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**Article (Accepted version)
(Refereed)****Original citation:**

Brown, Chris (2017). *Political thought, international relations theory and international political theory: an interpretation*. [International Relations](#). 31, (3) pp. 227-240. ISSN 0047-1178

DOI: [10.1177/0047117817723062](https://doi.org/10.1177/0047117817723062)

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Available in LSE Research Online: October 2017

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Political Thought, International Relations Theory and International Political Theory: An Interpretation

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Abstract:

The relationship between political theory, including the history of political thought, and International Relations theory, including the history of international thought has been, and to some extent remains, complex and troubled. On both sides of the Atlantic, the mid-twentieth century founders of International Relations as an academic discipline drew extensively on the canon of political thought, but approached the subject in an uncritical way, while political philosophers largely disdained the international as a focus. This changed in the 1970s and 80s, with the emergence of the 'justice industry' based on critiques of Rawls's *A Theory of Justice* and a consequent recovering of the past history of cosmopolitan and communitarian thought. A new discourse emerged in this period – international political theory – bridging the gap between political thought and international relations, and stimulating a far more creative and scholarly approach to the history of international thought. However, in a social science environment dominated by the methods of economics, that is formal theory and quantification, the new discourse of international political theory occupies a niche rather than existing at the centre of the discipline.

Key Words: International Relations Theory; International Political Theory; English School; History of Political Thought; Cambridge School; English School, John Rawls; political science; social choice theory.

Introduction:

In the framing document which initiated the Symposium at which the essays collected in this Special Section were first presented, the focus of the Symposium was expounded and a paradox identified:

‘Classical political thought has long been part of International Relations. It is therefore something of a paradox that questions of international relations today receive comparatively little attention from political theorists. Historians of political thought, for example, seldom engage such questions or, when they do engage, often criticize the way in which theorists of international relations handle classical texts..... [Such] criticism prompts a question of considerable import: what, if anything, does the history of political thought contribute to International Relations theory?’

The purpose of this essay is to provide an extended commentary on these propositions and this paradox; in what follows it will be argued that the framing of this issue is broadly correct, but that once one digs deeper some problems arise, problems which require a reframing of some of the core elements of the way in which the relationship between International Relations theory and the history of political thought is to be understood. The elements of this reframing will be presented in summary form in this Introduction, and then defended at greater length.

First, it is indeed true that ‘classical political thought has long been part of International Relations’, but it is equally true that the account of ‘classical political thought’ that was customary until quite recently was, for the most part, crude, caricatured and un-nuanced; this was the case for both mid-century American Realists such as Hans Morgenthau and for early ‘English School’ writers such as Martin Wight.

Second, although there is some truth in the charge that ‘questions of international relations today receive comparatively little attention’ from historians of political thought, it is also true that other political theorists, especially of an analytical bent, do not neglect international issues. Historians of political thought have themselves become marginalised in the modern Anglo-American academy, and their inattention to international issues may be a by-product of their struggle to survive in a hostile environment.

Third, the relative dominance of analytical political theory in the Anglo-American academy is mirrored by the rise of neo-positivist, social choice thinking in Political Science and International Relations; this perspective is generally uninterested in history of any kind, but a subfield of International Relations theory opposed to the dominance of neo-utilitarianism has arisen, namely International Political Theory and this new subfield is generally more engaged with the history of political thought.

Fourth, while the existence of International Political Theory has stimulated the emergence of contemporary historians of international political thought who have a far superior grasp of their subject than their predecessors in the discourse, they draw an audience for their work from a subfield of the discipline rather than from International Relations Theory as such. Unlike their 'historians of political thought' cousins, historians of *international* political thought fill a niche that it is widely believed ought to be filled, but they are indeed offering a niche product rather than contributing directly to the mainstream.

Fifth, in summary, we see that a shift has taken place. To oversimplify the story, fifty years ago scholars in the field were passionately concerned with the history of international thought, and indeed with international history in general, but their account of the classics did not stand up to close scrutiny. Now, there are numerous scholars of international political thought who have done the kind of in-depth textual analysis that earlier on was missing, but their place in the wider discipline is more problematic than used to be the case. Just at the point at which expertise on the history of international thought is at its zenith, a knowledge of the classics is no longer thought to be a necessity by the most influential modern scholars of either Political Science or International Relations.

