Kim Richard Nossal, "Tales That Textbooks Tell: Ethnocentricity and Diversity in American Introductions to International Relations," in Robert M.A. Crawford and Darryl S.L. Jarvis, eds., *International Relations—Still an American Social Science? Toward Diversity in International Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 167–86. Page turns indicated thus: [168]

Introduction

Although quarrels over theorizing in International Relations (IR) loom large in academic debates, it is worth remembering that these quarrels actively involve only a tiny percentage of the professoriate. There are thousands of postsecondary instructors of IR all over the world; but few of them actively contribute to the theoretical debates that are the focus of the contributions to this book. The reality is that international theory is "produced" by an exceedingly small number of scholars, mostly English-speaking, and mostly based in American universities. The rest tend to either "consume" that theory, implicitly or explicitly, in their writing, or simply ignore the theoretical "produce" altogether.

Yet while most members of the IR professoriate do not take an active role in the debate over IR theorizing, there can be little doubt that the thousands of instructors who walk into classrooms, seminar rooms, and lecture halls all over the world each August, September, October, or February to teach courses that seek to introduce students to international relations are all engaged in IR "theorizing"—that is, constructing the world of international relations for their students in ways that are more or less systematic. However, we tend to overlook the fact that the way in which instructors introduce their students to the world of world politics—reflected in their course outlines, syllabi, and lecture schedules—is by its very nature "theoretical," even if the instructor remains **[168]** totally (blissfully?) unaware of the theoretical contentions that mark the IR field. Likewise, what instructors ask (or demand) that their students read is of necessity "theoretical," even if not a single item on the reading list is explicitly about IR theory.

This is particularly true when an instructor assigns his or her students an IR textbook (as opposed to a book which might not have been written as a textbook but which is assigned as "required reading" to a course). We usually do not think of IR textbooks as works of theory, or as contributions to the broader debates that so persistently engage scholars in the discipline. But it can be argued that an IR textbook, whether an authored text or a book of readings, is a *highly* theoretical "product." By its very nature, an IR textbook is designed to organize the diverse phenomena of world politics into a more or less comprehensible whole and structured so that it can be "taught" (or, from the students' perspective, "studied" and "learned") within the relatively unforgiving timeframes of a term, semester, quarter, or academic year. But in so doing, a textbook constructs IR for both the student who must read and study it, and also, it should be

added, for the instructor who must work with, or from (or around, or against), it. It can thus be argued that an assigned textbook can be as important in defining the discipline of IR for students as other components of the course, such as lectures, seminars, tutorials, or the other readings assigned by the professor. In that sense, to the extent that its contents will be absorbed by the undergraduates who read and study it, and to the extent that a textbook helps shape the course for which it is assigned, a textbook has the capacity to shape theoretical understandings of world politics.

Given this, it can be asked whether the same "American" characteristics that Stanley Hoffmann attributed to the discipline of IR as a whole are reflected in the IR textbooks that are used to introduce students to the field. To what extent do American IR textbooks, like the American approach to the discipline as a whole, operate in what Hoffmann called "zones of relative darkness" (Hoffmann, 1977: 58)? To test this, I surveyed fourteen books that were written as textbooks designed to be adopted in introductory IR courses. All are "American": they were all were written by Americans or scholars who are faculty at American universities or colleges; all were published in the United States by American publishing houses (even if in the changing firmament of the global publishing industry those publishers were owned by non-American firms or interests).[1] The texts included in this study are listed in box 7.1.

One of the most obvious defining characteristics of these international relations textbooks is that they are written in the first person plural, figuratively if not literally. To be sure, only one of the texts surveyed—*The New World of International Relations* by Roskin and Berry—is quite literally written

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[1] Thus at least one widely-used text written by a scholar at a Canadian university and published in the United States has not been included in this survey: K.J. Holsti, *International Politics: A Framework for Analysis*, 7th ed (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1995).

Introductory IR Texts Surveyed

Joshua S. Goldstein. (1996). *International Relations.* 2nd ed. New York: HarperCollins.

Barry B. Hughes. (1997). *Continuity and Change in World Politics: Competing Perspectives.* 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Walter S. Jones, (1997). *The Logic of International Relations.* 8th ed. New York: Longman.

Charles W. Kegley, Jr. and Eugene R. Wittkopf. (1997). *World Politics: Trend and Transformation.* 6th ed. New York: St Martin's.

Howard H. Lentner. (1997). *International Politics: Theory and Practice.* Minneapolis: West Publishing.

Richard W. Mansbach. (1997). *The Global Puzzle: Issues and Actors in World Politics.* 2nd ed. New York: Houghton Mifflin.

Dean A. Minix and Sandra M. Hawley. (1998). *Global Politics.* Belmont, Calif.: West/Wadsworth.

Daniel S. Papp. (1997). *Contemporary International Relations: Frameworks for Understanding.* 5th ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Frederic S. Pearson and J. Martin Rochester. (1992). *International Relations: The Global Condition in the Late Twentieth Century.* New York: McGraw Hill.

