

A critical-sympathetic introduction to Linklater's odyssey: Bridge over troubled (Eurocentric?) water

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Abstract

This article provides an 'engaged' introduction to this forum on Andrew Linklater's recently published book, *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems*. I call this 'engaged' because I seek to adjudicate between the critics and Linklater's book in the hope of building a bridge over troubled water. Given that the key word that underpins many of this forum's contributions is Eurocentrism, I explore whether, and if so to what extent, Linklater's book is Eurocentric. While I too identify various Eurocentric cues, I also provide various defences for Linklater. In particular, the final section advances two definitions of Eurocentrism and anti-Eurocentrism. Although I identify elements of 'Eurocentrism I' (the elision of non-Western agency and reification of the West) in his book, Linklater might respond to the principal forum complaint that he accords little or no role to non-Western actors and processes in the Western or global civilizing process by appealing to an alternative anti-Eurocentric approach: 'anti-Eurocentrism II' (which focuses squarely on Western imperial power and ignores or heavily downplays non-Western agency). I close by critiquing his left-liberal cosmopolitan politics, arguing that his Eurocentric-universalist normative posture cannot create the kind of peaceful and harmonious world that he (and Kant) so desires.

Keywords

Eurocentrism; Eliasian Historical Sociology; English School; Cosmopolitanism; Civilizing Process; Civilization/Barbarism

Introduction

Despite my earnest objective to elicit a plurality of opinions in this forum on Andrew Linklater's new book, *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems*,¹ which comprises the second volume of his trilogy on 'harm in world politics',² most of the contributors have converged strikingly around a critical and highly coherent consensus on what they see as the central problem of the book: a Eurocentric conception of world politics. This critique is advanced by Zeynep Gülşah Çapan, Alan Chong, Julian Go, and L. H. M. Ling, though George Lawson chimes in too. Admittedly, for a book that has the words 'civilization' and 'the Western states-systems' co-existing in its title, it is perhaps not entirely surprising that many of the participants have alighted on the potential issue of

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¹ Andrew Linklater, *Violence and Civilization in the Western States-Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

² The first volume being: Andrew Linklater, *The Problem of Harm in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Eurocentrism, though to the extent that they have done so took even me by surprise. Accordingly, this introductory article will explore the question as to whether and, if so to what extent, Linklater's book is Eurocentric. And while I shall certainly endorse some of the critics' claims, my aim is to engage in a critical-sympathetic dialogue with them as I do with Linklater's book. For I remain convinced that there is much that is seminal and quite brilliant about the book. Thus my aim is to act as a bridge between Linklater and this forum's participants – or to act as a 'via media' to use the favoured English School phrase – in the hope of taming the waters that at times rage torrentially. That said, though, given the treacherous waters that envelop this forum, my hope of building a bridge over troubled water might well turn out to comprise but wishful thinking on my part!

So while I too identify various Eurocentric problems in the book I want to take a rather different tack to that of many of the contributors. I have read a lot of Linklater's work over several decades now and it's always struck me that finding a clear path to landing the Eurocentric critique, as is my wont, never quite opens up. In the case of the present book I think that it works in a two-dimensional intellectual space; and it is the second dimension wherein so much of what Linklater writes, I feel, cannot be cast in bald, Eurocentric terms. This is because the second dimension reflects a core modus operandi (MO) of *interstitiality* and *ambiguity/ambivalence*. For Linklater writes at times in ways that are reminiscent of traditional historians and poststructuralists, even if he fits into neither of these academic communities. And it is this interstitial, liminal space or vortex in which he roams that makes his book so fascinating, while making critiques appear *at times* to be akin to bashing a square peg into a round hole given the presence of various important *anti*-Eurocentric cues that I identify within the book. Moreover, in the final section of this article I will offer up a different conception of Eurocentrism to the one that I and some of the forum participants deploy, which threatens to turn the whole debate on its head.

Clearly, then, my general MO does not follow the conventional path that introductions tread given that I want to engage rather than summarise the debate that the critics initiate with Linklater. My hope, though, is that this produces a deeper and more engaging way of introducing the book and the key arguments of the forum's participants than had I adopted the standard reportage or 'passive-voice' descriptive-convention (that is, brief anodyne description of the book followed by even briefer descriptive summaries of the forum articles). But then this is no ordinary 'self-restrained' forum. For I should issue a strong word of warning to this forum's readership: buckle up now as you are in for a roller-coaster ride given the highly critical and at times highly passionate nature of some of these articles.

The article comprises seven sections. The first considers those arguments that various contributors make that are not specifically addressed in the *analysis* of this introductory article. The second section considers the five core strengths of Linklater's book as I see them, while the third specifies the contours of Eurocentrism, which provides a base or reference point for the subsequent analysis. The fourth section considers the first, and indeed principal, contribution of the book – specifically Linklater's historical-sociological 'stadial' model of harm and the civilizing process as it unfolds within Europe. And the fifth considers the second core contribution, specifically Linklater's analysis of the dark side of the civilizing process, which, I argue, constitutes a postcolonial critique of Western civilization. The sixth section considers whether Linklater's stadial model of ethical progress is as Eurocentric as this forum's critics suggest, while the seventh provides an alternative definition of Eurocentrism (what I call 'Eurocentrism II'), which his approach might be primed to critique and which provides a means for Linklater, should he so desire, to turn the tables on his postcolonial-inspired critics. However, while I offer Linklater various defences to his critics, I should warn him in

advance that the Conclusion constitutes a 'sting in the tail' (assuming, of course, that the preceding sections provide him with no headaches and that I have read his politics correctly!). For there I question whether his left-liberal cosmopolitan *political* framework can successfully deliver the world to a more peaceful and harmonious future given my belief that it is founded on a Eurocentric universalism, which advocates as a vital prerequisite the imperialist formula of culturally converting the Rest to that of Western civilization.

To be or not to be Eurocentric – is that the question?

The one problem of my core analytical focus that considers whether Linklater's book is Eurocentric is that it crowds out some of the other arguments and focal points that preoccupy various contributions. There is also one particular non-Eurocentric theme that I choose to highlight here rather than in the subsequent analysis. I shall consider four articles, beginning with Stephen Mennell's. Pointedly, he rejects the claim that Linklater and Elias suffer from Eurocentrism. Most significantly for the purposes of this forum, he is a world-leading Eliasian historical sociologist, who provides a brilliant introduction to the approach of Norbert Elias so as to furnish the uninitiated IR reader with the background to Linklater's historical sociological project. He also reflects on the fit between Linklater and Elias in the second half of his article, closing with a tantalising discussion that reflects the more pessimistic analysis that Elias is well-known for (among historical sociologists),³ by asking whether the present liberal cosmopolitan phase of IR is not in reality one of 'cosmopolitan irresponsibility'.

The joint article by Richard Devetak and Tim Dunne makes no mention of Eurocentrism. They provide a nice blend of sympathetic and critical considerations while also contextualising the book within Linklater's career dating back to 1982. Their key focus lies in their critical reflections on Linklater's position vis-à-vis the English School (ES). And the core of their critique interrogates Linklater's analysis of the post-1945 era, specifically his claim that the relationship between violence and civilization has been transformed significantly, especially in the last few decades. They critique this by arguing that progress in terms of protecting global international society has been less impressive than Linklater would have us believe; notwithstanding, I would add, the points that there is still a long way to go so far as Linklater is concerned and that for him there is more to international responsibility than ES pluralists hold but rather less than ES solidarists presume. That said, though, Devetak and Dunne rightly point out that Linklater equates the establishment of new progressive harm conventions since 1945 as part of an identifiable solidarist thrust. And they argue, by contrast, that pluralist tendencies within global international society predominate over those of solidarism, such that sovereign states and great powers still hold sway over the enactment of key global harm conventions, including humanitarian law, R2P, and the universal jurisdiction for international crimes (cf. Mennell).

George Lawson occupies a liminal space in that while he does not present his arguments within a postcolonial framework, nevertheless many of his criticisms dovetail with those made by the post-colonial critics (as I reference throughout this introductory article). But his article is far broader in its range and Lawson situates himself within the nexus of global historical sociology, relational sociology, and transnational history. Here I want to signal five core themes that his article considers. First, Linklater is described as an 'untimely historical sociologist' in part because of his prime focus on Europe's actions in the world, which Lawson associates with the bygone era of Oswald Spengler and Arnold Toynbee. Second, Lawson views the fit between Elias and the English School as awkward, if not incompatible, given the former's relational approach and the latter's substantialism.

