Introduction

Paul Kelly

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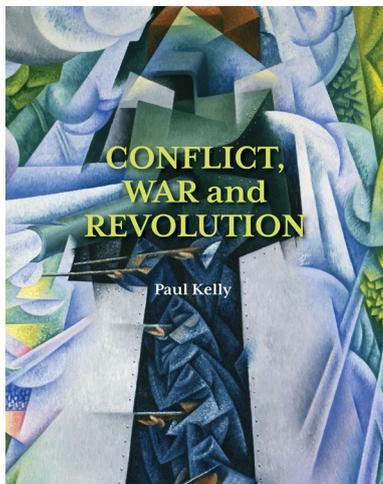
Paul Kelly

CONFLICT, WAR and REVOLUTION

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Conflict, war, revolution and the character of politics

We live in interesting times! Apocryphally, this is a Chinese curse, although there is little evidence that the English version, 'May you live in interesting times', matches any precise Chinese aphorism. Be that as it may, the times we live in are interesting, in that many very recent political preconceptions and trends of history are being turned on their heads, and this is happening in both confusing and troubling ways, the victims and beneficiaries of which are unclear. When Francis Fukuyama published his famous article 'The End of History' in 1989, it coincided with the collapse of the USSR, the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Cold War. Although too much triumphalism has been unfairly attributed to Fukuyama's subtle argument, the title certainly chimed with the age. It was also pretty much clear to everyone who the beneficiaries and losers of that historical moment were. Globalisation (and U.S. military power) defeated 'really existing socialism', and with the subsequent first Gulf War in 1991 the western military and economic order looked as if it had the blessing of history. This, coupled with what is often called the 'great moderation', the period of stable and steady economic growth in western developed economies unleashed by economic deregulation and globalised trade during the 1990s and the early 2000s, further vindicated globalised finance and the 'Washington consensus' on growth – an economic policy stance that is called *globalisation* by its supporters and *neo-liberalism* by its critics. In Europe and the European Union, many of the more enthusiastic EU backers saw a move

away from the model of nation states as the 'end of history' to a post-state order modelled on closer cooperation and integration: again. Although his argument is more subtle and qualified than this, we can see this optimism in the great German social and political philosopher Jürgen Habermas (Habermas 1998; 2005). Books were being written about the rise of 'cosmopolitan' democracy, world politics and the new political configurations needed to govern this new order.

Yet all was not quite what it seemed. The terrible events of 11 September 2001 unleashed the most significant attack on the continental USA in its history when a group of suicide bombers weaponised domestic airliners to bring down the World Trade Center in New York City and attack the Pentagon, headquarters of the U.S. Department of Defense. An essentially low-technology attack, by a previously little-known terrorist group, Al-Qaeda, had challenged the most technologically sophisticated military ever seen in history. The U.S.-led response in Afghanistan (where the Taliban gave succour to Al-Qaeda) and then Iraq (where Saddam Hussein did not) unleashed nearly two decades of struggle in the Middle East. A nuclear-armed USSR was replaced as the dominant enemy of 'the west' by an asymmetrical struggle against a jihadist enemy indifferent to the fear of death and which had no prospect of victory in any conventional sense. Al-Qaeda is not a military structure with a territory, government or a return address.

Other events quickly followed the triumph of neo-liberal globalism and the rise of global terrorism, with Al-Qaeda and then more recently ISIS/Daesh, ensuring that international affairs became even more 'interesting' and urgent. These included the global financial crash in 2007–2008, the rise of China as the default backer of the global financial order (as the largest holder of U.S. debt), the subsequent rise of populism in the U.S. and Europe with the election of a protectionist and nationalist President Trump, and the vote by the UK (one of the largest and most important economic and political players in the European Union) to leave the EU following a domestic referendum (Brexit). The global institutions considered necessary for a stable world order, and which had delivered the great moderation, were now seen to be lacking political legitimacy. They faced a concerted backlash from political forces on a scale that had not been seen since the 1930s, and which threatened the domestic political structures of states that were supposed to be exemplars of democratic stability.

This complex pattern of events spanning four decades thus saw the triumph of the west and the rise of the east; the triumph of globalisation and the resurgence of protectionism and economic nationalism; the end of the Cold War and the launch of the global War on Terror. The pace of change has been bewildering even in a new century that has seen unprecedented transformations in human affairs (to 2021). This shift from an historical trajectory of liberal dominance and global order might seem challenging, and it is, but is it unique? Or is it not just a case of history – which perhaps naively we thought had

ended – forcing its way back onto the agenda? International affairs and the thinking about it have always fluctuated between periods of progressive optimism and revolution, retrenchment and irredentism. Whilst there remains much about which we should remain optimistic, the challenges of the present, and the echoes of past crises, raise questions about the ways in which we think about and frame political action and agency, and especially about the adequacy of the dominant paradigms of international political thinking.

In this book, in a timeframe spanning the ancient world to the present, I examine the sources of some of those intellectual paradigms by exploring the ideas of a number of significant figures who illuminate ways of thinking about the challenges of politics and the prevalence of crisis and conflict. By studying 10 paradigmatic thinkers – Thucydides, Augustine, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Clausewitz, Lenin and Mao, and Carl Schmitt – I examine important debates in international political thought. The particular focus here is on those who wish to challenge or qualify the hope of redemption and order in human affairs by overcoming politics, versus thinkers who address the ineradicable necessity and challenges of politics, war and conflict. This may sometimes look like a 'history' of what international theorists and international relations scholars refer to as a tradition of realism, but my purpose is different.

Positing traditions such as realism already presupposes an answer to the question of how to read these thinkers and assumes that they conform to a single narrative (cf. Doyle 1997), but this is a narrowly circumscribed canvass. This book sets these key thinkers in a wider context, using them to identify and explore different ways of conceiving of the activity of politics as an autonomous way of acting in the world. The concept of realism falls within that domain because some of the thinkers discussed have been seen by some scholars as adherents of versions of this view. But, as we shall see, describing all these thinkers as 'realist' in the sense used either by international relations or by international political theory raises questions about the value and scope of that concept (see Chapter 11 for more on this).

The other reason this book is not a simple 'history' is that it does not aim to be comprehensive. There are clearly other ways of conceiving of international politics, and other narratives that may better explain the development of doctrines in the western tradition and beyond. To write such a comprehensive overview would be a considerably longer book, and it would also raise questions about the idea of a single history, issues that I mostly deliberately avoid (but see chapter 11). It is sufficient for this book to present a canon of thinkers whose ideas and approaches inform and illuminate some of the central questions of international politics and its contemporary challenges.

Precisely because it paints on such a large canvas, international political thought is a peculiarly valuable approach to understanding some of the most important questions about politics. It also leaves open precisely the sorts of questions, concepts and approaches that the 10 major thinkers here explored. They

all tackled fundamental questions about the nature of political activity and the vehicles through which political agency is exercised at different times and places – without privileging the development or priority of any particular mode of organisation, whether polis, empire, principality, multitude, state, nation, class or nomos.

The perspective of international theory helps transcend the narrow confines of domestic politics as the distribution of 'who gets what, where, when and how' (Lasswell 1936). Instead, it focuses attention on what might be called a meta-level where the real and fundamental work of delineating political agency takes place. In some standard introductions to political thinking, the explanation begins with human actors, then moves up to the state or political community level, and terminates with the way those communities interact in the international realm. This is the model of the domestic and the international so fundamental to standard international relations theory, but it is also commonplace in political theory courses.