The rest of this essay will fill out the arguments presented in shorthand above, but before proceeding to this task it is necessary to acknowledge two limitations; first, the focus here is on Anglo-American writers and the Anglo-American academy. Anglo-American in this context is defined as including anyone whose professional life is conducted mainly through the medium of English, thus

including most North Europeans, but not including most Francophones. Very clearly a wholly different story could be told about the relationship between the history of political thought and the discourse of International Relations were the focus to be on France rather than the Anglo-American world. The two worlds are, of course, not hermetically sealed, there are post-structuralists in London and New York, Copenhagen and Berlin, and there are utilitarians in Paris, but nonetheless these worlds remain distinct, as a cursory survey of the key journals of Anglo-America will confirm – over the twenty-year history of the *European Journal of International Relations*, the lack of material therein from France, Italy or Spain has been a constant complaint of its host organisation, the *European Consortium of Political Research*. Whether the new *European International Studies Association* will bridge this gap remains to be seen.

A second, perhaps more important, limitation concerns International Law. It could well be argued that many of the issues which have become central to the discourse of International Political Theory were first rehearsed by International Lawyers; figures such as Grotius, Pufendorf and Vattel are obviously important here, as are early twentieth century figures such as Hans Kelsen and Hershel Lauterpacht, and, in our era, Martti Koskenniemi and James Crawford. And, of course, some figures who are renowned as International Relations theorists began life as International Lawyers or legal philosophers – C.A.W Manning and Hans J Morgenthau are the most obvious examples here. The problem is that to do anything like justice to the importance of International Law in the development of International Political Theory would require more space than is available to me here – better, all things considered, simply to acknowledge the limitation and move on.

Political Thought and IR Theory in the Mid-Twentieth Century

The history of the discipline of International Relations – if ‘discipline’ is the right word in this context – is hotly contested; it is common ground that speculation about the nature of relations that would now be described as ‘international’ has a long history, in the Western tradition going back to classical Greece and

Thucydides, but when that speculation crystallised into systematic study is another matter.¹ Many standard texts take 1918 as a convenient point of origin, Brian Schmidt sees continuity between nineteenth century political science and the modern discipline, while Nicolas Guilhot dates 'the invention of International Relations theory' to a Rockefeller Foundation-funded conference that took place in 1954.² For the purposes of this essay, Guilhot's date, if made a little less precise, makes the most sense: important though the inter-war years undoubtedly were it is in the period from, roughly, 1945 to 1965 – the period dominated in the US by the so-called 'classical realists', in particular Hans Morgenthau, Arnold Wolfers, John Herz and in the back ground, Reinhold Niebuhr and in the UK by scholars such as C.A.W. Manning, Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight, the last two of whom later came to be seen as the originators of the so-called 'English School' – that International Relations theory came to be seen as a distinctive focus of study upon which the history of political thought did, or did not, impinge.³

All of the aforementioned scholars, with the possible exception of the theologian Niebuhr, grounded their thinking on international relations in their knowledge of history, and all made frequent references to the canon of European political thought stretching back to the Classical Greeks. These references present a rather mixed picture to the modern reader. On the one hand, Niebuhr's reading of Augustine stands up very well, and indeed the depth of knowledge of the Early Christian Fathers exhibited by figures such as Wight and Butterfield is very impressive, incidentally underlining the extent to which British intellectual life remained deeply Christian in the 1940s and 50s – one of the most important influences on the British Committee on International Theory, the forerunner to the English School, was the theologian Donald Mackinnon.⁴ On the other hand, Early Christian Fathers aside, the range of sources to which these figures referred was quite limited, and many of the judgements they offered verged on caricature, indeed actually crossed the line into caricature in some cases.

