Review of International Studies (1998), 24, 563–572 *Copyright © British International Studies Association*

Allott in Wonderland

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In his 1995 BISA lecture Philip Allott undertakes a '[reconciliation of] philosophy and international studies',[1] arguing that internationalists are the obvious leaders of the fifth[2] historical moral enlightenment. Their role would be to envision worlds that transcend the prevailing 'naturalistic' view of international phenomena, which mires humankind in morally unacceptable states of affairs. A 'naturalistic' approach misconceives the proper role of academics for whom the sky is the limit. Inspired by Kant's three Critiques, Allott declares 'The mind of pure reason is the mind in wonderland . . . We are all Mad Hatters conceptualizing together.'

Things being as they are, however, Allott rails with passion and wit against the modern university which, in the nineteenth century, assumed the shape (after Nietzsche) of 'the coldest of all cold monsters'. Today's universities, which Allott calls 'Istopias' because they are dedicated to the 'is', are populated with 'isarchs' who shirk their responsibility to empower humanity with morally acceptable alternatives. Modern universities are like the neutered 'medieval monasticism [that] left the world safe for men of action, the cynical manipulators of social systems'. Demoralized, brainwashed students are the casualties of universities.

Nevertheless, one would have to search long and hard for people who have not noticed the world's evils. It it is safe to say the world contains many thinking, feeling people (even including academics) who fervently wish the world were a better place. What prevents professional thinkers from exorcizing the evils of this one? According to Allott, it is a pervasive wrong-headedness, a blinkered view of their mission, and a love of power. Thus the conversation about moral responsibility in international relations is rejoined.

In what follows, I shall address Allott's themes, especially the nature of moral responsibility of internationalists, the power of ideas, and the extent of freedom in the international realm. Generalizing about the voices in this conversation is hazardous; there is much more diversity in international studies than Allott allows. Nevertheless his approach, around which a small, increasingly prominent, group of internationalists cluster, must be reckoned with. Arrayed against Allott are the majority of scholars in the field, many of whom argue that while ethical standards in international relations can and should be higher, the 'is' and 'ought' are inextricably

[1] P. Allott, 'Kant or Won't: Theory and Moral Responsibility', *Review of International Studies*, 23:3 (1997), p. 339, n.1.

[2] The four enlightenments are the ninth-century Carolingian, the twelfth- and fifteenth-century renaissances, and the eighteenth-century enlightenment. Ibid., p. 355.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210598005634 Published online by Cambridge University Press

bound together.[3] This group insist on the unique context in which international politics occurs, setting limits on the possibilities for transcendence, and hold that academics confine their claims to authority to what can be demonstrated according to prevailing social science and/or philosophical canons of authoritativeness. This larger group, with a few notable exceptions,[4] are sceptical of cosmopolitan claims.

Looking more closely at Allott's contentions, the reader is initially left with the feeling that she has missed some premise that entitles Allott to confer moral leadership upon internationalists. The answer is to be found in the broad range of writers whom Allott cites: in addition to Kant who for Allott is pre-eminent (but emphatically not the Kant of more political matters), one finds, among others, Nietzsche, Rorty, Derrida, Ricoeur, Borch-Jacobsen, Weber, and Foucault. What is obvious is the significant presence of 'reflectivists',[5] who, emboldened by challenges to the foundations of human knowledge and the contingency of human existence and history, seek in idiosyncratic ways to undermine modern interpretations of social reality. They generally maintain that arguments as previously understood cannot be constructed because what counts as proof is surrounded by radical uncertainty. At the same time, Allott's neo-Kantian, dizzying optimism and universalism are not typical of reflectivists, who are often seen as 'conservative' and 'irrationalist'.[6]

Allott's central contention is that '[*i*]*s* sentences are acts of power. And acts of power are moral acts. And *is* sentences . . . about ultimate things—God, man, the state, history, life, death, law, love—are acts of absolute power, entailing ultimate moral responsibility.'[7] From this claim flow his belief in the power of professional thinkers and his notions about the kind of world the morally responsible would conceive of. Allott reveals that he is a 'social idealist' who subscribes to the 'interesting conclusion that the proper study of International Studies is humanity', and whose project is the 'redeeming of all-humanity'. Thus his approach appears to combine a radical idealism and critical perspective with postmodern elements.