Michael G. Roskin and Nicholas O. Berry. (1997). *The New World of International Relations.* 3rd ed. Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

John T. Rourke. (1997). *International Politics on the World Stage.* 6th ed. Guilford, Conn.: Dushkin/McGraw Hill.

Bruce Russett and Harvey Starr. (1996). *World Politics: The Menu for Choice.* 5th ed. New York: W.H. Freeman.

Donald M. Snow and Eugene Brown. (1996). *The Contours of Power: An Introduction to Contemporary International Relations.* New York: St Martin's.

Paul R. Viotti and Mark V. Kauppi. (1997). *International Relations and World Politics: Security, Economy, Identity.* Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice Hall.

Box 7.1
Fourteen Introductory IR Texts

[169] in the first person plural: the authors of this text openly frame their discussion in terms of "we Americans," "our" foreign policy, and what foreigners do to "us." Other texts are more subtle in their rendition, phrasing the discussion of international relations in the third person. But the voice remains *figuratively* in the first person plural: the world of world politics represented in these texts revolves around the United States. These texts leave in no doubt that the readers being addressed are American **[170]** students. The scholarly sources cited are invariably the writings of other Americans or scholars at American universities, or the output of publishing houses in the United States. The referents are overwhelmingly American; the examples chosen to illustrate points are American or have to do with the United States. And most of the texts surveyed have extensive sections on United States foreign policy. Indeed it is likely that not one of the texts surveyed would pass a blind taste test: one could strip the names from any of the fourteen books but no reader would be left in any doubt as to the nationality of the authors.

Now the essential "Americanness" of these texts is neither surprising nor particularly noteworthy. After all, all of these textbooks are primarily aimed at the huge market of American undergraduates. Indeed, it would be surprising if these books did not use American examples or American referents. What is noteworthy, however, is that these texts tend to represent world politics in an essentially *Americocentric* way—in other words, as a phenomenon that has an essentially *American* core. This is reflected in at least three ways. First, it is revealed in the degree to which the scholarly discipline of IR is represented as something to which only Americans contribute. Second, it is revealed in the way in which the discipline of IR is portrayed as revolving around the United States. Third, it is revealed in the way that the "world out there"— beyond the water's edge—is constructed by these texts.

An American (Centered) Social Science

One of the purposes of a textbook is to acquaint students with some of the scholarly literature in the field, usually through the technique of citing works in footnotes or endnotes or in "For Further Reading" sections at the end of chapters, or in select bibliographies. Which scholars a textbook author chooses to cite, which journals students are implicitly (or explicitly) pointed to, whose books are identified as "must-reads"—these are all a useful reflection of the way in which the discipline is being represented for students who are coming to the study of world politics for the first time. On this measure, it is not difficult to conclude that American IR textbooks are deeply parochial.

One common observation, made more widely about the American academy and deeply reflected in the discipline of IR, is that American scholarship tends to be robustly unilingual; American IR textbook writers, like American IR scholars more generally, tend to read and reference only what is published in English. This, in turn, both reflects and reinforces the essential unilingualism of the American undergraduate audience who are the primary "consumers" of these texts. It must immediately **[171]** be noted that this linguistic parochialism is by no means particular to Americans. The linguistic imperialism (if not linguistic laziness) that comes naturally to native speakers of a universal language is evident throughout the English-speaking world, and well reflected in the IR discipline. The fact is that students of IR in Australia, Britain, English-speaking Canada, and New Zealand tend to be as robustly unilingual as Americans; they also tend not to be exposed to any IR scholarship that is not either written in English in the original, or translated from another language into English. By contrast, consider how many undergraduate students in places like Germany, Hong Kong, Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Norway, Québec, or Taiwan might receive their instruction in their native language, but are nonetheless expected to be able to read English works in IR that are assigned by their invariably bilingual or multilingual instructors.

But even leaving the issue of language aside, we see clear evidence of a deep parochialism in American IR texts. Nearly all of the textbooks surveyed for this chapter leave their readers with the unmistakable impression that there is no one writing in English outside the United States on

world politics. With but few exceptions, overwhelmingly the references, the suggestions for further reading, and the selected bibliography are the works of American scholars, writing in American journals, or for American publishing houses.

The exceptions are few. Goldstein's footnotes, which are designed to serve as a kind of IR bibliography for students, contain a few references to non-American authors. Kauppi and Viotti contains more than an occasional reference to the work of British scholars or works put out by British publishing houses. Of the texts surveyed, Lentner is unusual in the degree to which he regularly cites the works of non-American authors and the products of non-American publishing houses; perhaps not coincidentally, Lentner spent several years in the early 1970s as chair of a political science department at McMaster University in Canada before returning to the United States.

