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Crashing the Cathedral: Historical Reassessments of Twentieth-Century International Relations

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Crashing the Cathedral: Historical Reassessments of Twentieth-Century International Relations

Jeanne Morefield

After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-Twentieth Century
by Nicolas Guilhot
Cambridge University Press, 2017, 264p., $29.

The Power of Systems: How Policy Sciences Opened Up the Cold War World
by Eglė Rindzevičiūtė
Cornell University Press, 2016, 306p., ill., $49.

The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950
by Or Rosenboim
Princeton University Press, 2017, 352p., ill., $37.

White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations
Robert Vitalis
Cornell University Press, 2017, 288p., $21.

At the heart of mainstream International Relations (IR) scholarship today sits an uncomfortable disconnect between the conceptual apparatus by

which the contemporary discipline understands the world and the historical origins of the discipline *in* the world. For instance, today's predominant approaches to IR as a discipline and mode of foreign policy practice were developed over the course of the early twentieth century and concretized during the period of "sustained reflection about the organization of international knowledge" that followed the Second World War.[1] Key among the global problems discussed by the European and American scholars and public intellectuals engaged in these reflections was the postwar acceleration of what David Armitage has called the "drawn-out transition from a world of empires to a world of states."[2] And yet, reading mainstream IR accounts of global politics today, one would never know that empire played any role in these debates. Despite the centrality of imperialism, global hierarchy, and transnational racialized cartographies to the founding of the discipline—indeed, despite the fact that, as Armitage points out, most of the world's population "for most of history lived not in nation states but in empires"—the dominant IR *Weltanschauung* to emerge from this period naturalized an international terrain comprised almost entirely of discrete sovereign states. From the beginning, this conceptual apparatus necessarily occluded not only the lingering impact of race and imperialism on world politics but also extant alternatives to its own political and topographical knowledge.

Today, whether they are imagined by liberals as prone to cooperation, by realists as inherently drawn toward power politics, or by constructivists as responsive to international norms regimes, sovereign states remain the primary units of analysis for much mainstream IR scholarship. Throughout the field, scholars continue to naturalize this orientation by *prospectively* narrowing the discipline's interpretive frame to three dominant and acceptably state-oriented approaches—realism, liberalism (idealism), and constructivism. More importantly, for purposes of this essay, much of the discipline also *retroactively* reads the contested landscape of world history through these same, winnowing lenses. Liberals and idealists, for example, frequently simplify the transition to an American-led, liberal order of states after the Second World War, conveniently excising the impact of European and American imperialism during that period.[3] Realists, by contrast, insert

[1] Nicolas Guilhot, *After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 29.
[2] David Armitage, *Foundations of Modern International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 13.
[3] See, for instance, Anne-Marie Slaughter, *The Idea That Is America* (Basic Books, 2008) and John Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2011).

modern sovereignty into world history by, in part, locating the "security dilemma" in the writings of a selected canon of Western political philosophers, namely, Thucydides, Machiavelli, and Hobbes.[4] In both cases, mainstream IR scholarship reads history in ways that make the world, in the words of Slavoj Žižek, "become what it always was."[5]

And yet, if the election of Donald Trump as president in 2016 clarified anything in international relations, it is that this crabbed history no longer suffices to explain either global politics or American foreign policy at the beginning of the twenty-first century. Indeed, it may make it more difficult for scholars to diagnose contemporary political developments. The problem here is the uncomfortable family resemblance—in form if not in content—between Trump's version of international history and that of mainstream IR. In other words, the story of American foreign policy and global leadership since the Second World War, according to Trump, is one of altruism, victimhood at the hands of grasping nations who have taken our generosity for granted, and betrayal by weak leaders bent on "apologizing" to our enemies.[6] During and following the election, to "Make America Great Again" meant making America "become what it always was": marshal, dominant, white, and envied. Because many IR scholars approach international history through a similar desire to make the world conform to their political and intellectual cosmologies, much mainstream analysis of Trump's foreign policy often descends into a deadlock between conflicting visions of the past that can only produce a kind of baffled incomprehension about politics in the present. For instance, in the months immediately following Trump's election, IR scholars and public intellectuals in North America—particularly those writing for crossover journals like *Foreign Affairs*—expressed amazement at Trump's inability to couch his foreign policy in terms that cohered to any agreed upon approach for talking about the relationship of the United States to the rest of the world. Some expressed horror, for instance, at his refusal to endorse the American-led liberal world order of states.[7] Others bemoaned his apparent dismissal of the basic rules of containment.[8] From his threats to use nuclear weapons, to his explicitly