³ On this see Linklater, *The Problem of Harm*, p. 178.

And, although Lawson's own preference lies with a relational approach, nevertheless he views Elias's analysis as problematic given that his discussion is too top-down, wherein psycho-genetic changes associated with the civilizing process first occur within the aristocracy via their place in court society before later diffusing down to the lower orders. All of which, Lawson laments, tends to reify elite white European men while eliding any bottom-up effects associated with subordinate groups, whether they be white males, women, or non-white people more generally. Third, he views Linklater's general approach as substantialist on account of the fact that for Linklater the European states-system is bounded and self-constituting rather than being embedded within global processes. Thus Lawson argues that Linklater fails to incorporate a principal insight into relational thinking in that the book proceeds from units (Western civilization) to interactions whereas a relational approach reverses this sequence. And because he views Elias's approach as relational and Linklater's as substantialist, so this suggests an awkward, if not irreconcilable, fit between them. Fourth, Lawson concurs with the postcolonial critics' central claim that history is not unidirectional as in the flow from the West to the non-West, but comprises a 'messy, interactive series of events and experiences that prompts multilineal developmental pathways'. Fifth, and last but not least, Lawson finds Linklater's periodicity problematic on the grounds that while for Linklater a key rupture occurs with the Italian city-states-system in the fifteenth century, Lawson by contrast identifies the nineteenth century as the key moment of the European- and global-transformation.⁴

Finally, while Alan Chong is critical of various Eurocentric tendencies that he detects in Linklater's book (as I record throughout my piece), here I want to highlight his provocative, non-Eurocentric analysis of the civilizing process within precolonial Southeast Asia that he advances in the long final section of his article. His core claim is that the civilizing process within Southeast Asia provides a counter-example to that which Linklater identifies in the Western states-systems. Linklater's prime focus is on how the brutal modalities of warfare deployed by various European states-systems were mitigated by the civilizing process that sought to 'tame the warrior'. Chong, by contrast, argues that because the Southeast Asian civilizing process was guided by 'culture' that mitigated brutal warfare from the outset, so there was no need to find a way of 'taming the warriors'. More specifically, for Chong 'culture' in Southeast Asia refers to processes of cultural assimilation and adaptation through volition, example, and familiarity. Critically, 'culture' cannot be understood in monoglot terms because it takes on hybrid forms as a result of the inter-mixing of peoples with different cultures; a syncretic process which is driven by seaborne travellers – merchants, pilgrims, monks, migrants, and sojourners. Most significantly, Chong suggests that culture as the driver of the civilizing process in Southeast Asia might be extended to consider such processes in East Asia, South Asia, Africa, and Latin America. And if so, this presents the European civilizing process not as the universal but as the 'provincial exception' that has little application in the wider world. Which means that should Linklater enquire subsequently into civilizing processes in the non-Western world he will not find them if he applies the ontological categories that he deploys in his analysis of the Western states-systems. For on Chong's reading the implication is that only a Gestalt Switch will allow Linklater to reveal and trace non-Western civilizing processes.

Five core strengths of Linklater's *Violence and Civilization*

I am convinced that this book is a highly original and seminal contribution. In my thirty-plus years of studying historical sociology I have never read anything like this, and I have read a great deal over very wide areas in this time. That Linklater draws on Elias and the English School does not make

⁴ See Barry Buzan and George Lawson, *The Global Transformation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

this, in the derogatory phrase of our imaginary traditional 'fox-like' historian,⁵ 'merely a grand synthesis'. Rather, it tells a highly original story that takes historical sociology as well as the 'historical sociology of IR' down entirely new pathways. To reveal this I identify five core strengths of the book.

Having begun my career steeped in Eliasian historical sociology, I am hugely impressed by the way Linklater has advanced this genre into areas that his posthumous mentor was, I think, under-resourced to achieve. In particular, Elias's conception of the international states-system was based *for the most part* on an implicit and simplistic neorealist approach which, if nothing else, leads into a minefield of contradictions for his historical sociology; a deep problem that is known to Linklater but regrettably not to Elias and many Eliasian sociologists who, it seems, have not ventured into the world of the 'historical sociology of International Relations' where such a message can be found.⁶ Linklater, by contrast, avoids such pitfalls through his *non*-realist historical sociology. And, in this regard, it seems to me that one of the posthumous-Elias's protégés has earned his right to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with his mentor. At the same time, by analysing social processes Linklater has given sociological depth to the work of Martin Wight and other pluralist ES theorists in ways that they could not have achieved, not least because they tended to black-box the state (that is, treating the state as a unitary actor). Overall, then, Linklater does not simply 'synthesise' Eliasian historical sociology with ES theory but he adds dimensions to both these approaches that produces something that goes beyond them. This is the first significant achievement of the book and it is truly monumental.

The second core achievement is the sheer depth and scope of his project. Julian Go chimes in here in a puff-like clip stating that the book's 'breadth is staggering. This is a *tour de force* of historical sociology that will rightly be taught and read by scholars and students for years to come.' By way of analogy, I remain as impressed to this day as I did in 1986 when I first read Michael Mann's epic first volume of *Sources*, for its massive chronological scope (3500 BCE through to 1760 CE) and above all, for the deftness and virtuosity of his sociological touch, alighting on key moments and processes and bringing them together in ways that in aggregate tell a huge and significant story.⁷ Linklater's chronological scope is also of epic proportions, running from Ancient Greece through to the early twenty-first century – covering some 26 or 27 centuries – give or take the odd century! And he too displays a deftness and virtuosity of touch that I find as impressive as Mann's. Moreover, Mann's first volume covered 549 pages, Linklater's 564. The latter has 65 pages of bibliography comprising some 1,476 references and 26 pages of index. All of which marks this book as an exceptional, if not a phenomenal, work of scholarship. So if Linklater will forgive the awful pun, in this respect at the very least, his book represents all that is 'noble' in our higher education system.

The third major achievement is that while Linklater wears his once-proud critical-theory mantra very lightly in the present volume, nevertheless I think that Alan Chong is quite correct to say that Linklater's new book 'demonstrates not only continuity with the cause of critical theory ... [b]ut also

⁵ See Isaiah Berlin, *The Hedgehog and the Fox* (London: Orion Books, 1992).

⁶ See, for example, George Lawson, 'The promise of historical sociology in International Relations', *International Studies Review*, 8:3 (2006), pp. 397–424; J. M. Hobson, 'Reconfiguring Elias: Historical sociology, the English School, and the challenge of International Relations', *Human Figurations*, 1:2 (2012), available at: {<http://quod.lib.umich.edu/h/humfig/11217607.0001.206/-reconfiguring-elias-historical-sociology-the-english-school?rgn=main;view=fulltext>}.

⁷ Michael Mann, *The Sources of Social Power* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).

a great deal of humanity.’ The fourth major achievement runs on from the third; one that speaks to an important postcolonial theme. For as I explain in the fifth section, Linklater brings out the civilization/barbarism discourse in ways that extend both Eliasian historical sociology and post-colonial analysis into new areas. Following Edward Said,⁸ most postcolonialists focus on the development of the ‘civilization/barbarism’ discourse as it was constructed after about 1750 in Europe, though occasionally they go back to 1492 and the invention of America.⁹ But I learned a great deal from Linklater’s discussions of this construct as it played out in pre-1492 ‘European’ states-systems/international societies. Finally, the fifth major achievement, which speaks to the themes of interstitiality and ambiguity, concerns the basic proposition of his historical sociological enterprise wherein his MO is to tease out the presence and development of harm conventions which have been crowded out or rendered invisible by dramatic, headlining claims of cruel and brutal modalities of warfare. This applies to his analysis of the motor of ethical development or the civilizing process within Europe (as well as the aforementioned analysis of West/non-West imperial relations). Because his historical sociological model of the civilizing process coupled with his analysis of European imperialism comprise the core of Linklater’s book I shall consider them in some detail in separate sections. But before doing so it is necessary to outline precisely what I mean by Eurocentrism in order to help guide the reader through the subsequent postcolonial analysis.