For the rest, however, the scholarly world seems to stop at the water's edge. To be sure, non-American scholars are occasionally cited in these textbooks, but it tends to be when these scholars have published in American sources. Likewise, works of non-American scholars are often cited when they have been published in the United States via the U.S.-based subsidiaries of publishing houses that are organized on a global basis, such as Oxford University Press or Cambridge University Press, or who have 'global alliances' (such as Macmillan and St Martin's). In this regard, special mention should be made of two Boulder, Colorado publishing houses: both Westview Press and Lynne Rienner have worked hard to bring the IR scholarship of non-Americans to an **[172]** American audience. But generally speaking, if a book does not have an American imprint, it is likely to be invisible to American scholars more generally, and therefore to those who author textbooks and who take their referential cues from the writings of others. As a consequence, the incidence of citations to non-Americans who have been published in non-American journals or whose books have been published by non-American publishers is extremely low.

This invisibility is particularly true of the journal literature. Despite the existence of a large number of scholarly journals on world politics published in English outside the United States, one would never know of their existence from American textbooks, where the journal references are dominated by articles in *International Organization*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *American Political Science Review*, *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, and other journals published in the United States. The only non-American journals to appear in the citations with any regularity (but even then with no great frequency) are the *Journal of Peace Research*, published in English in Oslo, and the *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*. An occasional reference to such journals as *Review of International Studies* or *Millennium* may be found, particularly when an American academic has published an article there. Kegley and Wittkopf's *World Politics: Trend and Transformation* is nicely illustrative of this phenomenon: with approximately 1000 references spanning twenty pages of small-point text, Kegley and Wittkopf's bibliography provides readers with numerous references to articles in American journals, but there are only fourteen references to articles in non-American journals. Fully nine of those were to the *Journal of Peace Research* (one of which was to an article co-authored by Kegley himself, another to American scholar Carl Sagan). Of the remainder, two were references to *Review of International Studies*, the journal of the British International Studies Association (one of which was an article by American scholar Inis Claude); and two to the *Jerusalem Journal of International Relations*. There was but one reference to *Millennium*, the IR journal published by the students at the London School of Economics and Political Science—and that is to an article by the American scholar Robert O. Keohane.

America at the Center: The Case of Hegemonic Stability Theory

A second commonality is that these texts tend to construct international politics as something that cannot be understood unless the United States is at the core. And nothing is more indicative of the Americocentric **[173]** focus of American IR texts than how they tend to treat the notion of

American leadership in world politics. Much of the story of the post-1945 period is told with the United States at the center of the action. And prominent in that story is the "theory" that has been invented by American scholars to "account" for American leadership—hegemonic stability theory. Most of the texts surveyed acquaint their student-readers with hegemonic stability theory (see Viotti and Kauppi, 189; Goldstein, 103-104; Minix and Hawley, 231-32; Kegley and Wittkopf, 210-211; Lentner, 147; Hughes, 129ff). As importantly, they also tend to avoid acquainting their readers with critiques of this theory, such as that of Isabelle Grunberg (1990), who might, if she is lucky, get a footnote citation (as, for example, in Goldstein, who merely observes that hegemonic stability theory " is not … accepted by all IR scholars" [Goldstein, 1996, 103]).

More or less the story gets told like this: at different times in world history, there will be a country that, because of its superordinate power and its desire for order, will selflessly apply its energies, its resources, and its power to the creation and maintenance of a stable world order. In the recent past, there have only been two such hegemonic powers creating such "hegemonic stability": Britain in the nineteenth century, and the United States in the twentieth. Usually considerable attention is devoted to an account of how after 1941 a succession of American administrations devoted the energies of the government in Washington—and the treasure of the American people—to creating, and then maintaining, a stable international economic and security order so that the world did not drift back into the economic disaster of another Great Depression—and the risk of another global war. In this version of the tale, Americans created the international institutions that shaped the post-1945 order; Americans created the many alliances that ringed a putatively expansionist Soviet Union; Americans devoted billions of dollars to providing security for friends and allies; hundreds of thousands of American lives were lost in the cause of freedom against German Nazis, Japanese imperialists, North Korean and Chinese expansionists, Vietnamese Communists, and Iraqi annexationists. To maintain and encourage a more vibrant and open global economy, Americans created the post-1945 recovery of both Europe and Japan, by donating billions of dollars in aid and opening its markets to their products.

Normally, all of this activity is described using the discourse of "public goods." In this rendition, the United States, through foreign policy decisions that result in the creation of alliances, or rules-based trading regimes, or stable exchange markets, "produces" "public goods," either for the international system as a whole, or for particular countries (e.g., Russett and Starr, 426–434). Moreover, these "public **[174]** goods," by their very nature, are deemed to be "good" for whomever is out there consuming them. Consider, for example, Goldstein's globalized update of the old saw that "What's good for General Motors is good for the USA": a hegemon, Goldstein tells his students, "basically has the same interests as the common good of all states" (103). In other words, "What's good for the USA is good for the whole world." Americans spend money and energy creating something positive for the world that can be enjoyed by all, even those who do not contribute to those "goods," and indeed even those who might not want to enjoy those goods.