Partly this was a function of the determination of most of these writers to understand international relations as inter-state relations, and to focus on those

figures in the canon who expressly addressed such relations. Thus, for example, neither Plato nor Aristotle, nor the Stoics featured in their use of the canon, instead Thucydides was turned to as someone who explicitly addressed inter-state relations. Of course, the cities whose war Thucydides observed were not 'states' in the modern sense of the term – nor indeed were the Italian city-states that Machiavelli, another favoured source, wrote about – but they were unproblematically treated as such by most of the authors under consideration here. Wight's view, famously expressed in his framing article for the British Committee, 'Why is there no international theory?', was that political theory is resolutely state-centric and has been since Plato, while 'international theory' is something different, marked not only by its paucity, but also by intellectual and moral poverty.⁵ To be an 'international theorist' on his account it was necessary to address inter-state relations directly. As a result, many of the authors who would later feature very substantially in the International Political Theory of the 1980s and onwards – in particular Kant and Hegel – were given very short shrift indeed. In so far as Kant is read at all in this period it is as a utopian thinker; in F.H. Hinsley's generally valuable study *Power and the Pursuit of Peace*, Kant's 'Perpetual Peace' is seen as the last in the line of eighteenth century peace projects, and read outside of the context of Kant's moral philosophy.⁶ In *Politics Among Nations* Morgenthau refers to Hegel simply as a German nationalist; Wight goes one better, referring to the Nazis and Communists as the children of Hegel and Kant.⁷

Partly because of the limitations that IR theorists imposed upon their use of the canon, there was relatively little interaction with political theorists and historians of thought. In the UK, for example, the London School of Economics in the 1950s and 60s was the home both to leading British Committee members Martin Wight and Hedley Bull in its International Relations Department, and to one of the largest coterie of historians of political thought in the country, grouped around the charismatic figure of Michael Oakeshott in its Government Department, but there is very little evidence of these groups influencing each other. Several decades later, scholars such as Terry Nardin and Robert Jackson wrote major works of International Political Theory which were highly

influenced by Oakeshottian ideas – indeed Nardin has become one of the world’s leading scholars of Oakeshott’s philosophy – but there is no evidence that contemporary International Relations scholars in the 1950s and 60s interacted in any meaningful way with Oakeshott or his colleagues.⁸

If interaction between historians of thought and students of International Relations theory was very limited at LSE, in other British centres of learning it was even more attenuated. Generally, in the United Kingdom both scholars of International Relations theory and historians of political thought were thin on the ground. From the perspective of the mid-sixties the major expansion of International Relations as an academic discourse would take place some two decades later, the ‘Cambridge’ approach to the history of thought built around J.G.A. Pocock and Quentin Skinner had yet to be developed and the analytical philosophy dominant amongst Oxford political theorists was not conducive to the study of the history of political thought. In the United States the details were different – for example, in political thought the highly-influential figure of Leo Strauss had no obvious equivalent in British academic life⁹ – but the general picture of apparent mutual indifference between historians of political thought and students of International Relations theory was much the same. But in the 1970s things were to change, both for IR theory and for the history of political thought, and a different conjunction of ideas emerged.

The Rise of the ‘Justice Industry’ and of International Political Theory

The starting gun for this change was fired by the publication of John Rawls’s *A Theory of Justice*, arguably, the most important work of Anglo-American political theory in the twentieth century.¹⁰ *The Theory of Justice* is, on the face of it, a work of liberal analytical political philosophy, developing its ideas in a chain of reasoning from first principles but it also draws heavily on a reading of Kant and of the utilitarians. Though modern in its analytical method, it is a work of political philosophy that connects readily with the classics, not least by its ambition – this is a book which intends to tell us what justice is and, not, for example, simply how the word is used, the latter being the objective of most

political philosophy in the mid-twentieth century. Because of its scope and ambition, and also, it has to be said because of its occasional obscurity, *The Theory of Justice* is a work that has attracted an enormous amount of commentary – the term ‘justice industry’ is barely an exaggeration – and a great deal of that commentary has focused on the international implications of his theory. Rawls did have some things to say about international relations, and would later elaborate his position in his short book of 1999, *The Law of Peoples*, but his main contribution to International Relations theory has been to provoke his critics to challenge his thinking in this area;¹¹ in the process, a new discourse about international relations and a new relationship to some elements of the canon of great political thinkers emerged.