Specifying the contours of ‘Eurocentrism I’

Because the issue of Eurocentrism is a key feature of most of this forum’s pieces and because there is so much confusion as to its meaning within the IR community at large, it is vital that the reader is absolutely clear about this concept from the outset. Significantly, my own preferred formulation has the advantage of capturing that which is deployed by the postcolonial-inspired critics in this forum. As mentioned in my introduction, an alternative definition is available, which produces a radically different take to the consensus-definition that is adopted here (though I reserve its discussion for the seventh section). But to preface this I refer to two definitions: ‘Eurocentrism I’, which downplays non-Western agency in the making of the West and of global politics (as outlined here); and ‘Eurocentrism II’, which focuses purely on the elision of the structural, imperial power of the West in global politics. Significantly, perhaps the most common misconception is that Eurocentrism implies a rigid focus on the West such that the antidote is to focus on the non-Western world instead. But it is perfectly possible to write a long book that focuses solely on Asia or Africa while advancing a Eurocentric narrative. For what matters are the analytical categories that are deployed. What then are these?

‘Eurocentrism I’ comprises three core properties. The first is the *radical prising* or *splitting apart* of ‘East’ and ‘West’, which is coupled with the elevation of the latter given its allegedly superior rational traits and the demotion of the former with its supposedly irrational culture and institutions, thereby yielding the familiar binary of the civilized West over the barbaric and savage East. This Eurocentric imaginary deploys a *substantialist* ontological conception of the West and the Rest (or what Julian Go calls the ontology of ‘civilizational isolationism’), in that both are seen as autonomous, self-constituting entities such that all relational, or mutually reciprocal, global-interconnections between them are rendered entirely invisible. Thus East and West are separated by an imaginary line

⁸ Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 1978).

⁹ See, for example, Antony Anghie, *Imperialism, Sovereignty and the Making of International Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Brett Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2009).

of 'civilizational apartheid' or a 'civilizational frontier' that is embedded in what Boaventura de Sousa Santos refers to as 'abyssal thinking' (as Çapan explains in her article),¹⁰ all of which is captured in Rudyard Kipling's famous mantra, 'Oh East is East and West is West and ne'er the twain shall meet.'

This flows into the second core property of 'Eurocentrism I', which entails what I call the Eurocentric Big Bang theory of modernity and of world politics (BBT). This comprises a two-step narrative. In the first step the Europeans single-handedly create a capitalist and sovereign-state system within Europe as a result of their rational-institutional and cultural exceptionalism. This operationalises what I call the Eurocentric 'logic of immanence', where the *exceptional* nature of European culture and institutions is such that Europe's self-generating development into modernity or civilization, which unfolds within Europe with no help or constitutive influence from the non-West, is deemed to have been inevitable; that it was but a *fait accompli* from the outset.¹¹ All of which is found in its purest form within Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment stadial models of development.

The endogenous story that is narrated in stadial models of development can, in effect, be related through the Oriental(ist) Express metaphor of the Eurocentric logic of immanence. Here the developmental train sets off from Ancient Greece and, having passed through Ancient Rome gathering pace all the while, steams through European feudalism/Latin Christendom via the Italian way-station that was marked by its city-states system and the commercial and financial revolutions of the post-1000 era as well as the fifteenth-century Renaissance, before the progressive train tracks north-westward up to the Netherlands and Dutch hegemony, and thence British industrialisation and the Pax Britannica via the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Significantly, none of these stations and wayside halts is non-Western. Instead, this is a linear journey that takes the passenger on an exclusive tour of Europe. Critically, for the most part, such a 'progressive' journey could not have been undertaken by the 'East' given its alleged regressive, irrational institutions and culture such that it is deemed reasonable – or 'common-sense' – but to dismiss all non-Western achievements outright.¹²

Having completed the first step so the second flows on ineluctably, whereupon the West expands outwards to remake the Rest so far as possible in the image of the West. This, then, is a one-way diffusionist model, or what Julian Go refers to as 'metrocentric diffusionism', in which all progressive processes in the world – or the global civilizing process – emanate and radiate out from the hyper-agential West. Accordingly, this story presumes a pristine, autonomous West that monopolises economic, political, and ethical developmental agency, while the best hope for the passive, agency-less Eastern Sleeping Beauty lies waiting for her dashing Western prince to arrive via the imperial civilizing mission to wake 'her' up with a gentle kiss so that she too can come to enjoy peace and prosperity by embracing democracy, human rights, civilization, and capitalism (otherwise known as 'the white man's burden').¹³ As various critical contributors of this forum make clear – specifically

¹⁰ Boaventura de Sousa Santos, 'Beyond abyssal thinking: From global lines to ecologies of knowledges', *Review*, 30:1 (2007), pp. 45–89.

¹¹ J. M. Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics: Western International Theory 1760–2010* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), chs 1, 13.

¹² But see fn. 13.

¹³ Nevertheless, there is also an *anti-imperialist* Eurocentrism that grants, albeit a highly qualified, notion of developmental agency to non-Western societies (to which I return in the Conclusion); see Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, ch. 3. And herein lies a potential anti-Eurocentric cue for those Eliasians who want to argue that the civilizing process also occurred in non-Western states-systems/societies

Çapan, Chong, Go, Lawson and Ling – the antidote lies in getting behind this monological imaginary by revealing that which Lawson emphasises as the ‘relational theme’: specifically those dialogical and interstitial ways in which the non-West also shapes the West as much as vice versa, which on the one hand restores a certain level of agency to non-Western actors that has been rendered invisible through the performance of a Eurocentric sleight-of-hand or conjuring trick, while revealing the West as a ‘hybrid amalgam’ rather than an autonomous, self-constituting entity on the other.

Finally, the third core property of ‘Eurocentrism I’ is the rendering of Western imperialist actions as invisible. This finds its clearest expressions in liberalism and neorealist hegemonic stability theory, as well as for the purposes of this article, pluralist and solidarist conceptions of ES theory. Given that these latter theories emerged after the ‘1945 watershed’, in which the previous mode of explicit or ‘manifest Eurocentrism’ gave way to ‘subliminal Eurocentrism’,¹⁴ so they utilise an imperialist-politics that is expressed in subliminal terms that dare not speak their name. Neorealist hegemonic stability theory speaks of ‘hegemons’ rather than Anglo-Saxon imperial powers, while ES solidarists talk about ‘humanitarian interventionism’ rather than neo-imperialism. And ES pluralists such as Hedley Bull and Adam Watson refer to the innocent sounding ‘expansion of [Western] international society’ which, it turns out, embodies the twin-imperial rationale of bringing ‘order’ to global international society and the cultural conversion of non-Western societies to that of Western civilization.

In sum, these are the three basic properties or criteria of ‘Eurocentrism I’ and in what follows I shall consider *inter alia* whether and to what extent Linklater’s key arguments conform to them, not least by adjudicating between my reading of his book and the critics’ interpretations. Thus having sketched the contours of Eurocentrism so the next two sections will map out the two core contributions of the book in turn.

Linklater’s seminal ‘historical sociology of harm’ in International Relations

The first and principal contribution of the book problematises the standard reportage of the conduct of warfare in premodern European states-systems, which is presented as one of unmitigated cruelty and barbarism. Interestingly, Elias subscribed to this view particularly with respect to Ancient Greece and Rome as well as Latin Christendom. By contrast, Linklater’s core ‘interstitial MO’ is to get behind this dramatic headlining claim to reveal the humdrum development of *impermissible* modes of violence (while not losing sight of permissible modes of violence). That is, he reveals the ethical harm conventions that lead to self-restraint in warfare. One reason why he tracks back to Ancient Greece is because he wants to show how certain harm conventions laid out there became a legacy-portfolio that was picked up by subsequent European states-systems, which then took these forward to ever-higher thresholds before in turn passing on their legacy to future generations. Thus with each passing stage we witness a shift to deeper commitments to harm conventions (or conventions involving self-restraint in inter-state relations), even if this occurs in unpredictable and uneven jumps, through accelerations rather than ruptures as well as through reversals via decivilizing processes, as opposed to following a purely linear teleology (as Mennell also notes). Moreover, unlike

on the condition that local contexts and cultural-specificities are taken into account – as Chong and Mennell argue in this forum (see also Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, p. 14) – and that these also impact the Western- and global-civilizing processes.