Of course, the moment one slips into the discourse of "public goods," one cannot avoid the corollary: if these benefits can be enjoyed by all, then some folks must be enjoying the benefits created by Americans *without contributing*. Thus are American undergraduates introduced to the idea that other countries in the world are essentially "free riders," enjoying the security created by the United States, enjoying the economic benefits of an open and liberal global economy sustained by American leadership, but without having the pay the attendant costs. This inexorably leads into discussions of what is openly called the "free rider problem"—how to deal with those who enjoy the benefits provided by Americans but who do not pay their "fair share" of the costs (e.g., Russett and Starr, 399-400; Goldstein, 300; Kegley and Wittkopf, 212; Hughes, 130-31). And this, in turn, leads to telling undergraduates about "burden-sharing" in American-led alliances, and how the allies of the United States tend to be able to devote more of their social wage to social welfare (health care, education, or, as the case may be, "research and

development") because the American treasury is burdened with the costs of the alliance. It also provides an opportunity to acquaint American students with "fair trade," a uniquely American term invented to describe the process by which trading partners of the United States, having been assisted by American largesse in the immediate post-1945 period, in essence kick their benefactors in the teeth by engaging in trade practices that hurt American interests. It also confirms for American students what they have already been told by President Bill Clinton in his second inaugural: that their country is indeed the "indispensable country." Roskin and Berry put baldly what is implicit in most other texts: "The alternative to US leadership is chaos. Only the United States can have the breadth of vision to work toward a new world order" (Roskin and Berry, 1997, 67).

Although it is never painted this way by the American texts which so dutifully outline the theory, hegemonic stability theory is in fact a deeply nationalistic way of telling the tale of the post-1945 period. The **[175]** theory portrays Americans as global "good guys," selflessly ensuring that the world didn't slip back into the blackness of the Great Depression of the 1930s, and working hard to keep other folks safe from the predations of the new expansionists in Moscow and Beijing—but always having to struggle against foreigners who are, if not enemies, then untrustworthy "free riders" or ungrateful "unfair traders." It is a tale in which Americans feature prominently, and the rest of the world characterized as merely responding to farsighted American leadership and extraordinary American generosity, or cast in the role of cheap/ungrateful/unfair (choose your adjective) "free riders" bludging off an always put-upon United States. As a nationalist tale, hegemonic stability theory no doubt achieves its purpose: it probably makes American undergraduates feel good about their country's generosity and annoyed at foreigners— in particular those allies and trading partners who have done so well by the United States.

But this is very much the story as it would be told by an American. Few others in the international system tell the story this way, not even those who would willingly grant that many elements of post-1945 American statesmanship, such as the Marshall Plan, represented statecraft of considerable vision and generosity on the part of those in the administration and Congress, and indeed on the part of Americans who sustained the postwar internationalists in power. But unfortunately for aficionados of hegemonic stability theory, foreigners find it hard to take the essential hubris of the theory and the fanciful conflation of the "common good of all states" with the "international public goods" being produced by Americans. Above all, non-Americans find it difficult to accept the theory's construction of the world as a simple we/they duality in which the United States is the "Important Self" and the rest of the world is, in essence, the "Unimportant Other." It is thus no coincidence that hegemonic stability theory is a tale that tends to be told only in the United States, or by those who are in thrall to Americocentric IR theorizing.

The "Important Self" and the "Unimportant Other"
The essential ethnocentricity of these texts is also reflected in how non-Americans are portrayed. First, the obvious and necessary concomitant of an ethnocentric focus on the "Important Self" is that others are, by definition, unimportant. This is a not uncommon attitude among the leading members of the discipline in the United States. It is best exemplified by the comment of a senior American scholar, Stephen Krasner, to a panel on hegemonic stability theory at the 1990 meetings of the American Political **[176]** Science Association. Krasner is reported to have put the idea that those who did not enjoy a hegemonic position were essentially irrelevant this way: "Sure people in Luxembourg have good ideas. But who gives a damn? Luxembourg ain't hegemonic" (Higgott, 1991: 99). No less indicative was Kenneth N. Waltz's dismissive comment that "Denmark doesn't matter" in his discussion of the new world order (Waltz, 1996, 1993).

Given such views, it is perhaps not surprising that IR textbooks would also mirror these attitudes. Consider how one author, for example, characterizes Solomon Islands for his readers:

Admittedly, the Solomon Islands is a political entity significant to few others than its 385,000 residents. It has no oil and no industry, has not been the scene of major domestic or international strife since World War II, and is largely forgotten… For the most part, most microstates, including the Solomon Islands, are important only in that they are voting members of the General Assembly… [where] their votes are as significant as those of the United States, Russia, China, Japan, and the European states…. Little more can be said about the Solomon Islands…. Most [states like the Solomons] are indeed in the backwaters of international life (Papp, 1997, 350–351).