Focusing on international theory allows one to look at the bigger picture out of which much domestic politics emerges. It does not presuppose the primacy of domestic politics and see the international as a problematic remainder. Instead, it conceives of the challenges of the international realm as, if not prior or autonomous, then at least co-present with the challenge of delimiting political communities and sites of political agency. It is not surprising that much political theory and philosophy regards the perspective of international theory as secondary or an afterthought. That is indeed the legacy of Hobbes's work on political thought and international relations, a legacy that can be seen echoed in the work of the most important late 20th-century political philosopher, John Rawls. But this was clearly not the view of Augustine and Machiavelli, to take only two examples, for whom this distinction between domestic and international would have made no sense.

The narrative in this book deliberately eschews the term 'history' because it does not attempt to provide an overview of all the approaches one may find in international political thought courses. Indeed, if one refers back to my list of modes of organisation of political agency above, I deliberately left out organising categories such as the individual, society or economy, all of which would feature in some way in a comprehensive account of international political thought in the western canon. This choice is perhaps controversial, but it is a deliberate attempt to range beyond reductive approaches that reduce politics to morality, or to the economy and society. Too much contemporary thinking about our current global predicament suggests that there is a progressive unfolding of order that culminates in the triumph of the modern Westphalian state system and its international institutions alongside a globalised market economy. These approaches to international politics privilege the individual person as a right-holder or bearer of a unique ethical dignity, or as an individual utility maximiser with a clear preference order. In much academic debate

and in much political theory and science, this conception of the person has been taken to be a true account of moral and economic agency, and as the basis of all other political arrangements and groups. This has led to the prevalence of an unchallenged but apolitical cosmopolitanism that has marginalised some of the most fundamental challenges facing contemporary politics.

In this book, I do not seek to reject individualism or cosmopolitanism as systems of value. Indeed, elsewhere I have written to endorse a version of this perspective as liberal-egalitarianism (Kelly 2005). But in the current climate, with challenges to the conception of agency that underpins such an approach, I am more interested in the challenges to that world view that are arguably returning to centre stage. This individualistic and cosmopolitan view of the domain of the political has not only shaped contemporary political science and international relations. It has also done so to the exclusion of perspectives that force us to confront different ways of doing politics, exercising power, force and violence, and conceiving of the goals of political activity and its fundamental purpose. This book attempts instead to introduce political thinking and inter-national political theory without indirectly presupposing that political agency and institutions must have a settled character and structure that conform to moral individualism and converge on liberal constitutionalism as the best form of political organisation.

My purpose is to let a set of thinkers speak in their own voices rather than reducing them to a settled historical and cultural narrative, or to pre-established traditions such as realism, or ideologies such as liberalism. So, the linking narrative here must be abstract and general and stay at a high level. Nevertheless, there are important linkages between the chapters that explain the juxtaposition of these particular thinkers, as opposed to an alternative canon or narrative. All of them take as fundamental the role of violence, conflict and coercion. Violence and conflict are either the perennial experience of humanity beneath the thin veneer of civilisation or an aspect of human experience that morality and society attempt to discipline and obscure but which remains the basic stuff of political action and agency. For others still, these experiences are characteristic of life beyond the protections offered by state sovereignty in the anarchic world of international or interstate politics. Some of the thinkers conceive of violence as an ineradicable problem. For others, violence is morally ambiguous as a feature of experience that can be manipulated and channelled to achieve different ends and goals. We tend to think of both violence and conflict as bad things that must be avoided or mitigated. But at a more fundamental level one might also argue that these are merely natural forces that we can condemn under some descriptions whilst also praise under others. After all, is it not the case that order entails coercion (for all except anarchists), as indeed does the law – as indeed (if we follow St Augustine) does peace? Finally, under the headings of war and revolution we find approaches to politics that channel violence into pursuing goals that cannot be achieved by negotiation, deliberation

and compromise. In the case of revolution, they use violence to remove the existing order so as to (in theory) make way for a world beyond the violence and coercion of politics.

Discussing and contrasting these paradigmatic thinkers provides a theoretical introduction to international political theory. But what precisely is international political theory and how, if at all, does it differ from the study of international relations, and its sub-division international relations theory, or from the study of the history of political thought? International relations theory and the history of political thought are recognised academic activities. So it is important to show that international political theory is not simply a confused renaming of an already-familiar activity, or a more primitive and less clearly defined version of academic sub-divisions. In the next two sections I make a substantial argument in favour of defending international political theory and distinguishing it from the history of political thought. But, before turning to that argument, I want to distinguish international political theory from international relations theory.

The distinction between international relations theory and international political theory developed over the last few decades as a consequence of the disciplinary development of international relations on the one hand and the growth of normative political theory and applied ethics in political science and philosophy on the other. Chris Brown provided the most compelling account of how international political theory separated out from mainstream international relations theory. He linked it to the development in social science of a dominant turn towards positivism, which is an explanatory form of enquiry assuming that the facts or objects of study are stable and can be examined in ways analogous to the natural sciences (Brown 2015; Brown and Eckersley 2018). This positivist turn is exemplified in the application of formal modelling and economistic forms of theorising (such as rational choice theory) to traditional questions of national and state interaction and bargaining, as illustrated by leading theorists such as Kenneth Waltz (Waltz 1979). According to Brown, international political theorists are authors who see this as an unfortunate departure from humanistic approaches to the study of international relations that characterised its early origins as a distinct form of enquiry.

However, the issue is not just a war of methods between quantitative and formal theory against qualitative or historical approaches. It also relates to the point and style of international relations arguments. The turn to positivism and the primacy of explanation at the expense of normative and prescriptive arguments coincided with a resurgence of normative arguments in political theory and applied ethics under the influence of major theorists such as John Rawls, Michael Walzer and Peter Singer (Forrester 2019). These thinkers launched debates or rekindled questions about distributive justice and state legitimacy, the justification of war and what obligations we owe to distant others in the face of famine or global poverty. All of these questions have an element that links them to the familiar intellectual territory of traditional international relations

theory. But they also depart from it because they either challenge its apparent statist assumptions or attempt to provide normative and prescriptive accounts for what states or other international agents *ought* to do, irrespective of what they may be likely to do in relation to their interests. It is often the case that disciplinary development happens because of the recognition that something interesting and intellectually exiting was happening elsewhere, just beyond traditional disciplinary boundaries – see, for example, the way in which modern behavioural economics has turned to experimental psychology. That is also true with the development of international political theory. Yet, at the same time there is not simply a turn to familiar normative political thought, which is often poorly informed about the reality of international affairs and politics. It is precisely a critical engagement with normative and prescriptive arguments about the international domain that makes the study of international political theory important and vital. It also explains the particular selection of paradigmatic thinkers in this book. International political theory does not merely dismiss, or wilfully overlook, normative and prescriptive arguments as methodologically primitive, in the way it claims that standard international relations theory perhaps does. Rather, it brings them back to the forefront of engagement with the sorts of challenges that shape and unsettle our times. In so doing, international political theory also raises questions about the vocabulary, source and scope of approaches, languages and concepts – precisely what this book considers.

Texts, contexts, thoughts or thinkers?