¹⁴ Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, pp. 319–25.

Elias, Linklater analyses not individual societies but intra-European international societies. Thus the story begins in Ancient Greek international society before proceeding through various intra-European international societies in chronological order: Ancient Rome, Latin Christendom, the Renaissance Italian city-states system, and the Westphalian sovereign states-system.

However, one critical ontological-methodological issue needs to be resolved before proceeding. As noted in the first section, Lawson argues that Linklater's theoretical apparatus rests on a substantialist rather than a relational ontology as well as a methodological nationalism. Other participants also view his project as decidedly non-dialogical in that there is a lack of analysis of co-constitutive dialogical processes wherein the non-West shapes the West and vice versa. But if we hone in on Linklater's analysis of the various *European* states-systems we encounter an *intra-European* dialogical process, which implies that at this level of analysis a relational ontology is in play. I argue that what we have, then, is a relational and dialogical analysis *within* Europe that rests principally on a methodological regionalism, coupled with a comparative analysis of intra-European states-systems over the *longue durée* (though as I explain later, the critical issue that his critics raise is whether this dialogical and relational analysis is carried over to, or is cashed out at, the global level – that is, does he adopt a substantialist conception of the West at the global level?). How then does this play out in Linklater's discussion of the intra-European civilizing process?

Chapter One considers the Hellenic civilizing process, which witnessed hoplite military forces bound together by aristocratic principles of restraint. Of note is that campaigns of gross brutality only applied to three decades that occurred specifically during the Peloponnesian War. Moreover, the notion of 'taming the warriors' in the post-Homeric Greek polis later influenced medieval notions of chivalry as well as the later European civilizing process. In Chapter Two he focuses on the Roman Empire and reveals behind the headlining assumption of brutal warfare various ethical restraints vis-à-vis its civilized neighbours, comprising the establishment of diplomatic exchanges and the concluding of formal peace- and bilateral-treaties. Still, these are not over-played given that diplomacy as a permanent practice would have to await the turn of Renaissance Italy. Also important was the creation of a 'just war' tradition, which was coupled with an emergent tradition of legality that originated in *Ius Fetiales*. And, a key legacy of Roman Law that was transmitted to subsequent European international societies was the Stoic affirmation of the moral obligation to avoid unnecessary harm. Again, he emphasises the upholding of aristocratic notions of honour and that Roman aristocratic values were vital in promoting self-restraint, which emerged from an 'aristocratic elite that had little or no experience of war and little sympathy for those who had in an increasingly "civilian society"'.¹⁵ All of which underpinned a 500-year long peace – the longest that Europe has ever known. However, it requires emphasising that Linklater is not trying to justify Greek or Roman military behaviour in some kind of retrospective Whiggish history. For he emphasises that Roman notions of *humanitas* via the Stoics justified simultaneously imperial expansionism as a 'civilizing mission', designed to (paternalistically) uplift the barbarians beyond the Roman frontier; a point that I return to in the next section.

The story is carried forward in Chapter Three's analysis of Latin Christendom, where despite Elias's claim that violence was a constant factor in everyday life, Linklater reveals numerous harm conventions that were established simultaneously. Some of these derived from the Catholic Church, which sought to condemn cruelty and 'tame the warriors'. Again we find the passing on of previous harm conventions wherein, for example, the Church alighted upon Roman notions of *urbanitas*.

¹⁵ Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, p. 93.

This is succeeded in Chapter Four by the Renaissance Italian city states-system, which marked an acceleration in the general European civilizing process. The fear of the Ottoman Empire led to a greater reliance on embassies and permanent missions within Italy. In essence, Renaissance Italy bequeathed to future European generations, particularly the Westphalian states-system, a number of vital international institutions and practices – the balance of power and diplomacy in particular.

Linklater moves on in Chapter Five to the modern Westphalian states-system that took the earlier achievements much further, in large part through the process of state-led pacification. Here he alights upon many of the arguments that Elias made while adding to these by drawing on the ES and some of the key arguments that were made by E. H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau. With regards to Elias, these relate principally to the state-formation/state-centralisation process. Thus he focuses on the role of the Military Revolution (1550–1660) and the rise of a centrally-supplied professional standing army which, unlike its predecessors, no longer needed to pillage the land for supplies. Above all, echoing Elias,¹⁶ he emphasises the crucial role of the Royal Court. For having sucked the nobility out of the feudal provinces where they had previously held predominant political and military power, they then became civilized within the Royal Court such that the ‘nobility of the sword’ gave way to the anti-militaristic ‘nobility de robe’. Here the intra-European civilizing process takes on a further dialogical moment in that the norms of civilized, self-restraint diffused outwards from the French royal court to socialise nobles throughout Western Europe. In addition, humanist works such as those penned by Erasmus were key vehicles by which nobles learned to become civilized; a process that extended subsequently to the lower stratas as they emulated aristocratic manners. All of which is marvelously and indeed hilariously brought to life in Elias’s brilliant first volume of *The Civilizing Process: A History of Manners*.¹⁷

Linklater adds to this the familiar list of institutions and normative practices first articulated by Martin Wight, Hedley Bull, and Adam Watson: the balance of power, great power management, sovereignty, diplomacy, and international law. This is supplemented by Linklater’s drawing on E. H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau: specifically their argument that from 1648 through to the nineteenth century Europe was dominated by the ‘aristocratic international’ (Morgenthau) or the ‘monarchical international’ (Carr).¹⁸ By this they meant that Europe was socialised by aristocratic norms of politeness and self-restraint, which mitigated warfare between European states. So Linklater adds to Elias here by reflecting on the interconnection between the civilizing process and the international relations between European states (as Mennell also notes).

However, many of this forum’s contributors identify a potent sting in the tail – specifically a virulent dose of Eurocentrism that infects Linklater’s model. It seems clear, as Lawson also argues, that Linklater has developed a *stadial model* of ethical development – which is, incidentally, in part why Lawson describes it as ‘untimely’; notwithstanding my points that this is no ordinary stadial model, as I explain later, and that I do not mean to imply that for Linklater ethics takes on an autonomous, pace-making role in the international system. Notable here is the forceful point made by Ling: that in

¹⁶ Norbert Elias, *The Court Society* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983 [orig. pub. 1969]); Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994 [orig. pub. 1939]).

¹⁷ Elias, *The Civilizing Process*, pp. 1–256. Of the countless examples that Elias discusses, here are two excerpts from Middle Age treatises on table manners: ‘[i]t is unseemly to blow your nose on the tablecloth’; and ‘[d]o not spit over or on the table’; cited on pp. 118, 125.

¹⁸ E. H. Carr, *Nationalism and After* (London: Macmillan, 1945); E. H. Carr, *The New Society* (London: Macmillan, 1951); Hans J. Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1978 [orig. pub. 1948]).

Linklater's stadial model '[t]he Western states-system thus transforms itself by itself for itself. No one or nothing else is involved or needed.' No less strikingly, Çapan claims that Linklater's stadial model embodies a linear story of progress that is guided by a Western triumphalist teleology (cf. Lawson). In essence, Eurocentrism emerges according to Çapan, Chong, Go, and Ling, from his almost complete elision of non-Western constitutive inputs into European ethical development; those very things that Linklater mentioned *en passant* on p. 227 as 'having no space to discuss'.

Which means that on the critics' reading, Linklater's model imputes the Eurocentric logic of immanence such that ethical progress is based on developments that occur *within* Europe. If so, then his stadial narrative might be captured by the Oriental(ist) Express metaphor, which plies a path that sets off from Ancient Greece and, having passed through Ancient Rome and Latin Christendom, picks up pace as it steams through the Renaissance Italian city-states system and thence Westphalian Europe before heading up through the Enlightenment and thence to global civilizing processes via the European way-stations of imperialism and the Nazi Holocaust. This can also be expressed in terms of an intra-Western relay race metaphor, in which the baton of ethical progress is passed from one aforementioned Western runner to the next, with the post-1945 anchorman closing in rapidly on the finishing line but not as yet crossing it. So the issue that the rest of this article will consider is whether Linklater's critics are correct to identify his model as fundamentally Eurocentric.