Little more can be said about such views, except to reiterate the obvious observation that how important one is deemed to be, or whether the water at the edge is "backwater," depends heavily on one's standpoint.[2]

On occasion, simple oversights or mistakes can result in a distortion of importance. For example, consider how the IR texts surveyed treat the creation of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum, which for many people around the Pacific Rim is one of the most important groupings in the post–Cold War era. Despite APEC's prominence, a number of texts (Lentner, 1997; Pearson and Rochester, 1992; and Jones, 1997) get the name wrong. And some texts—Goldstein, Russett and Starr, Hughes, and Viotti and Kauppi—ignore APEC altogether: either the authors remain unaware of the forum's existence or they deem it to be not important enough to bring to the attention of their student-readers. Most of the texts that do mention APEC simply note its existence without exploring its origins (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1997; Lentner, 1997; Minix and Hawley, 1998; Roskin and Berry, 1997). Some imply that APEC started in 1993 (not coincidentally the year that President Bill Clinton hosted the first heads of government summit in Seattle), or in Bogor, Indonesia the following year (see Rourke, 1997, 521–522; Papp, 1997, 392). Four texts mention APEC's origin, and three get it wrong. Jones (Jones, 1997, 81) intimates that APEC evolved from ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations); Mansbach (Mansbach, 1997, 485) credits the United States with initiating APEC; Pearson and Rochester claim that Japan launched it (Pearson and Rochester, **[177]** 1992, 455). In fact, APEC evolved from an initiative taken in 1989 by Bob Hawke, the Australian Prime Minister. Hawke proposed the idea in a speech in Seoul, South Korea in January 1989, and hosted a meeting in Canberra in November of that year (Evans and Grant, 1991, 121; Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal, 1993: 92–94). But only Snow and Brown (Snow and Brown, 1996, 361) attribute APEC's creation to Hawke.

The treatment of APEC underscores a more general problem evident in many of the IR texts surveyed: these texts are also noteworthy for what they do *not* tell their student-readers about international politics, those things deemed to be too unimportant to bother knowing about, or telling students about. A good example is the Commonwealth of Nations or the grouping of states known colloquially as *la francophonie* (including the *Agence de Coopération culturelle et technique* and the *Conférence des chefs d'État ayant en commun l'usage de français*). No doubt because the United States is not a member of either of these associations of states, they are generally not even mentioned in IR texts. Of the 15 texts surveyed, the Commonwealth gets a passing mention in only three texts (Goldstein, 1996; Papp, 1997; and Roskin and Berry, 1997); *la francophonie* is mentioned in two (Goldstein, 1996; Papp, 1997)—albeit not by name, official or colloquial.

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[2] Papp might have chosen the Solomons as an exemplar of the "Unimportant Other" rather more carefully: his characterization of the country as uninvolved in "strife" is simply wrong, as the former Papua New Guinea (PNG) Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan, Solomons Prime Minister Solomon Mamaloni, Francis Ona and the other rebels on Bougainville, not to mention the board members of CRA, the soldiers of the transnational security corporation Executive Outcomes, and the Australian government of John Howard would attest.

It can be argued that such omissions are not trivial. Knowing nothing about the Commonwealth, for example, means that one cannot fully analyze the global struggle against apartheid in the 1980s, for a great deal of the international campaign occurred in the context of the Commonwealth. Likewise, knowing nothing about the Commonwealth distorts one's analysis of the origins of international development assistance in the 1950s. For example, not a single text of the fourteen surveyed mentioned the Colombo Plan of 1950, which was the first attempt to apply the lessons of the Marshall Plan to the development problems of the South. But because the United States was not at the meeting of the Commonwealth in Colombo in January 1950—and only joined the plan later—this germinal event in international development assistance is totally overlooked. Instead, the origins of development assistance are invariably represented to American undergraduates as having exclusively American roots: Hughes's discussion of "foreign aid" in the 1950s (Hughes, 1997, 97–98) provides a quintessential example of this.

"Cave! Hic Dragones" Revisited: Getting the World Wrong

In her critique of regime theory, the late Susan Strange used the warning often found on medieval maps of the world beyond Europe to identify **[178]** five "dragons," or pitfalls, that lie in wait for students international regimes (Strange, 1982, 479). However, the phrase is no less useful to describe a common phenomenon in American IR texts: the representation of an assertion as authoritative fact based on little, no, or erroneous knowledge. It should be remembered that medieval map-makers drew pictures of dragons and inscribed *Cave!* on their maps not because of *lack* of knowledge; rather, they were trying to convey to readers of the map their *certainty* that the waters beyond Europe were populated by sea monsters, even though in reality they did not actually know much about the waters they were drawing. There is something of the medieval map-maker in American IR texts: the world beyond the United States is sketched out, dragons and all, but it is not always based on a great deal of *correct* knowledge. On the contrary: the authors of these textbooks often appear to know very little about the world beyond the water's edge, even though they represent the world "out there" to their readers with seeming authority and assurance.