Studying the work of groups of thinkers from the past is often referred to as creating a canon. The approach has been a recognisable part of the study of politics since the emergence of the discipline of political science in the late 19th century (Boucher 1985; Kelly 1999). For most of that time, a series of great thinkers were gathered together to illustrate the dominant story of the emergence of the modern state. Reflecting on those past thinkers was part of a forward-looking activity that suggested arguments, principles and institutional models that could then be contrasted with current developments – all with the purpose of legitimating or improving the contemporary liberal state system. Just as in early international relations, many arguments based on this kind of enquiry were both prescriptive and normative. As the modern discipline of political science developed in the post-World War II period, the importance of political thought gave way to the study of political behaviour, political institutions and the development of comparative politics. The broad and eclectic study of political thinkers came to seem intellectually crude as it either lacked the robustness of a method or else followed the dictum of the 19th-century Cambridge constitutional historian F.W. Maitland that political science is 'either history or humbug'. The new field had a method but it was one that already had an intellectual home in the discipline of history. For radical critics of the modern state,

history also enabled the critique of the present by showing how contemporary political values and institutions were tainted by their origins in colonialism or patriarchy. With the subsequent development of normative political theory (exemplified by Rawls, Walzer and Singer), the study of past political ideas seemed a distraction. We should instead be 'doing our thinking for ourselves', to paraphrase Brian Barry, one of the most uncompromising of British normative political theorists (Barry 1965; Forrester 2019).

In this context, the revolution in the methodology of the history of political thought associated with Quentin Skinner and his colleagues claimed the whole terrain of past political thought for historians of thought. In magisterial essays – including 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas' (Skinner 1969) and his now-classic two-volume study *The Foundations of Modern Political Theory* (Skinner 1978), he set a benchmark for any credible history of political ideas and deprecated any alternative uses of 'historical' texts for studying political or international political thinking. Skinner's 1969 article provides a forceful criticism of both textualism and contextualism as appropriate objects of enquiries.

In his view, textualists are guilty of the mythology of coherence by claiming that a single book or text is the appropriate object of enquiry. This raises general questions about the appropriateness of reducing a writer's thought to a specific work, especially when many writers (including a number in this book) author a number of works. Not least amongst these questions is that about the coherence between earlier and later work. In the case of Thucydides, I focus on a single authoritative text, but by contrast both Machiavelli and Rousseau developed their arguments over a number of very different books. Does textualism impose a mythical uniformity across very distinct arguments?

The point can be more radical still if we question the coherence of an author's thought within a single text. Are texts, by which we normally mean books, constituted by a single argument or position? For Skinner, that begs the question of historical inquiry. By contrast, contextualists look beyond the boundaries of a book in order to understand its meaning. Books are seen as epiphenomena of broader social and economic forces, which in turn explain their meaning and power. For example, Skinner criticises C.B. Macpherson's interpretation of the English 17th-century philosophers Thomas Hobbes and John Locke as exponents of 'possessive individualism' or the rationalisation of the emerging class politics of early modern capitalism (Macpherson 1962).

The problem with this form of contextualism, however, is that it is reductionist. It shifts attention away from texts as autonomous worlds of ideas to their social context, but without adequately specifying the causal connection between these forces and the logic and form of a specific argument. In short, it says little about why Hobbes's arguments have the precise form that they do. After all, many contemporaries of Hobbes wrote books that do not rationalise the individualism associated with capitalism in the same way.

In response to the inadequacies of these rival approaches, Skinner offers his own methodology of linguistic contextualism, drawing on the speech-act theory of linguistic philosophers such as J.L. Austin and John Searle and the logic of question and answer underpinning the philosophy of history of R.G. Collingwood (Collingwood 1939).

Underlying Skinner's historical method is a claim about the priority of the historical approach to past political thought and an attempt to distinguish the authentic understanding of a past thinkers' utterances (speech-acts) from the impositions and distortions imposed on them by the ideological predilections of later interpreters. Utterances are a term of art derived from linguistic philosophy, but in Skinner's case these include the arguments, propositions and positions in complex works. So, Hobbes's *Leviathan* can be an utterance, as can his particular arguments about the state of nature, or indeed particular claims in those arguments that may be reducible to a passage or sentence. The historical question is one about what these utterances mean. This question is then answered by reconstructing the linguistic context, as opposed to a social and economic context. This step sets limits on what those utterances could have been understood to mean by the author's contemporary audience and thus in turn determine what the author could have been taken to be doing in making the utterance in the way he does (it is always a 'he' at this stage). Political language is always the result of someone's attempt to do something via speech and language. For Skinner, what that action is is an historical question and anything else is irrelevant.

Skinner's method has not been left unchallenged, and I will continue that challenge in what follows. Yet, the undoubted power of his arguments and intellectual agenda has transformed the study of past political thought and continues to be an inspiration for subsequent scholars. Aspects of his approach remain powerful tools of enquiry even if one does not accept his arguments for the priority of history. A variant of this linguistic-historicist approach has recently been extended into international theory in the work of David Armitage (Armitage 2012).

This book focuses on single texts, combinations of texts and in some cases combinations of thinkers who I argue make complimentary contributions to particular debates and perspectives. The chapters make little reference to linguistic contexts, albeit they also make little reference to other kinds of contexts as primary explanations, although each thinker is situated in an historical context. The arguments here also range beyond historically specific claims to assess the logical and trans-historical value of arguments and perspectives and the ways in which that thought is still deployed in contemporary debates and arguments. At best this might seem a crude and simplistic approach, perhaps suited to an introductory primer but one that should soon be put aside once serious enquiry begins. At worst, my approach may seem simply a category mistake, collapsing history into practice and advocacy.

In defending this approach and commending it to readers and students, I do not claim that Skinner's method of recovering historical meaning is incorrect, although I think it is too narrowly focused. Instead I want to reject Skinner's elevation of an historical use of past texts as the *only* intellectually respectable one. That position reinforces the idea that political thought and criticism cannot be liberated from the sources from which it emerges, and therefore cuts both of them off from the activity of political theorising. The consequent disregard for the arguments of past thinkers, now considered to be of only historical interest, has had a deleterious effect on contemporary political and international political theory. A narrowly historical account of political enquiry, especially one that effectively denies any authority to non-historical accounts of the meaning, scope and the fecundity of great political texts, seriously impoverishes our ability to engage with the challenges the world poses. Assigning priority to an historical approach to past thought only makes sense if this is the only credible way of approaching texts and thinkers from the past. That can only be shown to be right if there is something special about the historical-linguistic interpretation of meanings that Skinner advocates. If an historical-linguistic approach is only one amongst a number of valid ways of construing a text, then the special privileging of the historical over any other mode of interpretation does not hold and the possibility of creative interpretation remains part of political thinking.

Without getting into too technical a discussion at this stage, it is clear that the meaning of complex texts (even construed in the variety of ways that Skinner advocates) is not exhausted by the particular linguistic context of an utterance in the way that a specific verbal speech-act might be. Written texts are not exhausted by the range of meanings that an author might have consciously intended, or by a particular interpretation of the range of intentions that the discourse used might be interpreted to have. Because many texts are mediated through the passage of time, they accumulate meanings that are not simply imposed on a text but equally are not simply contained within the limits of a given linguistic context. Texts are not identical to spoken utterances, which are historically particular, contingent and fleeting. Texts have a life beyond the confines of their authors' lives, or the experiences of those who were the first readers. Linguistic contexts are themselves made up of constellations of speech-acts that in turn are parts of broader languages that transcend the historically local. This does not mean that anything goes in interpreting major texts, but it does problematise the issue of determining the linguistic context. My point is not simply that linguistic contexts are not self-identifying and determinate. I also want to claim that meaning in written texts is more than what is said in a particular context, as it is also shaped by readers, interpreters and critics even over long expanses of historical time. Furthermore, the historical-linguistic questions one can ask of a text are not the only questions. Ideological and philosophical use is an important part of what any particular reader could understand by the arguments of a text.