Linklater's postcolonial contribution to the critique of Western civilization

One of the problems with assessments of Linklater's Eurocentrism is that his stadial model is in one significant respect embedded in a postcolonial analysis of the civilizing process. Here Julian Go is surely correct to note that Linklater takes into fundamental account the postcolonial theme of the dual-nature (or two-faced nature) of Western civilization and the civilizing process. This, then, in my view comprises a core contribution to the postcolonial critique of Western civilization. For as Linklater asserts, the civilizing process refers to a Janus-faced set of phenomena: first, the development of European images of cultural superiority over non-Europeans (the postcolonial theme); and second, conceptions of self-restraint that exist in *all* human societies (that is, a potentially non-Eurocentric theme).¹⁹ The second meaning suggests that civilizing processes are not unique to European international society (as Mennell also argues), while the first, of course, reflects the standard argument of postcolonialism which focuses firmly on the two-faced nature of Western civilization (or what Linklater usefully terms its 'double standard of morality').²⁰ In this conception the Europeans come to treat each other in respectful, 'self-restrained' ways because they are deemed to be civilized and are, therefore, awarded the privilege of sovereignty supposedly at Westphalia. By contrast, the Europeans treat the Other in highly disrespectful and oppressive ways because they are dismissed as uncivilized – as barbaric or savage. Accordingly, they are denied the privilege of sovereignty and are viewed as ripe for European imperialism. All of which is standard fare for postcolonialists.

As I noted in the second section, Linklater not only *speaks* to this postcolonial theme but he *advances* it further because IR postcolonialists have not considered it in the pre-1492 context. Moreover, he advances this postcolonial theme in considerable detail for each of the various European international societies that he singles out. For example, he argues that the mass killings that occurred in Ancient Greek times were based on this binary construct which, he claims, foreshadowed the later

¹⁹ Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, p. 8, fn. 1.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

European colonial genocides. But even here, behind the grotesque headlines of mass-killing Linklater's interstitial MO reveals a simultaneous process of colonial self-restraint in that the Greeks had to engage in 'compulsory cooperation', whereby Alexander the Great sought to bridge the cultural divide between Greek, Macedonian and Persian elites through mutual trust and respect in order to cement imperial relations in place. Furthermore, while the Catholic Church was a key civilizer of the aristocracy within Latin Christendom, nevertheless he emphasises that it also justified 'malicide' – that is, the extermination of the Islamic 'infidel'. Thus he insists that feudal-Christian ethical harm conventions and the 'Peace of God' did not extend to the Islamic other, as the tragic slaughter of Muslims (and Jews) during the Crusades testifies.²¹ Moreover, when considering the European states-system after 1648 Linklater is clear that the intra-European civilizing process had as its flip-side the notion of conquering, plundering, and exploiting non-Western peoples through empire.²²

All of which suggests that there is no glossing over the dark imperial side of the civilizing process, quite the contrary. Moreover, Linklater's argument is that the intra-European civilizing process did not come first and imperialism subsequently, but rather that they co-existed simultaneously finding their place on both sides of the same civilizational coin. Noteworthy too is his point that European elites often likened domestic savages to external savages.²³ All of which is, once again, standard fare for postcolonialists. Thus Linklater provides a refreshing take on the ES, particularly vis-à-vis Hedley Bull's and Adam Watson's unequivocally Eurocentric account of the rise and expansion of European international society insofar as it elides the Western imperial process.²⁴

Not only is there no Eurocentric elision of imperialism in his book – as is consistent with the third criterion of 'anti-Eurocentrism I' – but it also means that Linklater's stadial model of the civilizing process is embedded firmly within the *external process* of imperial oppression and the exploitation of the non-European Other. And, this in turn means that Linklater's stadial model does *not* rest on a purely internalist model of ethical development that accords with the Eurocentric logic of immanence. Notable here is Linklater's claim that Elias fails to consider how the civilizing process was 'influenced by ... contacts with colonized peoples'.²⁵ Moreover, he chastises Elias and the English School for failing to consider the three fundamentally entwined constitutive processes that underpin the civilizing process: state-building, the waves of European colonial expansion, and the evolution of international society.²⁶ So far, so good. But so far as this forum's critics are concerned, the clinching issue revolves around the need to demonstrate how the colonial encounter engaged non-Western voices and processes and how these played some kind of causal-constitutive role in shaping or informing the civilizing process within Europe. For what is at stake here is whether Eurocentrism ultimately underpins his historical-sociological stadial model.

To be or not to be Eurocentric – that is the question

Many of this forum's contributors believe that because Linklater ignores the *voices, actions, and influences* of colonized peoples within the European civilizing process, so any postcolonial cue that I have identified above is ultimately headed off at the pass. Ling argues perceptively that such voices

²¹ Ibid., pp. 137–47.

²² Ibid., pp. 226–51.

²³ Ibid., ch. 6.

²⁴ See Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, pp. 222–33.

²⁵ Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, p. 233.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 434.

and actions are denied a constitutive role because for Linklater the motor of ethical development within Europe is founded ultimately on a process of European *Self-rectification* (or auto-rectification) to the exclusion of *Other-rectification* processes. This implies that violent and repressive actions taken against the non-Western Other are later auto-rectified by the West, in what amounts to a kind of internalist, Polanyian 'double-movement'. Ling as well as Çapan, Go, and Lawson are all highly critical of this self-rectification process in which Linklater's MO is to focus on the humanitarian responses issued by *Europeans* rather than non-Europeans vis-à-vis the atrocities associated with European empires, the slave trade, and the Nazi Holocaust. Put simply, they are critical of Linklater's excessive or monological focus on Western humanitarian voices as constituting the driver of the civilizing process to the exclusion of the relational/dialogical point that it is precisely the interconnections between Western and non-Western voices, actions and processes that are key. So I shall interrogate this complaint by considering Linklater's account of the humanitarian responses to black slavery and the Nazi Holocaust as they subsequently impacted upon the civilizing process.

The immediate question concerning Linklater's analysis of the abolition of black slavery is whether non-Western actors find a causal-constitutive place.²⁷ For his critics point to the absence of slave revolts and slave voices, which, they argue, impacted significantly upon the European Abolition movement. Çapan, Go, and Ling point to the Haitian revolt against empire, which informed the direction that the French Revolution took and ultimately forced the French to abolish slavery throughout its empire. Such arguments provide examples of a genuinely transnational and global dialogical process that interrupts the endogenous European logic of immanence. While it is true that Linklater mentions the influence of black slave testimonials, specifically those issued by Olaudah Equiano and Ottobah Cugoana in Britain as well as Frederic Douglass and Nat Turner in the United States,²⁸ these appear as too little, too late for his critics. Which leads to the conclusion that the global-dialogical process whereby the 'empire speaks back' is drowned out by the deafening European humanitarian-voices that drove abolition.²⁹ Moreover, Lawson argues that Linklater's (seemingly) reaffirming pat on Europe's back for in effect finally doing the right thing by the slaves is unwarranted given that slavery was superseded by the use of *indentured* Indian and Chinese labour, which one writer refers to as 'a new system of slavery'.³⁰ Thus the abolition of slavery was but a pyrrhic humanitarian victory given that in the subsequent course of events one mode of white domination was replaced by another.

While I agree with the critics that there is a lack of non-Western constitutive inputs in Linklater's account of abolition, nevertheless it is notable that he covers the exact-same points raised by Lawson. Thus Linklater asserts that '[t]he greater reliance on indentured migration schemes in the aftermath of the legal abolition of chattel slavery demonstrated that abolition was a first step towards eliminating a specific form of human slavery rather than a historical endpoint.'³¹ And far from providing a gloss to abolitionism Linklater concurs precisely with the conclusion that the movement against slavery should not be mistaken for support of the principle of genuine human equality and,

²⁷ Ibid., pp. 245–61.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 257.

²⁹ Interestingly, Craig Murphy tells me (in private correspondence) that the Quakers and Wilberforcians who pushed for the abolition of the slave trade were following the intellectual leadership of African men and women.

³⁰ Hugh Tinker, *A New System of Slavery* (London: Hansib, 1993).