A good example of an authoritative assertion is this description of contemporary Hong Kong in Goldstein:

> Hong Kong is a small territory with great internal disparities of wealth. Its rich neighborhoods are jammed with high-rise office buildings and expensive apartments; nearby are huge refugee camps providing cheap labor (Goldstein, 1997, 512).

This appears following a photo of Hong Kong entitled "Hong Kong business district, 1987." But it is clear that neither Goldstein nor the production staff at HarperCollins who wrote the caption for the photo have ever been to Hong Kong. For the photo is in fact a picture shot from street level of a jetliner making "the turn"—the precarious right-hand turn at rooftop level that planes had to make seconds before touching down at the old Kai Tak airport. But "the turn" used to occur over Kowloon Tong—a district that is across the harbor and many kilometers from the business district in Central. Likewise, the written commentary will have those who know Hong Kong asking: What Hong Kong is Goldstein describing? After all, the only "refugee camps" in the last generation were those created to house several thousand Vietnamese refugees, most of whom were not allowed to provide labour, cheap or otherwise, to the local market. To be sure, squatters continue to be a feature of the urban landscape—their population was estimated in 1996 to be 32,000—but their numbers are reduced each year as they are relocated to public housing estates. Moreover, while there is are disparities in wealth, Goldstein's intimation that Hong Kong is teeming with an impoverished laboring class does not square with either anecdotal observation or with the aggregate data. Hong Kong's per capita GDP **[179]** income of US$21,800—a level higher than that enjoyed in Australia, Britain, or Canada—may not be

distributed perfectly equally, but it is distributed in a way that allows fully 43.9 per cent of households in Hong Kong either to own their flats or to participate in a government-sponsored home-ownership scheme.

Certainly no one would want to criticize Goldstein for not having been to Hong Kong. But students reading Goldstein will come away with entirely the wrong information about Hong Kong. (Moreover, this is not the only error in his text: for example, it has the Communists seizing power in China in 1949, and then has India achieving independence "around the same time" [475]; it has Vietnam invading Cambodia in 1979 rather than in 1978; it has Iraq attacking Iran in 1979 rather than in 1980 [55]; it has Israel attacking the Osiraq reactor in 1982 instead of 1981 [212]; it claims that the visit to Beijing of Mikhail S. Gorbachev in May 1989 touched off the pro-democracy movement in China [43]—rather than the death of Hua Guofeng in April.)

While it is perhaps unusual to see so many factual errors in a single text, the other textbooks surveyed are not free of erroneous representations of the world. Consider the fleeting mentions of the Commonwealth of Nations noted in the previous section. Only three texts mention the Commonwealth, but those texts all got it wrong. Both Roskin and Berry (Roskin and Berry, 1997, 314) and Goldstein (Goldstein, 1996, 91) call it the "British Commonwealth"—even though the adjective "British" has not been used by the Commonwealth itself for decades. Moreover, Roskin and Berry clearly are unacquainted with the role of the Crown in contemporary governance, or of the relationship of the Crown to the Commonwealth: they describe the Commonwealth as "a loose grouping of Britain and its former colonies, which call the queen their nominal sovereign" (Roskin and Berry, 1997, 314). They appear to be unaware that not a single member of the Commonwealth regards Elizabeth II as its "nominal" sovereign; that she is the actual head of state of sixteen Commonwealth members; or that she is acknowledged by all members to be the head of the Commonwealth (this being a necessary condition of membership in the association).

For his part, Papp (Papp, 1997, 287) has this to tell his student-readers about the Commonwealth: "Great Britain's global Commonwealth of Nations meets regularly, and the countries of the Commonwealth share the equivalent of the US concept of most favored nation trading status." In this one sentence is nicely captured the essence of American ethnocentricity. First, the suggestion that the Commonwealth is somehow "Great Britain's" reflects essentially imperial assumptions about power as it is assumed to operate in any association of sovereign nation-states. After all, if one constructs Britain as a "former **[180]** hegemon," it follows that Britain *must* remain hegemonic over members of its former empire. Such an assumption would, of course, draw a rueful snort from the British tabloid press, which regularly expresses the view that Britain should withdraw from the Commonwealth precisely because other members have so often proved willing to cross the British government. And the idea that the Commonwealth members share special nondiscriminatory trading arrangements is similarly mistaken. Perhaps Papp was thinking of the old Imperial Preference, but this has been dead and buried for decades. The idea that "most-favored-nation" treatment is a "United States concept" is equally erroneous. This practice had made its appearance in various European trade treaties for at least two hundred years before 1860, when the phrase that now describes it was legally entrenched in the Anglo-French treaty of 1860, negotiated by Richard Cobden and Michel Chevalier.

