplated the racialisation of humanity in depth.[137] The point here is not simply to 'replace' White-centredness with Black-centredness as part of historical justice – but through re-positioning to reveal what has been obscured about the organisation of authority, relationality, rights, obligations, materiality, and knowledge.

Would the kind of IR theory examined here be possible with such starting points? Absolutely. A research programme focused on 'Great Powers' would still be possible but be explicitly a study of empires and other polities across time and space. It would have to embrace rather than ignore their internal diversities and forms of interconnectedness – overall, this might lead to an abandonment of the 'anarchy' problematique in favour of a more positive historical appreciation of diverse forms of authority and sociality. For a research programme interested in international co-operation, it would have to take a wider understanding of the kinds of co-operation which are possible, the kinds of political

130. For example, Jacqui True, *The Political Economy of Violence against Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

131. For example, Rob Nixon, *Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011).

132. For example, Sandy Grande, ed., *Red Pedagogy: Native American Social and Political Thought* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2015).

133. For example, Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick, 'Unparalleled Catastrophe for Our Species? Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations', in *Sylvia Wynter: On Being Human as Praxis*, ed. Katherine McKittrick (Durham: Duke University Press, 2015), 9–89.

134. For example, Robbie Shilliam, *The Black Pacific* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2015).

135. For example, Amy Niang, *The Postcolonial African State in Transition* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

136. For example, Errol Henderson, *African Realism?* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2017).

137. For example, Audra Mitchell, 'Posthumanist Post-Colonialism?', *Worldly* (blog), February 26, 2015. Available at: https://worldlyir.wordpress.com/2015/02/26/posthumanist-postcolonialism/.

purposes that they underpin, and the forms of exclusion, collusion, and expropriation which are likely involved in setting them up. This would make it impossible to study 'institutions' or 'organisations' among powerful actors in a way which is disembedded from their political foundations. Similarly, for a research programme interested in the emergence of forces of socialisation and collective identification, much more attention would need to be paid to the political context and drivers of particular forms of sociality and the kinds of coercion enabled by productions of Otherness. All such projects would be informed by that spirit of hermeneutic suspicion with which writers not racialised as White have often greeted projections of Western civilisation.

However, it is up to the field as a whole to uphold standards of rigour which make the persistence of racialised ignorance, immanence, and innocence impossible. What has happened over the last several decades has been a continued asymmetry in the practice of our 'science', such that the profound epistemological challenges presented for the field in a range of critical writing have been sidelined through practices of training and citation which together reproduce a White subject-position in the discipline. The vast bulk of references to *ToIP*, *AH*, and *SToIP* continue to treat them as authoritative texts. This is an institutional problem more than an epistemological one in many respects and one that is unlikely to be solved in the near future, or at least by this generation. Identifying the logics constitutive of Whiteness in IR theory is a necessary step towards institutional change, but no more than that. In the absence of this change, IR theory will continue to be White.

Conclusion

The primary purpose of this article has been to make White subject-positioning in IR visible, and to examine its consequences for how IR scholarship represents the world. In order to do so, it has elaborated a set of epistemological markers for understanding how a White-racialised subject-position can be read within discourse and traced them through canonical works in the discipline. It has also indicated the limitations to scholarship that this subject-positioning produces and suggested ways in which future scholarship can avoid these traps. By spelling out the ways in which scholarship naturalises White subject-positioning, my hope is to make IR scholarship accountable for its presumptions and responsible for working towards more robust, inclusive, and humane ways of thinking and seeing the world. This should be a basic minimum for future scholarship.

Nor is scholarship contributing to these efforts to be celebrated uncritically; it in turn needs to be interrogated for its own standards of argument, evidence, and reason, as well as its prospective implication in nationalist, violent, and exclusionary projects. The production of intellectual limits through subjective investments in particular kinds of racialised subject-positioning applies everywhere – albeit highly unevenly. However, if we can get to the point where all students of IR are trained to see how different racialised subject-positions are encoded in 'theory', how this affects the terrain of visible international politics and the various hierarchies of the human assumed within them, and how these are proper questions for scholarly accountability, then we are already well on the way to a substantially better place for understanding 'world politics'.

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