Rawls’s substantive account of justice in society involved political freedom and what he called the ‘difference principle’ which holds that inequalities can be justified only if they work to the benefit of the least-advantaged in society. His account of international justice offers the equivalent of political freedom, that is sovereign equality, non-intervention and the international rule of law, but no equivalent of the domestic difference principle. From the earliest critical reaction to Rawls’s theory onwards, it was generally agreed that this decision not to produce an account of economic and social justice that applied to international society was at least problematic if not actually perverse, given the obvious importance of international inequality in the modern world, and writers such as Brian Barry, Charles Beitz, and later Thomas Pogge made Rawls’s position on this issue the centrepiece of their criticism of his project.¹² None of these writers was particularly interested in the history of political thought; in reaction to Rawls position, political philosophers were increasingly now focused on the international – indeed the case can be made that Rawls was the last in a long line of liberal political theorists who believed it possible to think of domestic societies as bounded communities separate from each other – but while the new students of global social justice may have made contact with the international they did not do so via the medium of the history of thought, but rather through abstract theorising and a ‘presentist’ orientation.

Nonetheless, it can be argued that it was as a by-product of the debates between Rawls and his critics which focused attention on global social justice and global inequality that some important re-evaluations took place in the 1970s and 1980s, re-evaluations of great import for the relations between the history of political thought and International Relations theory. Most importantly, the critics of Rawls revitalised the study of cosmopolitanism and the search for its roots. Whereas a decade or so earlier cosmopolitanism had been largely associated with utopian theories of international relations, theories which had been discredited by the triumph of realism, the cosmopolitanism of the liberal critics of Rawls located the origins of their position in the thought of the European Enlightenment and especially that of Immanuel Kant, and, to a lesser extent of Karl Marx and the Marxist tradition. For figures such as Beitz and Pogge it was the moral theory of Kant that was central to cosmopolitan thought, and Kant's 'Perpetual Peace' came to be understood as an expression of that moral theory, rather than as simply another implausible peace project, which is how the previous generation of scholars had largely seen this work.¹³ Conversely, critics of cosmopolitanism looked to the roots of a more community-oriented account of political morality, and found it in the work of G.F.W. Hegel and/or John Stuart Mill.¹⁴ For both cosmopolitans and communitarians, the history of international thought, and its links to the history of political thought more generally, became salient in spite of the presentist inclinations of most of the participants in the global justice debates.

The work that most accurately reflects this new orientation to the history of international thought is Andrew Linklater's *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* which began life as a PhD thesis written in the International Relations Department at LSE (Linklater, 1982).¹⁵ Here Kant's cosmopolitanism is liberated from the charge of utopianism, Hegel's account of the rational state is no longer seen as a cover for German nationalism, and Marx's thought is studied in its own terms and not through Leninist lenses. Many of the judgements Linklater makes in this path-breaking book have not necessarily stood the test of time, but this is a work in the history of political thought by an International Relations theorist that represents a giant step away from the kind

of caricatures that were on offer a couple of decades earlier. In the same period Terry Nardin's use of Oakeshott's political thought in *Law, Morality and the Relations of States* represents another step-level advance on the work of the 1960s, bringing together political theory and IR theory in a way that would have surprised both sides of the divide in the 1960s. Michael Doyle's appropriation of Kant in order to formulate an early version of 'democratic peace theory' is rather closer to a caricature, but still finds within 'Perpetual Peace' much more than did Hinsley or Wight.¹⁶ Again, Mervyn Frost's 'constitutive theory' presents a picture of Hegel that many, probably most Hegelians would hardly recognise, but, again, his work represents a major advance on the crude characterisations of Hegel current a few years earlier.¹⁷

What is noticeable here is that these authors were all scholars of international relations who turned themselves into historians of political thought because they wanted to say something that they found difficult to say from the starting point of conventional International Relations theory. Linklater, for example, was steeped in the British Committee/'English School' writings of Bull and, especially, Wight – and, indeed, returned to these sources in his later work – but *Men and Citizens* is not in any conventional sense an English School work. The result was that these authors, along with the critics and defenders of Rawls referred to above, in effect created a new discourse, International Political Theory, distinct from, though clearly related to, International Relations theory. More on the importance of International Political Theory later in this essay, but first it is worth noting a particular feature of the birth of this sub-field; if the creators of International Political Theory are analytical political theorists and political theory-oriented international theorists, then the question arises, where are the historians of political thought proper? It is striking that there are very few works on the history of international thought *by historians of political thought* published in this period. One such would be W.B. Gallie's *Philosophers of War and Peace: Kant, Clausewitz, Marx, Engels and Tolstoy*, a short but valuable book based on the author's Belfast Wiles lectures, but it is difficult to find a second example.¹⁸ Later on the newly-formed Cambridge School of historians of thought would produce important work on, for example, colonialism and

imperialism, but in the 1970s only J.G.A. Pocock's *The Machiavellian Moment* is of direct significance for International Political Theory.¹⁹ The lack of engagement with the international by political theorists in the mid-Twentieth Century continued twenty years later, even as International Relations scholars such as Linklater and Nardin were successfully engaging with the history of political thought. How is this to be explained?