It is not only contemporary universities, on Allott's account, that are totalitarian, totalizing, and enslaving; the same could be said of the international realm and worlds within states, all of which are inextricably linked. It makes little difference that the totalitarian reality constructed by 'democracy, capitalism, and scitechracy (science and engineering)' is benevolent. The end result is '[m]ore people, more wealth, more law, more socialization of every kind—the relentless degradation of the human spirit as the human body flourishes in health and comfort'. What matters is that this dehumanization is the product of systems for which no-one is responsible. Relying on a neo-Kantian sense of necessity and urgency,[8] Allott warns that '[w]e are living what may be the last days of human self-creating, as humanity

[3] See, e.g., Michael Walzer, 'Against Realism', in Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi (eds.), *International Relations Theory: Realism, Pluralism, Globalism* (New York, 1987), pp. 547–9; and C. R. Beitz, *Political Theory and International Relations* (Princeton, NJ, 1979).

[4] Beitz, *Political Theory*; M. C. Nussbaum et al., *For the Love of Country: Debating the Limits of Patriotism* (Boston, MA, 1996).

[5] See L. Brilmayer, *American Hegemony: Political Morality in a One-Superpower World* (New Haven, CT, 1994), p. 194.

[6] C. Brown, *International Relations Theory: New Normative Approaches* (New York, 1992), p. 218.

[7] Allott, 'Kant or Won't', p. 342.

[8] Cf. I. Clark, *The Hierarchy of States: Reform and Resistance in the International Order* (Cambridge, 1989), p. 56.

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has one last opportunity to say what all-humanity is, and is for, just before all-humanity finally succumbs to its paranoia, trapped in a self-threatening self-made reality, over which it has finally lost control'. Academics can avert this apocalyptic state of affairs by imagining a future in which reason, 'happiness, perfection, immortality, the ideal' reign supreme. Hence the life-and-death power of 'isarchs'. (Getting into the spirit of things, we might call academics who view their calling in Allott's terms 'oughtocrats'.) Any initial appeal of Allott's approach, however, quickly evaporates.

First, Allott's argument appeals to a long-departed, hard-science model[9] of international studies that parallels the natural sciences, implying there is agreement about the field's phenomena and the most fruitful ways of studying them. Allott's notion of naturalism, however, also embraces the 'sinister' view of Quine that 'knowledge, mind, and meaning are part of the world that they have to do with'. But Allott's claim that 'naturalism' reigns in international relations and political science cannot be sustained. Almost thirty years ago, this 'naturalistic' view of political science was ushered out by D. Easton, proclaiming a 'post-behavioral revolution' that eschewed rigorous standards of proof in favour of 'relevance and action'.[10] Easton maintained 'substance must precede technique', and that '[t]he task of post-behavioralism is to break the silence that behavioral language necessarily has created and to help political science reach out to the real needs of mankind in a time of crisis'. Moreover, the 'intellectual must put his knowledge to work', and 'politicization . . . is inescapable as well as desirable'.

From a different angle, C. E. Lindblom and D. K. Cohen[11] unsparingly assess the 'authoritativeness' of 'practitioners of professional social inquiry'. The authors urge that social scientists be more restrained in asserting their authority, acknowledging that reliance on their expertise is only one among many valid approaches to solving social problems. Competitors include 'ordinary knowledge', which includes 'non-scientific or non-professional methods of knowing and analyzing'; 'social learning', which is a hard-won appreciation of reality born of repeated frustration and suffering; and 'interactive problem-solving', such as voting or the playing-out of market forces. Interestingly, moral preferences might well figure in all of these alternatives. Although Allott might well find this non-rational approach uncongenial, it does demonstrate that not all social scientists covet power. Moreover, neither Easton nor Lindblom is peripheral to modern political science, both being past presidents of the American Political Science Association. In 1985 K. Holsti in *The Dividing Discipline* dispelled the idea of a monolithic field of international studies.[12] Today's edited collections often reveal lively cross-sections of epistemological and ethical approaches.[13] The concepts and generalizations of contemporary international relations are so contested, the uncharted areas of reality conceded to be so vast, that there is more than enough room for alternative views.