[4] See Hans Morgenthau's discussion of Thucydides, in particular, his insistence that the "idea of interest is indeed of the essence of politics and is unaffected by the circumstances of time and place." Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations*, 7th ed. (New York: McGraw Hill, 2005), 10.

[5] Slavoj Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), 58.

[6] Donald Trump, foreign policy speech, Youngstown, OH, August 15, 2016, https://www.c-span.org/video/?413977–1/donald-trump-delivers-foreign-policy-address.

[7] See, for instance, John Ikenberry's, "The Plot Against American Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs* 96, no. 3 (2017).

[8] Stephen Walt, "Why Trump Is Getting Away with Foreign Policy Insanity," *Foreign*

racist references to "shithole countries," to his open affinity for the non-democratically elected leaders of countries to which he had business ties, Trump's every word called into question consensus narratives of international politics that had been dominant since the end of the Second World War. Again and again, scholars responded by reiterating their own versions of world politics and world history, often expressing utter dismay at Trump's inability to stick to the known script. The urgency of this collective dismay is perhaps best captured in the 2018 words of former Secretary of Defense, Ash Carter who, after viewing a Trump/Putin news conference, likened the experience to "watching the destruction of a cathedral."[9]

It is hardly surprising that in an era of clashing and mutually incomprehensible global histories, we would see a renaissance of scholarship committed to re-evaluating the history and "ideational scaffolding" of that cathedral.[10] The four books under consideration here do this in rigorous and diverse ways. The time period interrogated collectively by these texts ranges from the late nineteenth century to the late 1980s, with all four overlapping in their coverage of the crucial two decades following the Second World War. Rather than repeating what Robert Vitalis calls the discipline's "fables of origin," these texts embrace the opportunity to reimagine the role of intellectual history in international politics.[11] They thus shift the act of writing history away from justifying a world of sovereign states in the present toward writing critical examinations of the past that, as Eglė Rindzevičiūtė puts it, "enhance our reflexivity" by "revealing the specific political and technical contexts that have generated our current interest into ourselves."[12] Collectively, these counter-histories interrogate dominant ideological trends, investigate forgotten schools of thought, reveal and re-evaluate the utterances of public intellectuals, and re-stitch the frayed political connections between intellectuals and governments that have been effectively written out of IR's "invented history."[13] When taken together, they paint a far more complicated portrait of international relations over the course of the twentieth century than either mainstream IR or its uncanny

Policy, July 18, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/07/18/why-trump-is-getting-away-with-foreign-policy-insanity/.

[9] CNN, "Former Intel Chiefs Condemn Trump's News Conference With Putin," July 17, 2018, http://m.cnn.com/en/article/h_8d38e5d3a43918785d86f23c92ba3fc4.

[10] Robert Vitalis, *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2017), 58.

[11] Vitalis, 6.

[12] Eglė Rindzevičiūtė, *The Power of Systems: How Policy Sciences Opened Up the Cold War World* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2016), 8.

[13] Vitalis, 120.

Trumpian doppelgänger would care to admit, a portrait in which power politics, racism, imperialism, ideology, and the military industrial complex play a significant and troubling role in shaping our current world order.