Political Science, International Relations and Political Theory

The rather unexpected pattern outlined above is at least partly explicable in terms of changes that were taking place in the wider discourse of American Political Science, in particular the increasing significance in this period of social choice theory, formal modelling and quantification, imported into Political Science from the disciplines of Economics and Econometrics. In this period from the mid-60s through to the mid-80s, 'political theory' became increasingly understood as formal theorising, on the explicit analogy of economic model-building. And, just as most economists have very little interest in the history of their discipline, so most political scientists came to downplay the significance of the history of political thought and the study of the canon came to be marginalised. Of course, this was not a process that happened overnight or at an even rate everywhere; some of the most prestigious (and wealthy) universities continued to support the study of the history of political thought in much the same way that they supported the study of, for example, medieval philosophy and languages, that is as subjects of no practical significance, embodying an ethic of learning for its own sake. And, of course, there were pockets of resistance to the new learning from the left in the form of critical theorists such as Charles Taylor and William Connolly, and from Straussians on the right.²⁰

Still, within the American academy the rise of social choice thinking was inexorable, and came to include work in International Relations theory; rather surprisingly and somewhat against their own inclinations, the structural realism of Kenneth Waltz and his followers, and the liberal institutionalism of Robert Keohane and his, formed the basis for a social choice reorientation of this end of

the Political Science discipline.²¹ Returning to the focus of this essay, within this new dispensation the cosmopolitan critics of Rawls, along with at least some of their communitarian critics, found a relatively happy home; the kind of political theory they engaged in – liberal and analytic – was compatible with the kind of formal theorising that was now very highly valued in the discourse – but the history of international, as well as political, thought fell out of fashion.

Things were very different in the United Kingdom in this period. In the 1960s through to the 1980s most departments of politics and government in Britain, with the major exception of the Department of Government at Essex, were still largely oriented towards historical and institutional analysis and were resistant to the rise of formal theorising and quantification.²² The study of politics was largely understood as an activity that fell within the Humanities, and in elite circles, in and out of academia, the division between the arts and the sciences and the overvaluing of the former at the expense of the latter outlined by C.P. Snow in his account of ‘the two cultures’ still held.²³ In short, Political Studies in Britain was resistant to American trends, and to an extent still is, although there are now a much greater number of American-style Political Scientists, and Political Science Departments, in the UK than there once were.

Of equal importance in terms of the subject matter of this essay is the fact that in the United Kingdom International Relations has not necessarily been seen as a sub-field of Political Science in the way that is usually the case in the United States. The largest International Relations departments in the UK were formed as free-standing entities, established around named Chairs that were not located within departments of Politics and Government – indeed, most of the largest Departments of International Relations are still separate from Politics (Aberystwyth, St Andrews, Kings College London, LSE, Sussex). This has implications that are not simply bureaucratic or administrative; the self-understanding of the discipline of International Relations in the UK is not as a sub-field of Political Science, but as an eclectic field of study, drawing on the study of History, Law and Philosophy and well as that of Politics.²⁴ This provided for International Relations an additional layer of defence against the

encroachment of American formal theorising and quantification – and to give informal support for this generalisation it can be noted that those Universities where International Relations does not have a separate institutional identity have been most open to American methods (in which context see Oxford, University College London and Warwick as well as Essex).