This is not to make the over-hasty claim of some postmodernists about the death of the author and the open texture of all texts, suggesting that anything goes. Instead, I want to follow Paul Ricoeur in asserting that there is surplus meaning in texts beyond authorial intention or the understanding of immediate audiences. So I make a claim for the idea of the *overstanding* of texts, which is associated with the American literary critic Wayne Booth (Booth 1979; 1988). Indeed, if we look at literary criticism it does seem ludicrous that the only relevant approach to the meaning of a text is a narrowly historical one. No one would make that claim of a literary canon. Of course, literary texts such as novels, plays and poems are different things to political texts, although that difference can be overstated and was not always seen as essential (Boucher 1985). The point I want to emphasise is that, just as with literary texts, the removal of improper readings (to use Booth's phrase) is not simply done by focusing on the specific historical context in which the text was situated. For Booth, the very idea of improper interpretations is not simply a problem to be eradicated but is actually part of the process of *overstanding* or arriving at interpretations that reflect the uses to which readers and critics put texts, uses that can in their turn withstand critical scrutiny. So, without diverting into a long theoretical discussion about the appropriate methodology of criticism (which Booth as a defender of pluralism and ethical reading denies can be given a single and final statement), we can identify intellectually credible practices and discourses that do not attach priority to an historical mode of understanding.

Whilst Skinner is correct to argue in his essays that many interpreters of political texts distort the meanings of thinkers they address, this is often done in the way any critic would operate, by critically engaging with the argument as opposed to a narrowly historical judgement. One can say a lot about the distortions of Hobbes as a possessive individualist without a linguistic contextual argument, and in doing so reinforce the view that quite a lot can be understood by careful reading, comparison and contrast with other texts and thinkers. Whilst it is easy to belittle careful reading – and Skinner does belittle the scholarship of John Plamenatz, just because he suggests we can make sense of a thinker's argument by careful and repeated reading – Plamenatz was not actually wrong (Plamenatz 1963). One can read Thucydides in translation and understand an enormous amount about the intricacies of his arguments about the significance of historical events and ideas. It would no doubt be better to be able to master him in the original Greek, but it is just false to suggest that, unless one reads them in their original languages and only alongside their contemporaries, one cannot properly understand an author's meaning and value as utterances. The concerns of international political theory are also normative, and in some cases prescriptive. For example, many arguments advocate as well as explain the idea of the right of war, and these are normative arguments that require normative criticism. In this way it is clear that our enquiry is not

simply a form of literary criticism, unless of course that involves ethical and normative engagement.

I also reject the false binary between thinkers and texts. Some chapters below are focused on texts, some on a number of texts from the same thinker, and some compare two texts and thinkers as a way of introducing a broader theory or position. In so doing I am not making exhaustive arguments about the historical identity of a thinker or text and the theory or ideas contained therein. I limit historical claims to historical evidence and I am aware that all such interpretations are partial and incomplete, although that is true of any interpretation: it can never be final. Instead, these interpretations and critical engagements should be seen as akin to Weberian 'ideal types' and Kuhnian paradigms. They self-consciously place in brackets aspects of a complete description for ease of explanation and comparison, but they also account for the normative force of an approach to political agency (Kuhn 1962).

Thomas Kuhn introduced the idea of paradigms in his social epistemology of scientific understanding and theory-change, instead of providing a criterion of what counts as science such as Popper's falsifiability test (Popper [1934] 1959). For Popper, the mark of a genuine scientific claim is that it can, in principle, be falsified by experience and counterexamples, and, where it has not, that fact provides the measure of its credibility. Claims that could not in principle be falsified, especially those that include all possible counter arguments, are non-science propositions – such as religion, myth or comprehensive social theories such as Marxism. Kuhn adopted an account of science that he claimed was closer to the practice of science, where normal science is based around the working through of problems within the context of an overarching paradigm or conceptual framework. Scientific change is marked by the incremental accumulation of knowledge within a given paradigm, punctuated by the occasional revolutionary transformation that changes the overall framework in response to ineradicable anomalies within the previous paradigm. The idea is illustrated by the way in which Copernicus's heliocentric view of the universe changed the questions being asked by cosmologists and astronomers, and in turn enabled the new physics of Galileo and Newton to supersede the Ptolemaic universe of the ancient world. The Newtonian paradigm then served as a successful framework until Einstein and the quantum revolution of the early 20th century. In each case, Kuhn focuses on how the world view of a new paradigm reframes the normal practice of scientists, most of whom work on small incremental problems without considering the overall coherence of their work with that of all other scientists. It is the revolutions and paradigm shifts that provide the explanation of scientific progress and questions that are living and dead in normal science.

Kuhn developed his language of paradigms, and normal and revolutionary science, in the specific context of the sociology of knowledge and the practice of rigorous scientific enquiry. That said, the looser idea of paradigms as broad world views or frameworks that shape the structure of ordinary activity and

understanding has meant that many scholars use it as a shorthand for self-contained intellectual frameworks that influence the way in which the problems and languages of activities can be characterised. In political and international theory, this allows for the framing of distinct ways of characterising what politics is, without falling into the trap of assuming that there is a single uncontroversial object of enquiry that is progressively revealed over the historical development or evolution of political theory. By characterising the texts, arguments and thinkers in this book as paradigmatic, I emphasise the way in which they provide frameworks for thinking about the nature of political agency and its institutional and territorial manifestation – without assuming that each thinker or argument is engaged with progressing beyond or overcoming the ideas of the previous thinkers in my narrative. These free-standing paradigmatic views may indeed be challenged and overcome by the ideas of other paradigmatic thinkers in this narrative. But their value is primarily as exemplifications of different ways of thinking about and organising violence, force and conflict as contributions to an understanding of the various challenges of politics. The justification for these ideal typical interpretations is how useful they are for the arguments that they are illuminating or exemplifying, and not whether they are simply accurate accounts of the intentions of particular historical figures, whether authors or their contemporary readers.

Traditions are not necessarily historicist

In one obvious sense, my reluctance to offer a history to underpin my identification of a 'canon' of major works (originally meaning sacred texts) is curious. After all, there is a chronological sequence here beginning with the ancient Greeks in the 5th century bce and ending with 20th-century thinkers such as Schmitt. If this narrative is not a history, what is? However, a chronology is just a list of texts in the order of their authorship or publication. It does not involve treating the past 'as past' by bringing it under any practical or philosophical mode of understanding in a way that emphasises the significance of its 'pastness' (Oakeshott 1983). I have argued above that the pastness of a text is not definitive of its interpretation and critical use. There is, however, another dimension of a history (as opposed to just a chronology), namely that the sequence is also ordered in terms of a philosophical category.