[9] Ibid., p. 349.
[10] D. Easton, 'The New Revolution in Political Science', in Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi (eds.), *Approaches to the Study of Political Science* (Scranton, PA, 1970).
[11] C. E. Lindblom and D. K. Cohen, *Usable Knowledge: Social Science and Social Problem Solving* (New Haven, CT, 1979).
[12] K. J. Holsti, *The Dividing Discipline* (Boston, MA, 1985).
[13] See, e.g., R. Higgott and J. L. Richardson (eds.), *International Relations: Global and Australian Perspectives on an Evolving Discipline* (Canberra, 1991); and R. Little and M. Smith (eds.), *Perspectives on World Politics* (London, 1991).

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Degrees of freedom

Since claims for the power of ideas exaggerate the existence of freedom in international relations and discount the significance of reality, it is necessary to revisit features of international life affecting freedom and moral responsibility. I begin with Kant's primary preoccupation, the autonomy of individuals essential to their moral development. Within the limits of one's genetic inheritance, life experiences, imagination, and material and political circumstances, individuals exercise varying degrees of freedom. It seems obvious that the greatest amount of freedom can be found among individuals, especially those in liberal democracies. Contrary to Allott, I believe that individuals retain today, in net terms, as great a power of self-transcendence as they have ever enjoyed. In the aggregate, they may have lost possibilities (due to global economic trends, for example), but in light of the breathtaking variety of philosophies of life on offer, at no time have human possibilities been as great. Furthermore, as V. Frankl pointed out, even when faced with a crushing fate, one can choose one's response.[14] This is not to deny that economies, cultures, and societies exert pressures on individuals. But it is to argue that individuals can and do take a stand against those pressures, as Allott does. A major problem for Allott, however, is that most people do not share his preferences and are 'bought off' by liberal capitalism. This, however, is a fact that ought to be taken extremely seriously. In the face of the popular acceptance of systems that for Allott are 'totalitarian', Allott's tack is to invoke a false consciousness that is inherently unfalsifiable and raises doubts about the possibility of human freedom, thus subverting his own project.

Nation-states have the next largest amount of freedom, that affirmed by national self-determination. National groups seek it to promote their distinctive values and play historical roles on the world stage. This aspiration was writ large in Mazzini's Italy and is evident in today's Quebec. There is no doubt that national leadership and policies matter. Countries dealt poor geopolitical hands, for example, have flourished, while other countries have squandered lavish endowments. At the same time, there are obviously more constraints on the freedom of states than on the freedom of individuals. Democratic states must court popular approval for foreign policies and all are compelled to defend their national interests. The realm of international relations is the most lacking in freedom, for reasons that are well known: the inertia of historical forces, including traumatic memories of savagery inflicted by enemies, and conflicting value systems. The most crucial is that state policies express vital national interests, rather than more negotiable preferences affirmed by voters. International relations exhibits stability and continuity, and until their sources are understood, there can be no sense of human possibilities.

Here Weber's view of political/moral responsibility undercuts Allott's analysis. As is well known, Weber contrasted the 'ethic of ultimate ends' with the 'ethic of responsibility'. According to the former, 'The Christian does rightly and leaves the results with the Lord', while according to the latter, 'one has to give an account of the foreseeable results of one's action'.[15] This includes 'the possibility of evil

[14] V. Frankl, *Man's Search for Meaning* (New York, 1984).
[15] 'Politics as a Vocation', in *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, tr. and ed. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (New York, 1958), p. 120.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210598005634 Published online by Cambridge University Press

ramifications'. But Weber goes on to insist that '[f]rom no ethics in the world can it be concluded when and to what extent the ethically good purpose "justifies" the ethically dangerous means and ramifications'.[16] Yet the constrained realm of international relations does not require that statesmen succumb to what Michael Ignatieff calls 'the seductiveness of moral disgust'.[17] In any given crisis, there are courses of action that minimize evil.