Put these facts together and the apparently paradoxical developments outlined in the previous section of this essay begin to make more sense. The intellectual environment of the 70s and 80s was favourable to the rise of the ‘justice industry’ with all its implications for international theory because these new cosmopolitans were methodologically congruent with the new Political Science. The history of political thought, on the other, was a less-valued activity, surviving on the margins rather than occupying centre-stage in an intellectual world where science was the watchword. The work that was done to create the discourse that became International Political Theory drew on the work of members of the justice industry, but its more conventional studies of the history of international thought were based in International Relations rather than Political Science, and were disproportionately British in origin because International Relations, especially International Relations in Britain, was less focused on formal theorising than the wider discourse of Political Science. Interestingly, while the term “International Political Theory’ is widely used to describe this new orientation in the UK, in the US university courses covering similar material will often be taught under the rubric ‘Ethics and International affairs’, a more limiting description of the new discourse – the same terminology can be observed in the International Ethics Section of the (American) International Studies Association, and in the leading American journal in the field, *Ethics & International Affairs* the journal of the Carnegie Council for Ethics and International Affairs. In any event, thus it was that a new discourse emerged in the 1980s, the character of which is worth examining in more detail.

International Political Theory and the History of Political Thought

International Political Theory emerged as a distinct discourse in the 1980s, distinct, that is, from both International Relations theory, which was becoming increasingly defined in terms of causal theory and from Political Theory which was increasingly formal and abstract, divorced from the kind of historical research that had characterised earlier generations. In short, from the 1980s onwards three discourses existed in a field that once contained only two, but it is important to note that the boundaries between these three discourses were permeable and never clearly defined. Thus, for example, some 'classical' realists who rejected the neo-positivism of structural realism could easily be seen as International Political Theorists and, at the other end, as it were, of the new discourse, analytical political theorists who addressed international issues might well also turn their minds towards domestic topics – Charles Beitz comes to mind in this context, the writer of a seminal book on *Political Theory and International Relations* but also of works on democratic theory.²⁵ Also, some topics were such that all three discourses were engaged at one time or another – 'human rights' would be the most obvious example here, and also perhaps the notion of 'just war'. Still, although the boundaries may be hazy International Political Theory does have a distinctive core, and has developed a set of outlets for its work – most obviously the *Review of International Studies, Ethics & International Affairs*, and, more recently, *The Journal of International Political Theory* (although, of course, good work turns up elsewhere as well).

The point about International Political Theory, which applies even if the discourse were to be more loosely defined than it is above, is that it provides a home for work in the history of international thought that neither of the other two discourses can offer. Initially, as noted previously, much of this work came from International Relations scholars, but as time went by it became less and less the case that one could usefully classify the participants in this discourse by their origins. For those who are keen on pigeon-holing, International Political Theory is generally understood as a sub-field of International Relations but the people who created it are increasingly hard to classify and might not think of themselves as part of this wider discourse. Some of the most interesting writers in the field exemplify this point – Michael Walzer, for example, is a leading

authority on the Just War and a famed defender of a liberal nationalist approach to political communities, on both counts a major figure in International Political Theory, but someone who, if he could be brought to self-identify, would most likely simply describe himself as a political philosopher.²⁶

It is also important not to disregard some of the less intellectual factors that lead to the growth of International Political Theory, especially in the UK in the 1980s – Pierre Bourdieu’s study of *Homo Academicus* may have focused on French intellectuals, but the basic point that developments in academic life are rarely simply driven by intellectual factors hold more widely.²⁷ The 80s were a time of great financial stringency for Universities in the UK, and academic posts in political theory were very hard to find; International Relations, on the other hand, was booming, led by student demand – predictably, the result was that young scholars who, as political theorists, found themselves virtually unemployable but who had any kind of interest in the international were given a very strong positive incentive to rebrand themselves as international political theorists. International Political Theory was also reinforced by post-structuralist and feminist writers in the late 1980s, and by early constructivists. These were sub-fields of International Relations that were regarded very unfavourably by the neo-positivist mainstream, and, on the principle that the enemy of my enemy is my friend, they naturally gravitated towards the new discourse – in the case of the first two groups at least this alliance did not last long, but constructivists remain closely akin to international political theorists. More clearly, the rebranded and revived ‘English School’ – the successors to the British Committee of the 1950s – became part of the discourse of International Political Theory more or less by default. English School theorists, by simply continuing to do what they had always done, found themselves increasingly slipping away from the mainstream of International Relations.