All four books do this by employing two distinct but overlapping methodological perspectives, one oriented toward exposure, the other toward recovery. Nicolas Guilhot's work, for example, seeks to *expose* the political/philosophical underpinnings of that "elusive ideology" known as IR realism by examining the cross currents of conservative and counter-Enlightenment influences at work in its origins which have, for a variety of reasons, become less detectable over time.[14] The book is oriented toward both tracing these currents and interrogating the discursive and political developments that explain their occlusion. By contrast, Or Rosenboim and Rindzevičiūtė have written works of *recovery* that seek to draw attention to previously unnoticed groups of thinkers and policy makers who, nonetheless, influenced mid to late twentieth-century IR as a discipline and helped shape ideas regarding international organization and global governance. Rosenboim does this by focusing on several particularly rich examples of the multiple controversies and debates about "globalism" that took place among influential public intellectuals in the US and Europe during the 1940s. Rindzevičiūtė's book is more explicitly transnational in its purview, focusing on the heretofore ignored work of thinkers involved with the International Institute of Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) in the 1970s and 1980s who she treats as "conscious makers of a new world."[15] Finally, Vitalis's book brings both of these approaches together in a pincer grasp that exposes the imperial and racial logic at the core of early twentieth-century IR in America and recovers the largely forgotten writings of Black scholars who wrote "about white world supremacy from the standpoint of its victims."[16]

In what follows, I explore each of these texts in more detail. As will become obvious, they share certain similarities. Each author, for instance, takes an expansive attitude to the role of public intellectuals in the construction of twentieth-century international order and most of them are concerned with the Eurocentric, anti-modernist, hierarchical, and anti-democratic assumptions baked into those ideas of order. Rosenboim and Vitalism share an interest in the ideological rejiggering of imagined geographic space that went into the complex construction of contemporary IR

[14] Guilhot, 18.
[15] Rindzevičiūtė, 126.
[16] Vitalis, 6.

and historically "globalist" ideologies, and Guilhot and Rindzevičiūtė both touch on the genealogical origins of global neoliberal governmentality. Finally, all of these authors dwell somewhat on the complex relationship between governments, think tanks, universities, and intellectuals that were so central to the construction of today's mainstream accounts of global politics. This essay, however, is also concerned with the way these texts complement each other and, when read together, flesh out each author's critical oversights and collectively tell a richly complex and troubled story about the history of IR in the twentieth century. I end with some brief thoughts on the political relevance of writing counter-international-history in a "post-factual" era.

Vitalis, Rosenboim, Guilhot, and Rindzevičiūtė have all written books that join an increasingly growing and vital body of scholarship sitting at the intersection of intellectual history, political theory, and international relations.[17] In this spirit, each of these four authors approaches IR as a polyvalent phenomenon; both an academic discipline, a mode of foreign policy engagement, and a popularized vocabulary for describing the world. In other words, rather than treat the historical emergence of IR as an entirely scholarly—that is, as a discrete disciplinary object—these scholarly books approach it as an evolving set of theories, practices, ideologies, policies, norms, and institutional networks developed over time by academics, policy makers, and public intellectuals. With the exception of the thinkers associated with the IIASA discussed by Rindzevičiūtė, the disciplinary predecessors under consideration usually had at least one foot in the American and/or British academy and, often, another foot in the world of foreign policy think tanks. These "intellectual middlemen"[18] were involved in a self-conscious process of world making, whether as "builders of Utopia"[19] or its ostensible critics. Moreover, when looked at closely and in context, the world organizing / world theorizing principles to emerge from the pens of these influential thinkers were far more internally fraught than the

[17] See for instance, John M. Hobson, *The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012); Jennifer Pitts, *Boundaries of International Law and Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018); Patricia Owen, *Between War and Peace* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); William Hooker, *Carl Schmitt's International Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009); Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019).
[18] Vitalis, 4.
[19] Or Rosenboim, *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2017), 169.

dominant narratives associated with the intellectual traditions of either IR idealism or realism would suggest. Rather, the ideological infrastructure of these visions often required complex internal maintenance and conceptual maneuvering to rationalize, maintain, and/or obscure their political content. For example, as Guilhot notes, arguing that it is possible for a functioning and secure global order to exist in the absence of central authority actually required realists in the past (and contemporary neorealists and neoliberals today) to perform sophisticated rhetorical juggling acts that stealthily re-infuse politics into putatively self-sustaining systems, often under the cover of an "artfully maintained balance of power."[20]