There are a number of possible ordering narratives that could be given for a canon that I explicitly reject, hopefully in an effective way – it will be for the reader to decide. For instance, we could interpret the movement through the chapters as a 'progress' in thought, a positive development from the Greeks to the modern state or its postmodern replacement. Many histories of political or international thought illustrate a progressive narrative, often referred to as 'Whig histories'. Historically, 'Whig history' is associated with the 19th-century historian Thomas Babington Macaulay, who saw the development of English

constitutional politics as the historical triumph of the principles of the Glorious Revolution growing from 1688 to 1832. Whilst attractive for political and ideological purposes, such an approach subordinates the details and complexity of actual historical thought and events to a predetermined political goal, in the Whig case the triumph of English political liberalism. They claim that history has a purpose that led to and legitimates the dominant political order of the present. I am particularly sensitive to this risk. As the author of a book on political liberalism (Kelly 2005), it would be only too easy for me to fall into a trap of arguing that history supports the triumph of those values – in the same way that a crude reading of Francis Fukuyama's thesis about the end of history is supposed to show. Of course, Fukuyama's subtle argument did not actually argue for this sort of naïve historical determinism. Yet, many contemporary and historical neo-liberals, neo-conservatives and Marxists do hold such crude views about the logic of history and try to dress them up in the arguments of Hegel or Marx. Liberals assume the progressive triumph of constitutional states and free markets, whereas Marxists offer a mirror image of the progress through successive crises towards an ultimate socialist revolution supposed to overthrow all exploitation and conflict. Although the narrative is different, both approaches assume that history has a logic, one that leads to human redemption. The problems around progress, historical change and the idea of redemption are themes explored in a different way here. All the thinkers in this book challenge or repudiate and seek to overthrow liberal and Marxist theories of modernisation and redemption.

To avoid any confusion, then, let me state boldly that history does not have a logic, whether liberal, Marxist or otherwise. If one wants to defend liberal or conservative values, or democracy or authoritarianism, then those arguments have to be free-standing and cannot be read from the narrative of history. I would like to believe that some kind of 'improvement' justification can be given for pacific, liberal and humane values, but these claims need independent justificatory arguments. History can play a part in providing those justifications but it is not a complete argument. It is open to the possibility of alternative non-progressive narratives that deny the existence of any path of liberation from oppression and ignorance, and provide accounts of history as the continued unfolding of oppression and domination – with historical political ideas providing successive ideological justifications for that.

Another way of reading 'Whig' or progressive histories of thought, culminating in the triumph of human emancipation, upends them to show that the same people billed as advocates of liberty are at the same time justifiers of colonial expansion and domination, racial subordination and orientalism (Said 1979). History here only uncovers a narrative of domination and conflict. Advocates of decolonising the canon often point out that many early modern western political theorists such as Hobbes and Locke were associated with the colonial and imperial expansions of their countries, even if they did not explicitly defend final-stage colonial and mercantile imperialism. The history

of colonialism and empire can provide an important interpretative context even if it does not explain what the author was trying to do. A more complex question is whether this association vitiates the arguments of such thinkers, especially when discussing their arguments that do not expressly support or justify colonial domination. If one is trying to defend a set of political values by building on the arguments of a past thinker, then it might well be the case that such a context challenges that case. But the wider social and economic context or the use to which a work is put should not necessarily determine the meaning of the work. This Janus-faced character of progressive histories has led postmodernists such as J.-F. Lyotard to reject all meta-narratives (Lyotard 1984). Just as the canon of thinkers here clearly eschews a progressivist reading of international political theory, it is also not endorsing a postmodernist critique, even though it clearly recognises the value in undermining naïve historical optimism.

Avoiding implicit meta-narratives is a challenge, but it is possible, unless one believes in a naïve historical reductionism that subordinates the actual ideas of individual texts and thinkers to such trans-historical ideas. By juxtaposing a series of thinkers, I intend to open a space for comparison and contrast, to enlighten debates about the nature and scope of political agency in the international realm, rather than to construct a pre-existing tradition such as 'realism' through which international politics should be understood. Meta-narratives such as realism, idealism, liberalism and Marxism are political constructions that take the ideas of thinkers or key concepts associated with groups of thinkers and combine them to serve the task of political motivation. This kind of political discourse is best described as ideological thinking (Freeden 1996). For many scholars of political thought, ideological thinking is disparaged as a false history, a category mistake, or a practical distortion of a thinker. This criticism can also be overblown. There is nothing intellectually disreputable about ideological narratives such as 'liberalism' or 'realism', as long as one does not make unjustifiable causal claims about them.

But, if one rejects any single ordering narrative and rejects ideological constructions of the canon, does that just leave us with a mere list of thinkers arranged in a crude chronology? More philosophically sophisticated histories of thought that do not wish to confine attention to the interpretation of particular thinkers often deploy the idea of 'traditions' in some kind of dialectical relationship, whereby different theoretical positions develop out of the conceptual oppositions between their implications and their 'negation' or antithesis: a classic example is the struggle between individualism and communitarianism. Here the history of thought is explained in terms of new perspectives developing as traditions in response to contradictions in the perspectives of philosophical predecessors. One can see this approach in the sequence of three traditions identified by Martin Wight, namely realism, rationalism and revolution – which he subsequently named, after thinkers exemplifying those stances, as the Machiavellian, Grotian and Kantian traditions (Wight 1994).

A more sophisticated and explicitly philosophical history of this kind is also offered by David Boucher with his distinction between empirical realism, universal moral order and historical reason. For Boucher, these constructions are not simply derived from groupings of pre-interpreted theorists, as is the case with Wight. Rather, they use philosophical concepts that derive from but are in turn vindicated by their contribution to the interpretations of those thinkers. These ordering concepts, in turn, have a philosophical standing. They explain the development of ideas not in terms of an external causal account of historical events but in terms of the dialectical movement between arguments overcoming their own internal contradictions. Such philosophical histories have a value in that they explain the paradigmatic importance of great thinkers within a canon by distinguishing them from minor or second-rate thinkers. They also acknowledge the significance of genuine philosophical dialogues between thinkers. For instance, whatever else he might also have been doing, Rousseau was indeed reacting to Hobbes. Triadic narratives (such as Wight's and Boucher's) are not the only ordering traditions. Although using it to order contemporary theorising and not the broad sweep of history, Brown proposes a similar dialectical confrontation between cosmopolitan and communitarian thinking (Brown 2002). And one could make a similar case between the familiar confrontation between realism and idealism that preoccupied international relations theory in the early years of that discipline. One interpretation of the canon in this book is that it outlines a 'realist' tradition that could be contrasted with others in just such a historical dialectic.

It is very easy to subvert the classical traditions of liberal or state-based progressivism by portraying them sublimated justifications of colonialism or cultural imperialism, which privilege the perspectives of western or white-occidental thinkers. A history of international theory (even a partial one covering a sub-tradition such as realism) that only includes white male thinkers raises a serious and genuine question about its claims to universality as the site of truth or reason. If the western canon is not the sole repository of reason and truth, then why does it not include non-western thinkers in its account of history? A simple, but hasty response, might be to qualify the history by geography and argue that there can only be partial histories – there can be no complete global history of international political thought. Even that position leaves open a question of inclusion. Any account that claims to provide a complete overview is always subject to the criticism that it includes some over others; it reinforces claims about importance, marginality and absence because of who is included and who is not. Some grounds for selective inclusion are benign because textbook canons are often constrained by the availability of accessible texts that students can use in the classroom. It is unrealistic to assume that any cohort of students can acquire the books (mostly in translation) that would allow a genuinely inclusive global curriculum of international and political thought. In other cases, selection is less benign because it assumes that there is an underlying rationale for creating a distinct canon of texts, not to merely illustrate the

variety of thought but to converge on the right way of living and ordering politics and international affairs. In this version, common in political philosophy, the individual chapters are stages on the way to the truth or a right answer.

Selection poses a serious challenge to any author of a book like this one because merely denying that this is my self-conscious goal is never going to be enough. It will always be possible that the criteria of inclusion and the overall narrative contain implicit 'exclusions' or meta-narratives. Indeed, the much-maligned approach of 'deconstructionism' is concerned with precisely this issue: uncovering the ways in which conceptual languages always embody exclusions of various kinds. An obvious criticism, for instance, is that all the thinkers considered here are men.