One could continue to try to delineate the new field more or less indefinitely but the key point is that whether one wishes to think in terms of a new discourse or not, there is now a body of work in the history of international political thought that is superior in quality to the work being done 40 or 50 years ago, and which

has found an audience in the un-policed borderlands between Political Science and International Relations. In this essay the term International Political Theory is used to characterise this borderland but whether this characterisation is accepted or not, this work exists and is read. In the framing document from which this essay originated, Noel Malcolm is quoted as describing the standard (IR) interpretation of Hobbes as 'fixed and ossified' and perilously close to caricature. Malcolm's credentials as a Hobbes scholar are unquestionable, but not so this judgment; in recent years scholars such as David Armitage, Will Bain, David Boucher, Raia Prokhovnik, Gabriella Slomp, and Michael C. Williams have written extensively and creatively on Hobbes demonstrating that IR's interpretation of Hobbes is by no means either fixed and ossified or anything resembling a caricature.²⁸ Similarly the recent interest in the origins of international law and the so-called Westphalia system has produced decidedly un-caricatured accounts of figures such as Grotius, for example the work of Renee Jeffery, as well as highly nuanced accounts of political thought in the seventeenth century, particularly notable is Edward Keene's analysis of the non-European origins of the 'European' states-system.²⁹ Just war is another topic which has benefited from recent scholarship both building on the tradition, on which see, for example, the work of Cian O'Driscoll, Tony Lang and John Williams, and subverting it by reading it through the lens of modern analytical political philosophy; here Jeff McMahan and David Rodin are exemplary figures.³⁰ And, bringing the history of international thought closer to the present, figures such as Duncan Bell and Ian Hall have done much to clarify our understanding of Victorian and twentieth century international thought.³¹ The list of fine examples of scholarship could be extended, but the point is clear, there is a lot of very good work being done in International Political Theory today, more specifically the history of international thought, and the contrast in quality with the kind of work done a generation or two ago is quite striking. The kind of divide described earlier as present in the 1960s doesn't exist in the same way today. International Relations and Political Thought are no longer divided into separate silos in the way they once were; International Political Theory has provided a bridge between these discourses, and – the analogy here would be

with the Medieval London Bridge upon which houses and shops were built – not just a bridge but also a home for a particular kind of writing that crosses borders.

And there's the rub. The very success of International Political Theory in providing a home for work on the history of international thought has reinforced the tendency of mainstream International Relations to regard this discourse as essentially marginal to its conception of the discipline. Here is a real contrast with the 1960s; at that time the leading figures in International relations on both sides of the Atlantic were firmly committed to the importance of the history of international thought, but their account of that history came perilously close to caricature. Now, we have developed a much more impressive body of scholarship on the history of international thought, but most of the leading figures in the wider discipline have very little interest in this work. To put things in the language of contemporary economics, there is a solid demand for high quality work that brings together International Relations theory and the history of political thought and a plentiful supply of high-quality works that meet this demand– but this is a niche market, no longer at the centre of the discourse of International Relations. To return to the question that opened this essay, the history of political thought has a great deal to contribute to the study of international relations, and indeed is already making a substantial contribution – but the audience for this work is relatively limited, and will remain so all the while that the high ground of the discipline is occupied by formal theorists and quantifiers.

¹ See e.g. David Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012) and Lucian Ashworth, *The History of International Thought: From the Origins of the Modern State to Academic International Relations* (London: Routledge, 2014).

² Brian Schmidt, *The Political Discourse of Anarchy: A Disciplinary History of International Relations* Albany, (NY: State University of New York Press. 1997); Nicholas Guilhot, *The Invention of International Relations Theory: Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011).

³ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Moral Man and Immoral Society* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1932); Martin Wight *Power Politics* (London: R.I.I.A Pamphlet, 1946); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (NY: Alfred Knopf, 1948; John Herz, *Political Realism and Political Idealism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951); Herbert Butterfield, *Christianity, Diplomacy and War* (London: Abingdon Press, 1953); C.A.W. Manning, *The Nature of International Society* (London: Macmillan, 1962); Arnold Wolfers, *Discord and Collaboration* (Baltimore MD: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1965).

⁴ See Mackinnon, D.M. (1966) 'Natural Law' in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1966) and for context, Tim Dunne *Inventing International Society* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 1998).