Reflectivists seem more at home spinning metanarratives than getting down to cases. Hence, it is instructive to reflect upon humanitarian intervention, formerly called 'intervention on grounds of humanity',[18] which could be considered the most modest claim asserted for 'all-humanity' as well as a limiting case. Its rationale is that, although states' sovereignty ought to be respected because they are responsible for protecting a territory and population, the right to non-intervention is forfeited when a government fails to protect, or turns against, its people. The coherence of such projects, however, was always in question, and already there is a growing sense that their possibilities have been exhausted.[19]

When we turn, moreover, to what other 'reflectivists' might say about Allott's premises, we find ourselves in a quagmire of conflicting views. Neither Nietzsche, Foucault, nor Rorty offers comfort to Allott, Rorty asserting 'that the search for secure grounds in which to anchor moral claims of ethical universalism is the El Dorado of social and political theory'.[20] Nietzsche rejects the idea that moral duties can rest on reason, and Foucault claims that the totalitarianism and barbarism of our century can be blamed on the attempt by claims to universal knowledge to discover a 'core self',[21] thus subverting universal human rights claims seemingly integral to notions of all 'all-humanity'. The 'reflectivists' who subscribe to ethical universalism, such as R. Falk and K. Booth, have their own difficulties, especially their assumption of the possibility of ever-widening solidarity. In one sense, anyone arguing that people have a certain potential is, logically speaking, on the side of the angels, because no-one can say a priori that a particular state of affairs can never occur. On the other hand, this is a slender reed on which to rest contentions that fly in the face of a deep and honestly come-by scepticism about moral progress in international relations, where many doctrines and efforts aimed at such solidarity have resoundingly collapsed.[22]

Totalitarian universities

Allott is especially concerned about the modern totalitarian university, which limits the individual and society's capacity for self-transcendence. Allott, however, grossly

[16] Ibid., p. 121.
[17] Michael Ignatieff, 'The Seductiveness of Moral Disgust', in Michael Ignatieff, *The Warrior's Honour* (Toronto, 1998), pp. 72–108.
[18] M. Ganji, *International Protection of Human Rights* (Geneva, 1962), p. 11.
[19] See C. A. L. Prager, 'Barbarous Nationalism and the Liberal International Order: Reflections on the "Is", the "Ought", and the "Can"', in J. Couture, K. Nielsen, and M. Seymour (eds.), *Rethinking Nationalism* (Calgary, 1996).
[20] N. J. Wheeler, 'Agency, Internationalism, and Intervention', *International Political Science Review*, 18 (Jan. 1997), p. 17.
[21] Ibid., p. 16.
[22] See, e.g., Clark, *Hierarchy of States*; and W. Pfaff, *The Wrath of Nations: Civilization and the Furies of Nationalism* (New York, 1993).

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210598005634 Published online by Cambridge University Press

exaggerates the 'power' of academics, who are keenly aware of the feisty and desirable independence of students who refuse to abdicate their judgment and often compartmentalize their studies from practical political conclusions. (Graduate students may be less critical of what they are taught since their livelihoods depend on their ability to master the 'literature'.) In fact, all but elite universities are marginalizing arts and science faculties by decreasing their curricular importance and funding. This is due not only to the demand by governments and publics that universities should do more to make themselves 'useful', but to students' preferences, according to a study by the Higher Education Research Institute at the University of California at Los Angeles. It found that only 41 per cent of first-year students hoped to 'develop a meaningful philosophy of life' at the university, and 75 per cent hoped that their university training would enable them to 'be very well off financially'.[23] Allott might construe student preferences as evidence of the totalitarian effect of the world economy on the individual, but these preferences cannot be lightly dismissed. The claim of powerful 'totalitarian' universities is, however, a crucial premise in Allott's argument. Does anyone doubt, however, that Allott's proposals would provide the *coup de grâce* to the influence of internationalists?