Where are the women?

Is the omission of any women in my set of authors just an oversight or prejudice on my part? Have I left them out of this canon because of prejudices about the significance and sophistication of women thinkers? Am I working with a testosterone-fuelled view of international politics and affairs as overly conflictual, an approach that is primarily masculine – so where the high theory or important philosophising is done by men? I certainly hope that is not the case but this book remains an exclusively male canon of thinkers: that needs an explanation and justification.

The composition of the canon is not the only legitimate place to ask the question 'where are the women?' If we look at the arguments and texts of almost all those authors discussed here, the very place of women in the world they describe is at best problematic and at worst invisible. Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* contains no women amongst its cast of actors. There are no women generals, orators, demagogues or regular soldiers, and when they appear at all it is either to be slaughtered or sold into slavery as a class. Other historical or philosophically inclined thinkers (such as Machiavelli or Hobbes) fare no better. Women do not feature in any important way in the events, institutions, moral practices or conceptions of politics that are addressed by these exclusively male theorists. Alternatively, they do feature yet are subsumed under heavily gender-loaded categories such as 'man', which is supposed to just mean human but clearly does not. So, what is going on, and more importantly how can one explain and justify presenting a canon of enquiry that not only excludes women but seems also to deny the experience of approximately half or the human species?

To begin, I need to turn to feminist theory. Feminist theory is a relatively recent perspective, although there have been genuinely feminist political (if not international) theorists, such as Mary Wollstonecraft, since the 18th century. And of course there are many unjustly neglected women writers in earlier ages on some of the issues covered in this book (Owens and Rietzler 2021).

Amongst those early feminist theorists, often known now as first-wave theorists, the emphasis was on extending rights and privileges enjoyed by men to women, who had been traditionally excluded from such rights. Wollstonecraft, for example, argues that the rights of man popularised by Thomas Paine or the French Declaration should be extended to women. Later movements arguing for the extension of the franchise are similarly concerned with equalising a common set of rights, liberties and privileges rather than explaining underlying structures of power that shape and dominate gendered identities. They are about opening access to opportunities, not addressing the shaping of those opportunities. First-wave theory was a corrective to the unequal application of traditional political theories of freedom and equality. It was not until the development of second-wave feminism and feminist theory from the 1950s to the 1970s that feminism began to mount a full critical assault on the concepts, theories and vocabularies that are used to understand social, political and international relations.

The legacy of first-wave feminism has done much to unlock the academy to women by equalising access to the resources of advanced education and academic positions even if first-wave theorists have been most focused in domestic politics. The significance of these changes should not be underestimated but they do not address the whole problem. This can be seen in relation to the canon of thinkers. I need to show that I have not discriminated against women by focusing on male thinkers when equally qualified women authors are available. Is there a canon of equally qualified women who could be included that I have merely chosen to overlook? This question is relatively easy to address in the negative – although it remains for the reader or subsequent student to decide whether they are ultimately persuaded by my choice (Zerelli 2008). Whilst there are exceptional female authors who wrote on politics, law and international affairs, these women are truly exceptional given the social, political and physical exclusion of women from education, politics and public life for much of western history (and indeed the history of most other recorded literary civilisations: patriarchy is not simply a problem for the west). Consequently, with honorary exceptions such as philosophers like Christine di Pisan and Mary Wollstonecraft, or travel writers and diarists such as Mary Wortley Montagu, there is no existing canon of major international theorists that I have ignored or discriminated against at least until the 20th century. Indeed, the fact of male power excluding women (or patriarchy, as it is known) fully explains the absence of significant women authors in this canon until the 20th century. This is not to ignore the fact that some exceptional women – Cleopatra, Elizabeth I, Catherine the Great – did exercise political and military power.

The substance of the book is not an example of overt discrimination and exclusion of equally qualified voices, but is that a sufficient justification for this enquiry? Although I am not making this claim, a not uncharitable inference from what I have said would be that it will take millennia to find gender-balanced

canons of historical political and international thought. Until then, male authors can just carry on with our gendered canon until female political and international theorists can catch up on the lost ground! Underlying this point is the assumption that the human experience, institutions and events captured in the theories and concepts examined in this canon are somehow universal. If so, the problem is merely one of who is writing about it, which can be addressed by randomly distributing gendered pronouns – as if the ideas were being developed and discussed by women, when that was clearly not the case. But, if we return to the example of Thucydides and the place of women in his *History*, primarily as victims of violence, we can see a greater issue of concern than simply exclusion from contributing to a philosophical canon. This is what is captured by second-wave feminists and feminist theorists and their turn to the discussion of patriarchy as a social construction of power.

From the 1960s and 1970s, the second wave of feminism has led to a sophisticated body of theory that addresses the underlying power structures that constitute gendered identities and their social and political consequences. As a result, the concepts that we use to think about the social and political world are shaped by the power relations between men and women. Complex power relations are exercised through language, discourse and theory, as well as being constituted by discourse. Thus, conceptual language about human nature and human rights can appear emancipatory, whilst at the same time presupposing conceptions of humanity that are essentially masculine and which therefore disadvantage and exclude women and contribute to their oppression. One way to characterise the relationship between first-wave and second-wave feminist theorists would be to see the latter as reacting against the former's view of emancipation as making women more like men and assisting women to compete in a competition that privileges masculinity. The criticism of first-wave feminists is that they see the problem as equalising opportunities rather than challenging the hidden power structures that create those gendered-opportunities in the first place. Feminist care theorists often criticise natural and human rights individualism as masculinist because it privileges autonomy and independence over moral considerations of relationality, care and empathy. Care theory can seem to reduce these perspectives to inherently feminine attributes that follow from women's biological role in nurturing and childrearing, in contrast to masculine identities of protector and provider. But care theory does not have to be biologically reductive. Even if some moral responses are socialised through gendered roles in caring, it might nevertheless be the case that these can be liberated from socially constructed women's experience, and used to challenge and reshape social and political relations that are unduly distorted by masculine moral categories that reflect the predominance of male power. Such a perspective is a valuable source of criticism of the paradigms of political agency discussed in this book. Yet, taking that further to excluding such theorists is not a denial of their importance but merely of their relevance given that the

point of the book is not to provide a full critical survey of all the ways of under-standing political agency. As I have said earlier in this introduction, the canon here deliberately excludes perspectives that make the concept of 'the political' derivative of moral notions such as care or justice.

Second-wave theory has turned feminist analysis into a critical and norma-tive theory, which sees social and political relationships as social construc-tions that need to be analysed and transformed rather than as immutable facts. Power structures and discourses are malleable and can be transformed. Femi-nist gender analysis is a tool for that transformative politics which now ranges beyond the distribution of opportunities, rights, liberties and privileges and instead focuses on the power relations of domination and subordination that work through our conceptual and philosophical languages.

One of the implications of the success of second-wave feminist theory is the development of identity politics, which acknowledges the diversity of human identity and the power structures that are reflected in the plural nature of per-sonal identity. People are not just men or women; they also have racial, national, sexual, gender, age and class identities in combination that link them to social groups who may be the beneficiaries of power relations in some respects, whilst being victims of overt and covert oppression in other respects: think of young, black, middle-class, university-educated women and white, working-class, non-graduate older men. Power relations include and exclude, oppress and dominate groups in different ways, but none are totally free from the play of dominant power structures in society. For some identity theorists, this fact has downplayed the importance of feminism as an emancipatory project, because it is focused on one amongst many sites of oppression and domination. Yet there is something profoundly important and historically resilient about gendered oppression that many feminists capture through the idea of intersectionality, which emphasises the ways in which various sources of social and personal identity are irreducibly interlinked for the most marginalised groups and voices in society.