³¹ Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, p. 260.

moreover, that abolitionism was tied to ‘benevolent paternalism’. Critically, these points converge with a further claim, derived once more from his subtle, ambivalent and interstitial MO, which concurs with the aforementioned postcolonial conclusion. Thus he asserts that

[t]he defence of systems of tutelage because of their supposed civilizing function is clearly hard to reconcile with the thesis that [Western] humanitarian motives drove the movement towards slave emancipation. It would seem to lend support to the contention that societies swing from one mode of domination to another as opposed to following an upward curve towards higher levels of freedom, as proclaimed by nineteenth-century discourses of progressive modernity.³²

Accordingly, just when the critics claim to have identified an unequivocally Eurocentric argument in Linklater’s book, his narrative almost immediately unsettles, or at least qualifies, this ‘finding’. And typically, as in Linklater’s discussion of abolition, a similar thing happens when we examine his arguments concerning the humanitarian response to the horrors of Nazism.

In Chapter Nine Linklater argues that Nazism constituted a dramatic reversal of the civilizing process – comprising a deeply ‘decivilizing process’. The key question, once again, is whether it was the shame and horror that the Holocaust elicited within the *Western* international community that was wholly responsible for spurring on, in an urgent way, new global civilizing processes in its aftermath, or whether non-Western voices, actions, and processes also played an important role. Missing here, Lawson insists, are the considerable contributions made by non-elite white voices – that is, women, unruly publics, and the global campaign for human rights – while the postcolonial critics lament the missing role of non-Western peoples such as the anti-colonial nationalist movements, all of which in aggregate helped enable these new global civilizing processes to emerge and thereby informed the broad humanitarian contours of the post-1945 world.

In his final chapter, Linklater argues that the earlier dramatic distinctions between white and non-white societies, or ‘self/other relations’, have been rendered less pernicious over the *longue durée*, though he insists that the process is still far from complete. However, this narrowing but not erasure of difference, Linklater asserts

clearly cannot be explained simply in terms of ‘moral progress’ *within* Western societies. They were brought about by [non-Western] ‘emancipation struggles’ ... As integral parts of that process, anti-colonial struggles... were influenced by multiple forces A deep awareness of contradictions between imperial domination and European social and political ideals – and of the paradoxical expectation that colonized peoples would defend ‘civilization’ in the two world wars – developed in that environment.³³

So while Linklater’s critics lament the absence of non-Western voices as having a constitutive ontological impact on the European civilizing process, at least in the aftermath of the Holocaust this statement provides something of a corrective (as Go also concedes). Moreover, Linklater reinforces this further, adding that

Counterhegemonic [that is, the third world nationalist] movements illustrated how the participants in [colonial] emancipation struggles can accumulate *significant power resources* and secure moral and political legitimacy by turning the dominant ideologies against those who claim to live in accordance with more ‘civilized’ principles. Those modes of [non-Western] resistance

³² Ibid., p. 259.

³³ Ibid., p. 445, emphasis added.

also demonstrate how the ethical sensitivities... acquired relative autonomy ... and influenced directions of change within Europe and in the wider world.³⁴

Still, the critics' likely reply here, explicit in the case of Go's and Ling's article, is that these statements constitute but rare 'qualifications' such that they fail to satisfy the key criterion that they are searching for: the *sustained* existence of a relational, dialogical set of interactions between the West and non-West, in the absence of which the charge of Eurocentrism remains in tact. Thus because there is little emphasis on the actions and agency of non-Western peoples, so his critics believe that the high road out of the Eurocentric citadel becomes blocked off.

Moreover, this still leaves unresolved the question as to whether Linklater's analysis conforms to the *second step* of the Eurocentric BBT – that is, is his analysis of the global civilizing process akin to a pure Western diffusionist model? Or, put differently, does Linklater advance a substantialist conception of the West in world politics? Here Linklater appears to be on thin ice. For as he put it:

[I]t is entirely valid to describe the expansion of international society as evidence of how almost all peoples have been incorporated in a society of states that is governed by standards of self-restraint that can only be understood as direct offshoots of the European civilizing process. The point is not that non-European peoples have become more 'civilized' in some normative sense but that they became entangled in a global civilizing process that originated in Europe.³⁵

And interestingly, even Mennell chimes in here by arguing that Linklater's discussion of the global civilizing process 'skates a little too close to representing the global process as diffusionist from Europe', cautioning simultaneously that Elias 'stressed the possibility of "separate [civilizing process] tendencies [outside of Europe]"'. Which means that Linklater's approach likely conforms to the second step of the BBT and thereby operationalises a substantialist conception of the West in world politics. So where in the round does all this leave us with respect to the Eurocentric charge?

The rise of 'Eurocentrism II'

To clarify the considerable complexity of the issues that are at stake here, the forum's critics essentially make the argument that Linklater's stadial model of the civilizing process is underpinned by the endogenous Eurocentric logic of immanence (understood as being consistent with the first step of the Eurocentric BBT). This is qualified, I have argued, by the fact that the imperial encounter with non-Western societies also informs directly the intra-European civilizing process, even if I agree that Linklater could have made much more of the impact of non-Western voices, actions and processes (as I discuss at the end of this section). And, moreover, I have argued that his analysis of Self/Other relations that underpinned European imperialism in history is consistent with postcolonial analysis. Nevertheless, it seems that Linklater's model conforms to the second step of the Eurocentric BBT and its associated substantialist conception of the West in world politics.

However, at this point I want to discuss a possible reply that Linklater might want to make to his critics that I signalled earlier. For he might feel that to bring in non-Western voices, actions and processes so as to disturb and undermine both steps of the Eurocentric BBT might be unwarranted on 'anti-Eurocentric grounds'. Yes, the reader has read this correctly: *anti-Eurocentric grounds*.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 445, emphasis added.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 442.

Such a response, of course, would issue from a radically different conception of Eurocentrism to that which has been deployed by his critics in this forum (all of whom interrogate ‘Eurocentrism I’). Elsewhere I have identified what I am calling here the critique of ‘Eurocentrism II’,³⁶ which can be found in its most explicit form in two key articles, one by Immanuel Wallerstein and the other by Alina Sajed and Naem Inayatullah.³⁷

Wallerstein, in particular, argues that my definition of anti-Eurocentrism (and that which is deployed by this forum’s critics) is in fact Eurocentric such that the self-proclaimed anti-Eurocentrics turn out to be ‘avatars of Eurocentrism’. What might seem to be a perplexing, if not bewildering, position emerges from several points, the principal one being that bringing in non-Western agency and showing how it affects and shapes Western civilization and global politics/economics leads into a kind of moribund liberal pluralism, in which all actors across the world have some kind of determining input into the wider world beyond them. Wallerstein is adamant that non-Western agency should be discarded if we are to develop an effective anti-Eurocentric critique of the West. In essence, ascribing agency to the non-West is problematic because it *dilutes* the picture of an imperialist West that Wallerstein is so anxious to prosecute in the critical-academic court of social justice.³⁸ Thus we must not compromise the absolute dominance of the West in the world with *fuzzy* and what can only be *weakly consequential* conceptions of non-Western agency, for ‘[i]f we insist too much on non-European agency as a theme, we end up white-washing all of Europe’s sins, or at least most of them.’³⁹ Accordingly, for Wallerstein *anti-Eurocentrism* entails, nay demands, a substantialist conception of a hyper-agential imperialist West, which must be rendered immune from the dialogical impact of relational interconnections with so-called non-Western agents and processes. Nevertheless, there is some wiggle-room here in that Sajed and Inayatullah accept that non-Western agency should not be discarded altogether. All in all, the inversion that Wallerstein as well as Sajed and Inayatullah effect means that the (Eurocentric) BBT is now embraced as the foundation of their critique of Eurocentrism and the West (that is, ‘anti-Eurocentrism II’). And critically, this inversion threatens to turn the present forum debate on its head.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, I do not share this view of anti-Eurocentrism, seeing in it a form of ‘critical Eurocentrism’ because it ends up telling yet another story, albeit a critical one, of why the West is supreme and why the non-West is irrelevant.⁴⁰ But as it is articulated by the recognised postcolonial scholars, Sajed and Inayatullah, it is legitimate to treat it as one possible definition; and I suspect strongly that there are many other critical IR scholars who might subscribe to this view. In essence, ‘Eurocentrism II’ could be defined as a metanarrative that seeks to deny or elide the exploitative and repressive power of Western capitalist imperialism in the world, the antidote to which (that is, ‘anti-Eurocentrism II’) lies in revealing the absolute centrality of the imperialist West in world politics

³⁶ J. M. Hobson, ‘The “R-word” and “E-word” controversies: a dialogue with my five interlocutors’, *Post-colonial Studies*, 19:2 (2016), pp. 210–26.