What does appear 'totalizing' and 'totalitarian' is to co-opt the prestige of university professors for the propagation of radical projects in the face of what would surely be overwhelming opposition from universities, societies-at-large, and students. Max Weber, who saw that the world had been 'disenchanted' and man imprisoned within an 'iron cage' of rationality, had a drastically different conception of the academic's role. Weber famously held that the role of the academic was to familiarize students with the range of views on a subject, and that he would grievously abuse his authority if he exploited his position to indoctrinate students. Indeed, Weber concluded, if his students were able to piece together the professor's values, he would have failed in his moral duty to them. He wrote:

> I deem it irresponsible to exploit the circumstance that for the sake of their career the students have to attend a teacher's course while there is nobody present to oppose him with criticism. The task of the teacher is to serve the students with his knowledge and scientific experience and not to imprint upon them his personal political views. It is certainly possible that the individual teacher will not entirely succeed in eliminating his personal sympathies. He is then exposed to the sharpest criticism in the forum of his own conscience . . .[24]

Weber also maintained that

> '[s]cientific' pleading is meaningless in principle because the various value spheres of the world stand in irreconcilable conflict with each other . . . It is commonplace to observe that something may be true although it is not beautiful and not holy and not good. Indeed it may be true in precisely those aspects. But all these are only the most elementary cases of the struggle that the gods of various order and values are engaged in.

These latter insights, with which Allott might agree, led Weber in a very different direction. In fact, because of the authentic tensions[25] that permeate his thought, Weber is a better guide to moral responsibility in international relations than Kant.[26]

[23] *The Globe and Mail*, 2 Feb. 1998, p. B2.
[24] Weber, 'Science as a Vocation', in *From Max Weber*, ed. Gerth and Wright Mills, pp. 146–7.
[25] This is the interpretation of Weber advanced by W. G. Runciman in *A Critique of Max Weber's Philosophy of Social Science* (Cambrudge, 1972).
[26] Cf. R. B. J. Walker, 'Ethics, Modernity and the Theory of International Relations', in Higgott and Richardson (eds.), *International Relations*, pp. 158–61.

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Another approach to moral responsibility

Even when sharply disagreeing with Allott, there is no need to deny a place for moral ideas in international relations. But there may be more promising ways to reconcile international relations and moral responsibility than his. First, since the devil is in the details, he will not be found in metanarratives. Thus an alternative approach would presuppose making the typically opaque components of meta-narratives more transparent. Deontological norms would seem less helpful than consequentialist ones because of the inevitably applied character of international ethics. Moreover, no elaborate analysis is necessary to enlist common human decency. One can agree with Kant that even when a constructive outcome seems impossible, there is a moral obligation to keep searching for one. But the existential still matters, and a general sympathy with Kant's injunction should not blind us to the fact that in international relations we are hedged about by stubborn realities, and that available options are typically more or less evil.[27] The 'proto-existentialism' of a Max Weber would continue to be an enduring feature of international life.[28]

A persuasive conception of moral responsibility would involve the elaboration of the 'intolerable',[29] although agreement on what it embraces in practice is unlikely. Such a conception would also acknowledge that the use of power in international relations invariably has tragic consequences. It would distinguish between misfortunes and injustices since, as Judith Shklar trenchantly maintained,[30] not all misfortunes are injustices for which identifiable individuals can be blamed. The existence of many decent people supports the importance of moral ideas in international relations. At the same time there is no reason to assume that all decent people will come to the same moral judgments. Never lurking far from Allott's analysis is the *sotto voce* assumption that all right-thinking people would embrace his preferences. M. Kundera rightly called such assumptions 'leftist kitsch'.[31]