Guilhot begins *After the Enlightenment: Political Realism and International Relations in the Mid-Twentieth Century* by zeroing in on the political and intellectual problem of letting those artfully maintained tensions go undiagnosed within IR as a discipline. He devotes much of his introduction to an examination of the contemporary intellectual movement to revivify (or "re-enchant") postwar realism. Scholars like William Scheuerman are, Guilhot argues, motivated largely by the desire to find an approach to global politics that both counters the flawed interventionist politics of the last thirty years and also provides a genuinely political language capable of responding to neoliberalism's relentless reduction of the world to economic rationality. As such, these "left realists" find inspiration in early realism's deep suspicion of nineteenth-century liberalism whose faith in rationality, they argue, ends in an imperializing form of utopianism. In today's world—a world consumed by apolitical, neoliberal overreach and economic rationality—classical realism, in Guilhot's words, "seems to be the only language left to impugn imperial adventurism" while still being taken seriously in policy circles.[21]

The problem with this revivalist project, Guilhot continues, is that it fails to adequately grasp the deeper political and ideological contradictions within early realism that resonate—in complex, ideological ways—with neoliberalism. The postwar realism developed by (largely) émigré scholars like Hans Morgenthau was, indeed, a reaction against the totalitarian impulses of the nineteenth-century liberal belief that economic ordering would and ought to ultimately replace politics. But, as Guilhot argues, neoliberalism itself is similarly a reaction against nineteenth-century liberalism. Classical realism and neoliberalism share a neo-Burkean rejection of the Enlightenment, a suspicion of democracy, a belief that public opinion is

[20] Guilhot, 7.
[21] Guilhot, 5.

irrational, and a keen sense that liberalism could be saved only if it were "submitted to a form of politics that was not liberal."[22] The turn to classical realism as an antidote to neoliberalism and rational choice is thus ultimately doomed to failure, argues Guilhot, because it refuses to acknowledge those shared ideological commitments encircling the core of the two movements.

Even more troubling, the contemporary "re-enchantment" of realism fails, Guilhot continues, to adequately appreciate the compromise realists eventually struck with the 1950s Cold War university in order to legitimize IR as an emerging academic field, a compromise that found these thinkers rushing straight into the arms of the very scientific revolution and faith in rational choice they originally eschewed as potentially totalitarian. The book makes this argument through chapters that unfold as a chronological series of essays centered around both individual thinkers and schools of thought. Along the way, each of these chapters also deals with some of the particularly fraught ideological tensions that cluster around both classical realism and in its neorealist offshoot.

Guilhot begins by examining the overwhelming obsession with power politics of Morgenthau, Reinhold Niebuhr, Franz Neumann and other émigré scholars, as well as their collective abhorrence of the romantic, liberal, and utopian ideologies they believed could only resolve into authoritarianism. Guilhot's fascinating analysis of these early thinkers focuses on the way most of them were trained as jurists in Germany and brought to their emerging analyses both a Schmittian legal positivism and a Burkean suspicion of democracy, particularly in international relations. In Morgenthau's words, "a democratically conducted foreign policy is of necessity a bad foreign policy."[23] Guilhot goes on to chart the evolution of the discipline in America, paying close attention to the way its foundational conservatism, its connections to theology, and its deep skepticism about democracy and utopianism were ultimately transformed, first into an invented "tradition" with fictive historical roots in Thucydides and Machiavelli and then into a science. Through a close, contextualized reading of these thinkers, Guilhot examines how the desire of early realists to secure IR within the developing firmament of political science (and within the context of the Cold War university and its attendant bevy of think tanks) moved realism closer to the scientific presumptions of systems analysis. Indeed, his chapter on the way putatively historically minded realists were

[22] Guilhot, 7.
[23] Guilhot, 54.