⁵ Martin Wight, 'Why is there no international theory?' in Butterfield and Wight *Diplomatic Investigations* op. cit. p.9

⁶ F. H. Hinsley, *Power and the Pursuit of Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1963). Hinsley's work contained many valuable insights into the history of the European states-system, even if his account of Kant was inadequate.

⁷ Martin Wight, op. cit. 1966, p.28

⁸ Terry Nardin, *Law, Morality and the Relations of States* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1983) is an explicitly Oakeshottian account of international society, compatible with, though only marginally influenced by, that of the English School; see also Nardin *The Philosophy of Michael Oakeshott* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania University Press, 2004). Robert Jackson *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) is a paid-up member of the English School (though, as is traditional, without actually being English).

⁹ For Strauss's influence see the essays in Steven B. Smith *The Cambridge Companion to Leo Strauss* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

¹⁰ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1970).

¹¹ John Rawls, *The Law of Peoples and The idea of Public Reason Revisited*. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1999).

¹² Brian Barry, *The Liberal Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972); Charles Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1979); Thomas Pogge. *Realizing Rawls*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989). These authors disagreed on much else, but were unanimous in the view that Rawls had got the international dimension of his theory badly wrong.

¹³ Chris Brown, *International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).

¹⁴ Charles Taylor, *Hegel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975); Michael Walzer, *Just and Unjust Wars* (New York: Basic Books, 1977, 5th ed. 2015).

¹⁵ Andrew Linklater, *Men and Citizens in the Theory of International Relations* (London: Macmillan, 1982).

¹⁶ Michael Doyle, 'Kant, Liberal Legacies and Foreign Policy', Parts I and II, *Philosophy and Public Affairs* (12) 1983, pp 205-35 and 323-53.

¹⁷ Mervyn Frost *Towards a Normative Theory of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

¹⁸ W.B. Gallie, *Philosophers of War and Peace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978).

¹⁹ J.G.A Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1975).

²⁰ Charles Taylor 'Interpretation and the Sciences of Man' *The Review of Metaphysics* 25, (1) 1971, pp. 3-51; William E. Connolly, *The Terms of Political Discourse* (London: Basil Blackwell, 1974); Smith, op.cit.

²¹ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*. 1st ed. (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 1979); Robert O. Keohane, (ed.) *Neorealism and its Critics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986).

²² As early as 1959, Bernard Crick set out a critique of American political science and a defence of the British institutionalist and historical approach to political studies: Bernard Crick, *The American Science of Politics: Its Origins and Conditions* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959).

²³ C.P. Snow *The Two Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1959, Reissued with an Introduction by Stefan Collini, 2012).

²⁴ On which see Chris Brown 'The development of International Relations theory in the UK: traditions, contemporary perspectives, and trajectories' *International Relations of the Asia-Pacific*, 11 (2), 2011. Pp. 309-330.

²⁵ Beitz, 1979 op. cit. and *Political Equality: An Essay in Democratic Theory* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1989).

²⁶ Walzer, op. cit. (1977/2015). For an overview of his work see Chris Brown 'Michael Walzer' in Michael T. Gibbons et al *Wiley- Blackwell Encyclopedia of Political Thought* (London: Blackwell, 2014).

²⁷ Pierre Bourdieu, *Homo Academicus* (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press, 1990).

²⁸ Armitage op. cit. (2012); Will Bain, 'Thomas Hobbes as a Theorist of Anarchy: A Theological Interpretation' *History of European Ideas* 4 (1), 2015, pp 13 -28; David Boucher, *Political Theories of International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) Raia Prokhovnik & Gabriella Slomp, (eds.) *International Political Theory after Hobbes* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011); Michael C. Williams, 'Hobbes and International Relations: A Reconsideration' *International Organization* 50 (2), 1996, pp. 213 – 236.

²⁹ Renee Jeffrey, *Hugo Grotius in International Thought* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

³⁰ Anthony F. Lang, Anthony, Cian O'Driscoll, and John Williams, (eds.) *Just War: Authority, Tradition, and Practice*. (Washington DC: Georgetown University Press, 2013); Jeff McMahan, *Killing in War*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); David Rodin, *War and Self-Defence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

³¹ Duncan Bell, *The Idea of Greater Britain* (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007); Ian Hall. *Dilemmas of Decline: British Intellectuals and World Politics 1945 – 75* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2012).