Comparable errors can be found in discussions of the civilizational argument most commonly associated with Samuel P. Huntington (Huntington, 1993, 1996). Most texts refer to Huntington's contention that in the future the fault lines of global conflict will be on civilizational lines. Many reproduce the thesis without comment or criticism, leaving readers with the view that the civilizational argument is not at all contested (e.g., Hughes, 1997, 63; Goldstein, 1996, 207; Viotti and Kauppi, 1997, 279); two authors do draw attention to criticisms (Snow and Brown, 1996, 556–557; Rourke, 1997, 194–195). At least one textbook reproduces for students a map showing how Huntington divides the world into major civilizations (Minix and Hawley, 1998, 553). This map faithfully reproduces Huntington's often bizarre divisions, including the inclusion

of Papua New Guinea as a country of the "West"; the mapping of Israel as an Islamic country; the characterization of Madagascar as "African"; and the characterization of the Philippines as partly a Sinic country, partly an Islamic country.

But not one of the texts remarks on the degree to which these are odd ways to represent these countries. No one notices that Huntington and the cartographers at Simon and Schuster appear to believe that PNG is, like Tasmania, part of Australia and not a country of the South. Or that Huntington is seemingly unaware of Madagascar's unique blend of cultural origins—still reflected today—that are as much Indonesian as they are African. Or that perhaps he did not know that the population of the country he characterized as part Sinic, part Muslim is in fact 94 per cent Christian and only 4 per cent Muslim. No one comments on the strangeness of his exclusion of Israel from his definition of the West (an exclusion that is, however, no error: at different points in his book, Huntington makes quite clear that he does not think Israel is a Western **[181]** country). Instead, Minix and Hawley simply reproduce Huntington's idiosyncratic characterizations and errors without comment or criticism (Minix and Hawley, 1998, 552–554).

Kegley and Wittkopf also discuss the civilizational thesis, though they do not use Huntington's civilizational phraseology. Instead, they divide the world into nine "cultural domains," declaring that these "world or transnational cultures recognize no international borders" (Kegley and Wittkopf, 1997, 177). They then produce a nine-color map of the world showing nine "cultures": European, Chinese, Russian, Islamic, Black African, Hindu, Latin American, South African, and "other" (which appears to be a category in which to dump Madagascar and Papua New Guinea).

It is alarming that thousands of American undergraduates are assigned this book each year—and thus might actually believe this to be an accurate representation of world politics. First, it is strange that the boundaries of these cultures that supposedly recognize "no international borders" all happen to correspond precisely and neatly to the existing borders of contemporary sovereign states. And the cultural divisions themselves are fanciful, to say the least. Among the more egregious errors include the representation of all the countries of South and Southeast Asia as part of a putatively "Hindu" domain—including the three states of Indochina, Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, Brunei, Singapore, Myanmar, and Bangladesh. The populations of these countries is in fact overwhelmingly Buddhist, Muslim, Christian, Taoist, and animist, and Bangladesh and Malaysia have only tiny Hindu minorities. And just like Huntington, Kegley and Wittkopf seem misinformed about the cultural makeup of the Philippines: they paint some of islands of the Philippines as "European" and some as "Hindu"—even though 84 per cent of the population is Roman Catholic, 10 per cent are Protestants, 4 per cent are Muslims, and Hindus are such a minuscule proportion of the population that they do not register on most data sets.

Unlike Huntington, however, Kegley and Wittkopf acknowledge that PNG is not part of Australia, and do nt mistakenly paint the eastern half the island of New Guinea as "Hindu" as they do with Irian Jaya. But they do not appear familiar with what kind of "culture" exists there, for it is marked merely "other."

Kegley and Wittkopf's knowledge of Africa is equally problematic. As noted above, South Africa is accorded its own unique cultural domain—"South Africa (mixed)"—but for some reason Madagascar is not accorded the same privilege. Instead of a separate category—'Malagasy (mixed)'?—the island of Madagascar is classified merely as **[182]** "other," offering readers little clue of the rich and ethnically diverse history of the origins of the peoples of the island before and after the arrival of Europeans. For reasons not made clear, a number of African countries—Niger, Chad, Mali, and Ethiopia—are classified as Black African rather than Islamic.

Other parts of the world are equally misconstrued in this exercise. All of the countries and territories of the Caribbean and the Guiana coast are uniformly painted as part of the "Latin American" cultural domain, which obliterates the many English, French, and Dutch-speaking peoples of the Caribbean basin. The Baltic republics—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania—and Ukraine are all considered by Kegley and Wittkopf to be part of the Russian cultural domain

despite the presence of several strident nationalist groups. Likewise, Japan, the Koreas, and Mongolia are all painted "Chinese" (ditto).