Moral responsibility for statesmen would entail the rational and ethical maxim to build on legitimacy when circumstances permit,[32] although judgments about what legitimacy requires and when circumstances are propitious would vary. Such an approach is rational because few states, however elaborate their rationalizations, will admit that they are flouting accepted standards of legitimate behaviour. What is critical is the reconciliation of policies with norms of legitimacy, imposing a floor below which all but diplomatically ostracized states will not be willing to be seen since accountability reinforces moral norms. Overextended conceptions of the moral responsibility of internationalists and statesmen, on the other hand, amount to last-

[27] A related suggestion, recently advanced by M. Walzer, is the distinction between the 'thick' morality of communities and the 'thin' morality of international relations. '[H]umanity, by contrast [with communities], has members but no memory, and so it has no history and no culture, no customary practices, no familiar lifeways, no festivals, no shared understanding of social goods. It is human to have such things, but there is no singular human way of having them.' M. Walzer, *Thick and Thin: Moral Argument at Home and Abroad* (Notre Dame, IN, 1994), pp. 6–8.

[28] Cf. Walker, 'Ethics', p. 136.

[29] Ibid., p. 130.

[30] Judith Shklar, 'Misfortune and Injustice', in Judith Shklar, *The Faces of Injustice* (New Haven, CT, 1990).

[31] Cited by Walzer, *Thick and Thin*, p. 9.

[32] R. Fisher, *International Conflict for Beginners* (New York, 1969), ch. 6.

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ditch efforts to coerce an intransigent reality to conform to one's will. The existence of a cavernous international reality can be confirmed by reality-testing; repeated failures to achieve objectives indicate that reality has been misread.

A palace coup

Allott's lecture concerns not only the vaunted power of ideas, but also those articulating them. If human beings have freedom to reinvent international reality, if one is convinced of the rightness of one's views, and if constructions of reality are acts of power, staging a palace coup to oust the reigning 'isarchs' and install 'oughtocrats' seems justified. It is not clear, however, on Allott's account who, apart from Allott, possesses the proper qualifications. Although power and morality have always been susceptible to unseemly compromises, Allott worries about the abuse of power only when it is in the hands of isarchs.[33] In fact, power is not a word ordinarily associated with academics. Power, *per se*, is political and is typically backed by violence.

If the truth is what the powerful say it is, all powerful individuals like professors are free to enter the mêlée with their claims and preferences. Since radical moral theory goes against the grain, however, all 'oughtocrats' can do is preach to the converted, unless they are prepared to impose their views on everyone else. Reality is neither necessarily good nor admirable, but it exists and deserves to be taken seriously because robust forces keep it in place. Statesmen, unburdened by elaborate academic understandings of these phenomena, make more or less effective decisions based on their understanding of that reality. The reason many internationalists confine themselves to the realm of the 'is', broadly conceived, is that there is a greater likelihood of reaching agreement about what is than about what ought to be. Nor has 'reflectivism' supplanted modern epistemological analyses or the belief that 'consilience' will be found in human knowledge. As the distinguished scientist E. O. Wilson has recently written: 'The enlightenment got it mostly right. The fragmentation of knowledge and the chaos in philosophy are not reflections of the real world but artifacts of scholarship.'[34]

Ultimately the persuasiveness of Allott's view of theory and moral responsibility in international relations depends on the truth of three propositions: first, that mankind is oppressed by dehumanizing totalitarian systems, albeit deliberately chosen and benevolent; second, that ideas have the power to transform international relations; and, third, that it is the moral responsibility of internationalists to envision morally acceptable international relations. While international orders limit possibilities, the international realm is far from totalitarian; to say so is to engage in extravagant hyperbole. Human freedom, especially in liberal democracies, has never been greater. This is not negated by Allott's dislike of the options on the menu. Allott must fall back on a false-consciousness argument, which drastically undercuts claims that anyone accurately understands reality, including himself. Talk of 'false

[33] Intellectuals' exercise of moral responsibility does not have a reassuring track record. See Tony Judt's discussion of the 'golden age' of French intellectuals. Tony Judt, *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals, 1944–1956* (Berkeley, CA, 1992), p. 307.