³⁷ Immanuel Wallerstein, ‘Eurocentrism and its avatars: the dilemmas of social science’, *New Left Review*, I:226 (1997), pp. 93–108; Alina Sajed and Naem Inayatullah, ‘On the perils of lifting the weight of structures: an engagement with Hobson’s critique of the discipline of IR’, *Postcolonial Studies*, 19:2 (2016), pp. 201–9.

³⁸ Cf. Michael Mann’s response to the Eurocentric charge; see George Lawson, ‘A conversation with Michael Mann’, *Millennium*, 34:2 (2005), p. 483.

³⁹ Wallerstein, ‘Eurocentrism and its avatars’, p. 102.

⁴⁰ For a fuller response to ‘anti-Eurocentrism II’, see Hobson, ‘The “R-word” and “E-word” controversies’, pp. 211–17. And for a fascinating, related discussion, see Deniz Kuru, ‘Historicizing Eurocentrism and Anti-Eurocentrism in IR: a revisionist account of disciplinary self-reflexivity’, *Review of International Studies*, 42:2 (2016), pp. 351–76.

while downplaying, or even erasing all, traces of non-Western agency. Seen in this light it might be the case that criticisms of Linklater's so-called elision of non-Western agency in favour of a story that highlights the imperialist actions of the West might accord with 'anti-Eurocentrism II' (though I emphasise the point that the critics of 'Eurocentrism I' clearly do *not* seek to elide or deny the role of Western imperialism).

However, this potential cue comes with a caveat. For one potential obstacle that Linklater needs to confront if he is to adopt a critique of 'Eurocentrism II' in order to defend himself against his postcolonial critics is that his book focuses in part on progressive moral/political development in the world *after* the European imperial moment.⁴¹ Thus because the critique of European imperialism/neo-imperialism tends to drop out of his analysis of the post-1945 world, so this weakens or undermines his 'anti-Eurocentric II' credentials. Against this obstacle, however, is the point that Linklater devotes only two Chapters (Ten and Eleven) to analysing progressive development after 1945. Which means that for the vast bulk of the book (Chapters One through Nine) his critique of 'Eurocentrism II' could be relevant, though the question remains as to whether he could realistically apply it to the post-1945 world. Either way, though, how might such a critique of 'Eurocentrism II' play out in Linklater's thinking in the *historical* context?

As we have seen, many of the critics argue that Linklater's narrative is Eurocentric because it places hyper-agency in the hands of privileged, elite-European (especially aristocratic) white males, thereby marginalising the roles of non-whites in the non-Western world. And the critics want, nay demand, an analysis that brings the marginalised peoples in from the dark and distant periphery. However, I suspect strongly that Linklater's reply – were he to follow the critique of 'Eurocentrism II' – might be that it is not him but the power of these white metropolitan elites themselves who have dismissed, and rendered all but silent, these marginalised voices; or equally that it is not *his* book but the historical record that is Eurocentric. To deny this and criticise Linklater, he might argue, is merely to shoot the messenger. Worse still, it is to dilute the massive power disparities between the West and the Rest! For isn't the very cause of critical theory to reveal the structures of power and global power-disparities in the world? Moreover, he might follow Edward Said by arguing that there is a strong case for an *internalist* (intra-European) reading of how the *idea* of civilization developed,⁴² as it was advanced by elite white males (and, I would add, occasionally white females) for other white males for the export market, such that non-Westerners had no real say or influence in any of this. And he might claim that to think they *should* be written into the record is to overlook the aforementioned massive global power disparities.

However, by the same token, if Linklater wants to downplay the constitutive impact of non-Western actors and processes then the logical upshot is that relational, dialogical interactions between the West and non-West are unimportant for him. Which means, as his critics have insisted all along, that his approach really is about a 'self-generating' West that developed through the endogenous logic of immanence before expanding outwards through imperialism and the global civilizing process, whereupon it sought to civilize the world through its own 'self-rectification process'. In short, the inevitable upshot of this is that Linklater's approach conforms to both steps of the Eurocentric (I) BBT.

At this point I want to pre-empt one possible reply that Linklater might make to this charge: that the postcolonial critique, which characterises his account in terms of the Eurocentric BBT, errs by

⁴¹ I thank one of the reviewers for pushing me on this point.

⁴² Said, *Orientalism*.

assuming that his book is about the ‘Rise of the West’, whereas all he is seeking to do is to trace, much more narrowly, the emergence of civility and the idea of civilization within Europe. However, this potential manoeuvre, which seeks to avoid the ‘Eurocentric I’ charge by quarantining or sequestering the civilizing process from the Rise of the West, is problematic for two reasons. First, for Elias as well as Linklater, the civilizing process was embedded within the state-formation process. Elias argued that rulers sought to relocate the nobles from their provincial settings into the centre (in the royal court) where they could both be controlled and ‘civilized’, the ultimate purpose of which was to undermine their previous political, military, and fiscal institutional power-base which they had accrued from their feudal position in the provinces (given the feudal ruler’s lack of infrastructural reach into society and the associated lack of centralised bureaucratic and military institutions).⁴³ In short, this process was akin to replacing the notion of feudal ‘parcellised sovereignty’ with that of centralised state sovereignty. And because state-formation was a fundamental component of the Rise of the West so the civilizing process cannot be sequestered from European modernisation. Second, for Elias the civilizing process performed a role that was analogous to Max Weber’s rationalisation process, in that it drove the differentiation of the private and public realms that had been fused together under feudalism. Given that this is a crucial component of modernisation so this means, once again, that the civilizing process is embedded within the Rise of the West. All of which, in turn, means that the critics’ characterisation of his approach as conforming to the Eurocentric (I) BBT holds up.

However, even if Linklater were to concede this he might demand proof that non-Western processes affected or informed the European civilizing process (and the Rise of the West). Here Julian Go’s rhetorical question cuts in: ‘But did the “West” learn absolutely nothing about statecraft or civility from interacting, over centuries and at multiple registers (economic, political, cultural), with these Other societies that all ostensibly developed in isolation from one another?’ – a point echoed by Çapan, Lawson, Ling, and implicitly by Chong. Thus a very brief sketch of how the non-West helped shape the European civilizing process and the Rise of the West seems apposite.⁴⁴

Regarding the Renaissance Italian city-states system and the subsequent Westphalian system, both of which comprised major moments in the deepening of the intra-European civilizing process for Linklater, we encounter the paradox that a fellow-ES scholar, Adam Watson, in an exceptional moment of ‘postcolonial sensibility’ in his classic book, *The Evolution of International Society*, argued that the Ottoman Empire prevented the Habsburg bid for ‘hegemonialism in Europe, thereby helping to preserve that most fundamental of institutions prized by English School scholars – the balance of power’.⁴⁵ Watson also argued that Ottoman diplomatic practices influenced Europe in that ‘[t]he European concept of consulates grew out of relations with the Ottomans, and for instance the first English consulate was established at Aleppo’.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the Italian Renaissance, which features strongly in Linklater’s narrative, owes a colossal debt to the many ideas that were developed by the Middle Eastern Muslims and North Africans, and indirectly to the Indians and Chinese.⁴⁷

⁴³ Elias, *The Civilizing Process*.

⁴⁴ For a full discussion see J. M. Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), chs 5–9, 11.

⁴⁵ Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society* (London: Routledge, 2009 [orig. pub. 1992]), pp. 177–81, 216; see also Alexander Anievas and Kerem Nişancıoğlu, *How the West Came to Rule* (London: Pluto, 2015), ch. 4.

⁴⁶ Watson, *The Evolution of International Society*, p. 218.

⁴⁷ Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*, pp. 173–83; Salim T. S. Al-Hassani, Elizabeth Woodcock, and Rabah Saoud (eds), *1001 Inventions* (Manchester: FSTC, 2007).