　　How can one explain the many outright errors and erroneous characterizations outlined above? It could be a function of the stay-at-home parochialism of the American professoriate, which manifests itself in many ways, from a lack of world travel[3] to the incestuousness bred by reading only what other Americans have to say about the world. It could also be a function of a reviewing process that is relentlessly parochial and Americocentric. Consider how many people read these erroneous characterizations of the world beyond American borders before they appeared in print. It is sobering when one considers that all of these textbooks were reviewed in manuscript form by colleagues at other universities—and many of them have gone through at least one edition (and thus multiple reviews)—but not one of these errors was picked up by reviewers or readers of previous editions. But given the ethnocentric nature of the reviewing process, it is not particularly surprising. For publishers of American IR texts appear not to bother to send manuscripts to "foreigners" for review. For example, Goldstein (Goldstein, 1996, xxiii) lists thirty-one scholars who acted as reviewers; fully thirty came from universities all over the United States and only one non-American is listed as a reviewer—Akira Ichikawa of the University of Lethbridge in Canada. Other texts are even more Americocentric. For example, all seven of Kegley and Wittkopf's sixth edition reviewers came from American universities; all twenty-eight reviewers of Minix and Hawley are at American institutions; and all nineteen reviewers engaged for Snow and Brown, and all eighteen for Hughes.[4] Needless to say, relying to such a degree on Americans to review commentary on foreigners not only runs the risk that one will get it wrong; the Americocentric nature of the reviewing process merely perpetuates the Americocentricity of the text.

　　But mostly, it can be argued, these errors stem from the lack of general **[183]** knowledge of the authors—and their reviewers—about that which is deemed unimportant. In other words, it is okay to get things wrong if they are unimportant; it is not necessary to work to get *everything* right as long as one has the important stuff right.[5] What does it matter, after all, if American undergraduates are left with the impression that Hong Kong is a teeming slum, or that APEC was started by Bill Clinton in 1993, or that Indonesia is Hindu, or that Papua New Guinea is part of Australia? Who cares if they know who Queen Elizabeth II is, or how governance in a Westminster system actually works? Is it really important to know about the Commonwealth? Who cares if they think that the Iran-Iraq war started in 1979 rather than 1980, or that Vietnam invaded Cambodia in 1978 rather than 1979? After all, is this not all "the backwaters of international life"? Are these things not, when all is said and done, fundamentally unimportant?

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[3] Consider, for example, the startling admission by one of the most productive American scholars in the field that between his wartime service and 1993 he had never actually been abroad (Rosenau 1996: 24).

[4] Rourke lists eighty-nine colleagues who "contributed" feedback; clearly not all were reviewers engaged by Dushkin, his publisher. Of the eighty-nine, only three were members of faculty of a non-American university—all in Canada.

[5] If one were *really* churlish, one might be tempted to cite the observation by Roskin and Berry to their student-readers about the putative causes of "backwardness" in the world. Apparently, one of them obtained a pocket calendar in Yugoslavia, but discovered that it was one day off—because its maker had made an error, and forgotten to add an extra day in February for leap year. That, according to Roskin and Berry (Roskin and Berry, 1987, 183), was when they "discovered what backwardness was all about. It's not a shortage of tractors and telephones; it's a shortage of meticulous thinking, of doing things right the first time. Backwardness is slovenly attitudes." Indeed.

Conclusion: In the "Zone of Relative Darkness"

This essay has focused on an admittedly very partial reading of fourteen texts, many of which run to hundreds of pages and hundreds of thousands of words. It might therefore be asked whether it is fair to fix on a few errors or omissions or erroneous characterizations. After all, one can easily pick nits with any book, and few authors (or publishing houses) are immune from the errors in fact or interpretation that all too easily creep into any book. However, I focus on these characteristics of American texts because they reveal so well a critical element of the construction of IR in the United States: that is, the degree to which American IR textbooks contribute in important ways to how the tale of world politics is told, how a certain image of world politics is constructed and thus world politics understood, and how this is reproduced from one generation to the next in a hermetically sealed Americocentric vacuum. While they are not normally seen as contributions to IR theorizing, in fact they *are* theoretical contributions, for they organize and define world politics for hundreds of the professors who adopt them for their courses and thousands of students who are required to read them for examination purposes. And even a very partial reading of these texts reveals the degree to which IR, as they construct it, remains a deeply "American" enterprise, having changed little since Hoffmann was writing in the late 1970s. In other words, these texts portray the world to their readers from a uniquely *American* point of view: they are reviewed by Americans; the sources they cite are American; the examples are American; the theory is American; the experience is American; the focus is American; and in one case, the voice is also explicitly American. And, **[184]** as the errors and omissions surveyed suggest, the "zones of relative darkness" that Hoffmann wrote about two decades ago are all too evident in these texts. Moreover, this "American" view of the world is being communicated to successive cohorts of American undergraduates, some of whom will themselves go on to get Ph.D.s and teach international politics in American universities to a future cohort of undergraduates—thus perpetuating and reproducing these zones of darkness.

Note

Readers should be aware that since joining this project, I myself have written an introductory IR text (Nossal, 1998)—partly in reaction to the findings outlined in this chapter and partly out of a belief that the existing IR texts on the Canadian market were so unabashedly Americocentric that it would be inappropriate to assign them to my students at McMaster University. However, the appearance of *The Patterns of World Politics* means that I am no longer as disinterested as I was when I joined the project; skeptics may be forgiven if they read the critique in this chapter as hopelessly self-serving.

[The other footnotes appeared here in the published version, p. 184.]

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