[34] E. O. Wilson, 'Back from Chaos', *The Atlantic Monthly*, 281 (Mar., 1998), p. 42.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0260210598005634 Published online by Cambridge University Press

consciousness' is often, indeed, a fanfare that precedes coercion and real totalitarianism. As Camus acutely observed, '[m]istaken ideas always end in bloodshed, but in every case it is someone else's blood. That is why some of our thinkers feel free to say just about anything.'[35]

The argument that ideas can radically transform and improve international relations must confront the historical fact that throughout history neither the wide range of ideas about alternative international realities nor their many activists have effectively altered the fundamental features of international life. Until Allott can account for the actual continuity in international affairs and its resistance to change, he can have no understanding of the role of ideas in international relations. Finally, the proposition that academics assume moral leadership in rescuing humanity from totalizing systems similarly falls flat. The assault on the edifice of modern thought has not toppled it. Reliance on modern perceptual and intellectual presuppositions still permits practitioners to effectively navigate the shoals of international affairs. It appears that Allott has advanced a logically flawed, pragmatic argument. Because transcendence cannot be achieved in the present 'naturalistic' approach to international studies, then we must work backward, positing but not demonstrating whatever conditions make transcendence possible.

Neo-'new scholasticism'

For several decades beginning in the late 1950s, political scientists have been engaged in a frenzy of theorizing about theory, so much so that B. Moore called this development a 'new scholasticism'.[36] Theorizing was an exhilarating and prestigious exercise, but at the end of the day often irresponsible since it was typically defended as heuristic, presenting a promissory note that was seldom paid. Now internationalists are beset with a new binge of theorizing, a neo 'new scholasticism' that generates metanarratives that are superimposed on reality to convert sceptics to one's moral preferences. Ultimately, however, neither the theorizing frenzy of the 1960s and 1970s nor that of the 1990s is responsible. Both deflect internationalists from the business at hand: deepening our understanding of our subject matter.[37] That internationalists don't get on with it may be indicative of the fact that we are not yet confident about how to proceed, or that the cultivation of knowledge of international relations is labour-intensive and inspires humility.[38] Although Allott says he wants theory to be morally responsible, it is apparent that what he seeks is power. But power belongs to statesmen whose moral responsibility is to protect national interests while minimizing the evil consequences flowing from their decisions. Internationalists are morally responsible when they teach their students

[35] Cited on frontispiece of Judt, *Past Imperfect*.
[36] B. Moore, Jr, 'The New Scholasticism and the Study of Politics', *World Politics*, 7 (Oct. 1953).
[37] I agree with J. Galtung that the social sciences would accomplish more if they were relatively more idiographic and diachronic. J. Galtung, 'The Social Sciences: An Essay on Polarization and Integration', in Klaus Knorr and James N. Rosenau (eds.), *Contending Approaches to International Politics* (Princeton, NJ, 1969), pp. 259–80. International studies, as Weber remarked about politics, is a 'strong and slow boring of hard boards'.
[38] S. Strange, 'What about International Relations?', in William Clinton Olson (ed.), *The Theory and Practice of International Relations* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1991), p. 12.

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what they and others have the most authoritative grounds for thinking, and the keen ones the limitations of those grounds. Academics also display moral responsibility when they explain the reasons underlying the contestability of moral preferences.

At the end of the day, critical and postmodern thought should be seen more as political than as intellectual developments. 'Oughtocrats' might counter that this is true of all claims to knowledge. Matters of degree, however, still make a difference. What university professors have, when they don't throw it away, is authority. That some internationalists covet the power of statesmen is understandable. But this also works to wear down a distinction, albeit not impermeable, that needs to stay in place to avoid creating more problems than it solves.

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