Also important is a set of global-dialogical processes that enabled the European civilizing process and state-formation. For both Elias and Linklater note how trade and trading interdependence comprised an important ingredient in European state-formation (see also Mennell, this forum). Critically, 'Europe' since the ninth century was dependent on the east for much of its trade – especially from China, Southeast and South Asia, the Middle East and North Africa – in the absence of which the flow of trade in Europe would have been significantly reduced.⁴⁸ Moreover, Elias and Linklater emphasise the European Military Revolution (1550–1660) in stimulating European state-formation.⁴⁹ But gunpowder, the first metal-barrelled gun firing a metal bullet and the first cannon (the 'Eruptor') were all invented in China between 850 and 1291, all of which diffused across to enable the later European military revolution.⁵⁰ And last but not least, though neither Linklater nor Elias considered European industrialisation, undeniably it was a hugely significant process in that it helped unleash European imperialism in Africa and Asia in the nineteenth century, which, according to Linklater rather than Elias, then informed the European civilizing process. But there were significant Indian and Chinese influences that enabled British industrialisation in the first place, not to mention all manner of colonial inputs.⁵¹

I offer these examples, as does Lawson, Go, and to an extent Chong, as an invitation to Linklater to produce a future narrative that could fully counter the problem of 'Eurocentrism I', which is the source of his critics' ire. But if his preference turns out to be critiquing 'Eurocentrism II' instead, then the aforementioned alternative strategy presents itself. Either way, Linklater is poised at a crossroads that has two avenues open to him.

Conclusion

This whole discussion culminates with the question as to what *politically* is at stake when considering the way forward to bring global politics to heal, though this is also relevant because it is important to Linklater's project. Here I shall reflect critically on Linklater's left-liberal cosmopolitan politics, which is informed to an important extent by his commitment to the 'radical' strand of the Enlightenment,⁵² on the basis of its moral concern for, if not outrage at, distant suffering and for its positive attitudes to indigenous peoples, all of which is coupled with a moral revulsion of the oppressive nature of European imperialism.⁵³ I concur entirely that both Smith and Kant were anti-imperialist and sincerely abhorred European imperialism's repressive nature (notwithstanding the presence of an imperialist slip that emerges in their politics – see below).⁵⁴ Nevertheless, I believe it

⁴⁸ Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*, ch. 2.

⁴⁹ Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, pp. 201–7.

⁵⁰ Hobson, *The Eastern Origins of Western Civilisation*, pp. 59, 186–9.

⁵¹ J. M. Hobson, 'Desegregating IPE' (unpublished manuscript).

⁵² Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, ch. 7.

⁵³ For Smith's and Kant's propensity for anti-imperialism and 'tolerance of the other' see respectively, Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005) and Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003).

⁵⁴ Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, pp. 62–6, 74–8. However, there were other 'radical Enlightenment' thinkers who were *pro-imperialist*, Bishop Abbé Raynal being one whom Linklater locates within this tradition; Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, pp. 293–303. As was Norman Angell despite Linklater's claim that he was 'heir to the radical Enlightenment', *ibid.*, pp. 239–40. See Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, pp. 40–5. My point being that Linklater is in danger of painting the 'radical' strand of the Enlightenment as too monolithic and anti-imperialist as well as too progressive and 'tolerant' of the Other.

wholly problematic to cast Smith and Kant as ‘tolerant’ or accepting of the Other.⁵⁵ Kant was strikingly *intolerant* of all non-Western *societies*, both in his scientific racist treatises and in his (Eurocentric) political writings that avoided scientific racism.⁵⁶ To be clear: it is true that in his political writings Kant’s critique of European imperialism went hand-in-hand with his theory of cosmopolitan right and hospitality.⁵⁷ Notably, in his 1795 essay, ‘Perpetual peace: a philosophical sketch’, Kant approves of the Japanese and Chinese practice of placing heavy restrictions on the entry of European traders since the latter had failed to act peaceably and fairly in accordance with the strictures of cosmopolitan right.⁵⁸ This, alongside other examples,⁵⁹ suggests a tolerance towards the Other. But this should *not*, however, be conflated with a tolerance of (non-Western) societies that are different to that of Western civilization.

When treading the boards of the conventional interpretation of Kant we now drop through a hidden trap door to find ourselves in the chamber of the acrimonious Kant/Herder debate where we encounter Kant’s picture of ‘Dorian Gray’, so to speak. For Kant, *unlike* Herder, was unremittingly scathing of non-European ‘savage’ peoples:

Does [Herder] really mean that, if the happy [savage] inhabitants of Tahiti, never visited by more civilised nations, were destined to live in their peaceful indolence for thousands of centuries, it would be possible to give a satisfactory answer to the question of why they should exist at all, and of whether it would not have been just as good if the island had been occupied by happy sheep and cattle as by happy human beings who merely enjoy themselves?⁶⁰

And in ‘Perpetual peace’ Kant no less forcefully dismissed ‘savage’ societies by asserting that ‘we look with profound contempt upon the way in which savages cling to their lawless freedom ... [and] prefer the freedom of folly to the freedom of reason. We regard this as barbarism, coarseness, and brutish debasement of humanity.’⁶¹ Herder, by contrast, rejected entirely Kant’s Eurocentric assumption that ‘all cultures can be ranked relative to a European norm and that they [must] all develop ... toward the [idealised Western] apex’.⁶² This thrust of Kant’s line of argumentation enables us to appreciate James Tully’s claim that ‘Herder ... presents a cultural pluralism as an alternative to Kant’s cosmopolitan universalism [or Eurocentric cultural monism] on the grounds that all cultures are of intrinsic worth.’⁶³

⁵⁵ Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics*, pp. 66–74, 78–83; Martin Hall and J. M. Hobson, ‘Liberal international theory: Eurocentric but not always Imperialist’, *International Theory*, 2:2 (2010), pp. 210–45.

⁵⁶ For his Eurocentric political writings, see Immanuel Kant, *Kant’s Political Writings*, ed. Hans Reiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970). For three of Kant’s scientific racist tracts, see Immanuel Kant, in Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (ed.), *Race and the Enlightenment* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997), pp. 38–64. Interestingly, although Linklater concedes that Kant held scientific racist views, nevertheless he reiterates Muthu’s claim that these *preceded* Kant’s later political writings on liberal cosmopolitanism; see Linklater, *Violence and Civilization*, p. 278; Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire*, pp. 181–4. But both these sets of writings were penned in the latter part of Kant’s life.

⁵⁷ See also fn. 55; Muthu, *Enlightenment Against Empire*, pp. 187–8, 192; Garrett W. Brown, *Grounding Cosmopolitanism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), pp. 59–66. But see Bowden, *The Empire of Civilization*, pp. 147–8.

⁵⁸ Kant, *Kant’s Political Writings*, pp. 106–7.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 108, 172, 173.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 219–20; also p. 45.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 102.

⁶² James Tully, ‘The Kantian idea of Europe: Critical and cosmopolitan perspectives’, in Anthony Pagden (ed.), *The Idea of Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 344.

⁶³ *Ibid.*

The ultimate problem with Kant's politics, which has passed down to his followers today, is that his Eurocentric 'cultural monism' cannot tolerate or bear the existence of difference from the liberal-civilizational ideal and advocates – most paradoxically given his sincere critique of European colonialism – the imperialist formula that Resterners must simply learn to become like Westerners before we can build a better and peaceful world. That is, Resterners must sacrifice their identities and cultures by culturally converting to the ideal conception of Western civilization. By contrast, the kind of non-Eurocentric *politics* that underpins the critique of 'Eurocentrism I', at least as I see it, seeks to replace the liberal-cosmopolitan conception of the *Western civilizing process* with a non-Eurocentric *global dialogical process*. For this latter process requires that Westerners and non-Westerners engage in empathic, inter-cultural learning/diplomacy in what amounts to an anti-imperialist, mutually reciprocal/dialogical learning-process in order to find 'globally-democratic' ways to advance to a more harmonious future.⁶⁴ Which presents us with the irony: that only through an 'anti-Eurocentric I' form of global-dialogical politics can we realise the grand aim that Kant's Eurocentric cosmopolitanism – which Linklater holds in such great stead – claims to stand for.

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⁶⁴ This is complemented by 'worldism' (derived from Daoism) and the Indian-Dharmic notion of *Sapekshata*; see respectively L. H. M. Ling, *The Dao of World Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2014); Rajiv Malhotra, *Being Different: An Indian Challenge to Western Universalism* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2011).