In light of this second-wave and identity-based critique, histories of thought cannot simply be a long list of male authors. Such histories are also gendered in the sense that the conceptual languages and discourse covered by these things will inevitably reflect gendered social relations and patriarchal dominance. At its most obvious, this will be seen in the absence of women as agents in Thucydides, or in the overt sexism of Machiavelli. But it is also present in the predominantly masculinist discourse of human nature, natural law and rights in Hobbes or Rousseau. Even radical thinkers such as Lenin and Mao reduce women's oppression to a mere epiphenomenon of the more real class relations that shape late capitalism. So described, might it seem that books such as this one are guilty as charged?

In response, I acknowledge the importance of the second-wave feminist cri-tique but do not think it vitiates the conception of the book. That the narrative of this book is open to feminist critique does not vitiate its point, because I am

not offering a defence of the substance of each argument from all or any criticism. Work is being done on exploring a feminist canon in international relations and political theory, especially in the 20th century (Owens and Rietzler 2021). The task here is to show that there is no deliberate exclusion and also to recognise that the main questions are not in the choice of canonical texts but rather in how they are read. After all, there is no set of thinkers from the past who are free from gendered power relations, and there is no prospect for future theory that is also not in some way implicated in the social construction of discourse. Feminist theory, or any other criticism of this kind, is a second-order activity that operates upon pre-critical interpretations. A book of this kind that is designed to set out a number of distinct perspectives is therefore logically prior to this second-order activity. Reducing one to the other would not only result in a different book but would still leave open that prior activity of interpretation as ostension (the act of showing or presenting), after which criticism follows.

I do not offer a feminist study of international political thought, or speculate whether the approaches discussed in this book must collapse under feminist scrutiny. However, I acknowledge that the real challenge for this book will be how far it lends itself to critical engagement with the discourses of power that are immanent within the thought and thinkers discussed, and acknowledges the ways the theories and concepts discussed can reinforce or explain those relationships of power and domination.

Overview of the argument

The book comprises nine substantive chapters and a concluding essay. Each chapter is presented as a distinct paradigm of politics in the international realm, rather than a stage in the unfolding of a single narrative explaining or legitimising the current world order. Whilst these paradigms may rise and fall, the overall argument of the book is that they remain effective sources and structures for thinking about international politics and agency. None of them can be simply confined to the past as of no more than historical or antiquarian interest. I have followed a rough chronological order but this is not supposed to illustrate an unfolding historical development.

The book begins with the most famous ancient Greek writer on the modern field of international affairs. Thucydides' *History of the Peloponnesian War* is one of the few foundational texts in international political thought. The chapter introduces Thucydides' work and his influence on theory and history and considers his role as a theorist of realism. I examine the nature of and basis of realism as the default perspective of international politics. Thucydides also provides an account of the collapse of Athenian democracy under the pressure of war, so the chapter explores the themes of democracy, strategy and leadership in wartime. Thucydides gives an account of a system of Greek political

communities (poleis) operating in the absence of an overarching hegemonic power. This is a model of international order that continues to dominate international affairs and diplomacy. It is an account of the dynamics of international politics that is still thought to have lessons for present-day international politics and a changing world order.

The second chapter turns to the late Roman period and the rise of Christianity in the work of Augustine of Hippo. Augustine is considered to be one of the most important thinkers of the Christian era. He is an important source of ideas about the nature of politics, war and peace and a critic of theories of historical progress. Augustine's political thinking is located in an overview of his theology and the impact of his understanding of the Christian story of redemption on thinking about the nature, scope and claims of political and moral authority. The central question is whether the fundamental teachings of Christianity tend towards a utopian and pacificist view of political relationships, or is the legacy of Christianity in politics and international affairs more properly understood as a form of realism? Augustine's thought is central in the development of 'just war' theory and had a big impact on the development of 20th-century Christian realism and the marked anti-utopianism of post-Cold War liberalism.

Machiavelli is tackled in Chapter 4. He is one of the most controversial of political thinkers because his ideas ran counter to many traditional conceptions of politics, such as the primary role of the common good and the need for political power to be constrained by moral or ethical obligations. In the context of international political thought, Machiavelli is presented as a realist and an originator of the idea of *raison d'état* (reason of state). I advance the stronger claim that Machiavelli challenges the idea of any stable political societies or peoples. Instead, he focuses attention on the founding or refounding of political communities in a world of constant change and revolution. Machiavelli is also concerned with the character of leadership and the ways in which temporary and fleeting political power should be exercised to create and maintain regimes. Rather than steering a careful path around the idea of ethics in politics, he explores the nature of political life outside of a moralistic, ethical and legalistic framework. In this way, he poses one of the most striking challenges to the conceptual framework of modern politics.

Thomas Hobbes is covered in Chapter 5. He is one of the first great theorists of the concept of sovereignty and of the modern state, and the original theorists of the state system that lies at the heart of contemporary international relations. His theory of the sovereign state is set out in *Leviathan* and the chapter explores Hobbes's place in modern international relations theory alongside his intellectual context and wider materialist philosophy of humanity. He offers an account of human nature and the state of nature, as well as a contractarian account of the origin of sovereign power. The nature and extent of Hobbes's account of absolutism is another focus, and his rejection of international political

society derived from early modern papalism. He sees international relations as solely between sovereign states, explaining the way in which contemporary international relations theory has absorbed him into the tradition or realism and interstate anarchy.

The second of the great social contract theorists is John Locke. In contrast to Hobbes, Locke is considered an early liberal because he argued for a constitutionally limited conception of sovereignty that protects individuals' rights to life, liberty and property. The sixth chapter begins with an overview of Locke's social contract theory and his account of the constitutional sovereign state. On the state of nature, the law and right of nature, and the theory of consent, Locke differs importantly from Hobbes. He also formulated a right of revolution and a theory of property that is linked to trade and colonial acquisition. Locke's connection to colonialism and its impact on his theory has been highlighted by what is known as the 'colonial turn' in modern political theory. I also discuss Locke's state theory and his views on the normative status of non-constitutionally limited powers and the extent to which they should be recognised by legitimate states, Although he is often thought of as a source for liberal idealism because of his moralistic natural law theory, his relationship to the realism/idealism distinction is more subtle, and he defended a militant or crusading liberal order in the international realm.

The seventh chapter gives an overview of Rousseau's writings and his influence on international thought and theory. Once again, the central concept is sovereignty and its political and international implications. However, Rousseau's main arguments concern the idea of popular sovereignty, and how the concept of sovereign power can be maintained and exercised collectively by a free sovereign people who remain free citizens. In this respect, it is a criticism and a development of the concept as deployed by Hobbes or by Locke. Rousseau is critical of the concept of state sovereignty as a distinct juridical or law-like entity. Instead, sovereignty for him can only be a power of a people acting in accordance with a general will. In order to be a sovereign people, the citizens need to think of themselves as more than a multitude or collection of individuals trying to secure and protect their private interests. To maintain that idea of a sovereign general will, the people need a strong conception of identity and to avoid the corrupting power of commercial society and cosmopolitan engagement. Rousseau's arguments are a precursor of an inward-looking nationalism and anti-cosmopolitanism that has seen a recent recurrence in anti-globalisation movements, political and economic nationalism, national solidarity and the rise of identity politics.

Clausewitz is an unfamiliar figure in histories of political thought and, when he is discussed, it is mostly as a footnote to discussions of the state or as a marginal figure of interest only to a small professional readership concerned with strategy and military affairs. The eighth chapter focuses on Clausewitz's great work *On War*, a book as much a work of political theory as any of the other

texts I discuss. I begin by situating Clausewitz in the climate of state and military theory that grew up in Prussia in response to the French Revolution, the idea of the rights of man and the citizen, and the consequent wars for national liberation. I explore the methodology of his military theory as a development of a new policy science, and discuss his account of the concept of war and the place of genius and friction, which aligns with a Romantic critique of crude Enlightenment rationalism. The concept of the 'paradoxical trinity' (which covers the interplay between the people, the army and the government) is examined next, especially the question of whether there are actually one or two 'trinities' at play in Clausewitz's work. The concept of the 'trinity' illustrates Clausewitz's analysis of the deep interplay of hatred, chance, and reason or policy as the dynamic forces that explain war and drive international relations. The chapter moves on to consider the priority of offence and defence in the conduct of operations and concludes with an extended discussion of Clausewitz's influence in a modern age characterised by violence and war.

Whilst Marx has undoubtedly had a significant impact on the development of social and political theory, it is through his followers, especially Lenin and Mao, that his doctrines have had the greatest impact on international thought and affairs. Marx theorised (or, for some, predicted) the revolutionary overthrow of capitalism, but it was actually Lenin in 1917 and Mao in 1949 who presided over the two great socialist revolutions of the 20th century. The ninth chapter explores their writings on the theory and practice of revolutionary politics that have had the most impact on international political thinking. A brief introduction to the Marxist framework precedes a discussion of Lenin's theory of the vanguard party as the vehicle for establishing a dictatorship of the proletariat, an idea he took seriously and placed at the centre of revolutionary struggle. Marx's theory of imperialism as the latest phase of capitalism and the role of violence in the revolutionary overcoming of the state is examined next. Mao's thought, in turn, transformed the legacy of Leninism in the specific contexts of the Chinese struggle against imperialism by theorising the peasant masses as a revolutionary class, which transformed his account of revolution. I also explore Mao's writings on revolutionary war and the role of guerrilla forces. The chapter concludes by assessing how both Lenin's and Mao's thinking about the practice of revolutionary politics has impacted on contemporary political and international theory.

Carl Schmitt rejects the optimism of the contemporary liberal internationalist view of the global order that has been dominant since the end of World War II. Reviewed in Chapter 10, Schmitt is an uncompromising conservative thinker who has influenced theorists of the left and right. He saw the international system of states as a bulwark against the violence and conflict that he saw as underlying the universalist and globalist tendencies of liberal and revolutionary politics. His ideas are a response to the decline of European power, the rise of Cold War ideological opposition, and the emergence of new global hegemons such as the United States. Schmitt both provided a critique of liberal

optimism and globalisation and at the same time attempted to salvage essential concepts such as sovereignty, war and enmity as a way of disciplining politics and responding to the decline of state power. I cover Schmitt's criticism of liberal democracy, and the concept of 'the political' as an examination of what sovereignty is and where it now resides following the abandonment of liberal popular sovereignty theories and nationalism. Finally, I consider his critique of global liberalism and international law.

Each chapter is free-standing and can be read and understood on its own. However, the juxtaposition of these paradigmatic approaches to the nature, scope and organisation of international politics and agency also shows the importance of three linking issues that frame the overall narrative. These are violence and politics, temporality and change, and the meaning and significance of history. These issues recur across the distinct treatments of individual authors, and are also illustrated in the methodologies deployed in shaping the discussion of these issues, whether these are historical, philosophical or political-theological. The final chapter examines the re-emergence of realism as an approach to political theory and how this 'realist turn' illuminates or complicates international political theory, which has been suspicious of the hegemony of realism in the wider discipline of international relations.

Using this book

Each of the chapters on a paradigmatic thinker gives a free-standing introduction to their perspective on the international realm, and so I have deliberately avoided narrative themes that span multiple chapters. I hope that readers will want to read all chapters but also that it will be useful to students studying just some of the authors covered here, and to general readers interested in particular authors. Each chapter outlines the context that the thinker operated in, the structure of their argument, and its implications for their views of politics – as an activity prior to the challenge of critical analysis and engagement. Covering an author does not entail endorsement of any of their arguments, but rather highlights the need to understand their structure before they can be critically analysed or (more importantly) organised into a distinctive interpretative narrative such as political realism.

Each chapter also outlines an historical introduction to the relevant texts being addressed, looking at critical themes and debates that provide the interpretation of the argument. A thinker like Hobbes wrote a number of works, but I am concentrating on the argument in *Leviathan* (1651) and its implications. In the case of Rousseau or Schmitt, I link a number of works to identify their main arguments, but even here I am not providing a complete overview of all of the thinkers' works. Augustine, Machiavelli, Rousseau and Schmitt each have a large corpus (or body of work), not all of which is relevant for understanding the position set out here. My treatment does not presuppose that readers are

already familiar with the thinker, nor do I require students to master all the intricacies of an individual's thought. Some scholars in political thought spend their entire careers working on a single author or a small part of one author's output. This book cannot cover everything. It will have achieved its purpose if it inspires readers to go back to the main texts or to become familiar with the continuing scholarly debates.

It is not necessary to read chapters in their chronological order. Indeed, I am explicitly not claiming that there is an unfolding historical narrative that informs an argument about the triumph of a particular way of organising politics or international affairs. In principle, the book's narrative could be read backwards, with later thinkers providing insights and questions that can be used to frame the interpretations of their predecessors. Whilst reading the past in light of the present is a familiar basis for philosophical critique, there is also paradoxically some scope for this at the interpretive level.

All of the interpretations and arguments set out here are built on a vast scholarship that exists in the case of each thinker and text. It would be easy and unhelpful to overload readers with summaries and lists of the scholarship on each thinker. Each sentence could be accompanied by extensive bibliographic referencing because the act of scholarly writing always involves a complex synthesis of what has been read or argued elsewhere. Some of the readings I offer will be familiar and potentially controversial because they involve my taking sides in interpretive and scholarly debates and reflect my own studies over a number of decades. I hope that readers will challenge and debate those readings in time. For that reason, each chapter has a minimum of internal references. Where they occur, these references are to key positions in debates and not simply sources of a specific idea that underpins my interpretation of paraphrase. I have tried, but not always succeeded, in reducing the references to the work of my peers as I try to focus attention on the main text.

The bibliographies at the end of each chapter identify some of the more important scholarly works I have drawn on, or which best address the issues covered in the chapter. They are not intended to be comprehensive – indeed, that would not be possible – but to help readers with university or public library access to follow up and question my exposition. For the main texts, I have chosen easily available scholarly editions that are also authoritative. I have quoted relatively extensively, subject to the normal constraints of scholarly fair use. The quotations are sufficient to guide the reader in making sense of the key arguments. That said, none of the arguments or claims made for any of the thinkers discussed depends upon a particular translation or edition and that is why I have not linked digitally to those text versions. Any available online version will be adequate to the task of building a first understanding and familiarity with the main thinkers. There are no references that are time-dependent and no data sets or empirical materials that need a direct link or which could become unavailable.

The end of chapter references also includes a brief bibliography of key secondary literature about each main thinker,

Finally, the LSE Press guide at the end of the book has some advice on finding open access versions of the main texts for readers without such backup.

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