ultimately reconciled to science through Kuhn—in Guilhot's words, Kuhn's paradigms played for political science a role similar to the film *Forrest Gump*'s "cultural reconciliation of a divided nation"—is a masterful example of the intellectual historian as political investigator.[24]

At the end of the day, Guilhot demonstrates that the deracinated, rationalist, systems-oriented, neorealist accommodation to the neoliberalism of today has its roots in both the ideological discomforts of the classical realists and in their own accommodation to Cold War science. He describes neorealism as "decisionism with a vengeance: a doctrine of sovereignty that equated power and rationality" that is unable to recognize "an outside of politics in an all-encompassing system."[25] In his particularly important final chapter, "The Americanization of Realism: Kenneth Waltz, the Security Dilemma, and the Problem of Decision Making," Guilhot expands on these concerns by demonstrating how Waltz's internally focused systems theory finally brought realism within the fold of systems analysis by effectively neutralizing democracy. While classical realists "insisted on curtailing liberal democracy by insulating foreign policy decisions from the public," he argues, neorealism "saved democracy by making it inconsequential."[26] In this brave new world, "the system" would regulate itself. Guilhot lays the blame for this shift not only on neorealists like Waltz but also on the purposeful failure of thinkers like Morgenthau to specify *who* (if not a democratic public) should make foreign policy decisions.

Guilhot's book can thus be read as a complex counterweight to a simplified version of history in which classical realism is fixed in locked antithesis to the apolitical juggernaut of neoliberalism and systems theory. Intellectual historians reading this book might crave a slightly more nuanced definition of the "Enlightenment" itself but the absence of such an engagement in no way detracts from the overall power of the argument and, indeed, interrogating the variegated history of the term could easily have sucked up all the oxygen in the room and detracted from Guilhot's more focused critique on the equally complex history of twentieth-century anti-Enlightenment thought.[27] More notably absent from Guilhot's fine-grained genealogy is the possible influence of racial politics and imperialism

[24] Guilhot, 161.
[25] Guilhot, 219.
[26] Guilhot, 247.
[27] For good reason, the "Enlightenment" seems to come under perennial reconsideration by intellectual historians, including Jonathan Israel in the pages of this journal. See Israel, "Enlightenment! Which Enlightenment?" *Journal of the History of Ideas* 67, no. 3 (2006): 533–45.

on the emergence of postwar realism in America. From Guilhot's perspective, the anti-Enlightenment tensions at work within classical realism flowed directly from the reactions of postwar German émigré scholars to the rise of fascism and the war in Europe (a fact that makes their reliance on Schmitt all the more ironic). Moreover, Guilhot describes the security interests of the 1950s university as entirely the product of a Cold War context in which an economic fixation with scientific rationalism swallowed up any and all international or transnational democratic alternatives, and realism—devoid even of its historical and political content—became the only robust alternative to totalitarianism. We get virtually nothing, from this account, about the domestic context of Jim Crow race relations, the emergence of the United States as an imperial power before the Second World War, and the relationship between this global, racialized empire to the emerging postwar discipline of IR. How to explain, from Guilhot's perspective, that the vast majority of "realist" military deployments in the world during the Cold War took place almost entirely in the global south and the former colonized and de-colonizing world? Is America simply, as Steven Walt and John Mearsheimer argue, "the luckiest great power in history"?[28] Whither decolonization, imperialism, and looming theories of "race war" in realist thought? These seem to be particularly important omissions given the extensive role that imperialism played in fellow émigré scholar Hannah Arendt's critique of Enlightenment modernity in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Why, given Arendt's concerns, would other émigré scholars erase imperialism (recent and remote) from their theories? What happened in the US during this period to convince Morgenthau, for instance, that it was appropriate to call America a "status quo" rather than an imperial power in *Politics Among Nations* despite its recent history of continental and extra-continental expansion? And what, in the end, does this tell us about the internal contradictions of realism both historically and today?

The absence of race and imperialism in Guilhot's extraordinary book in no way undercuts what the book does well, but it does suggest that it should appear alongside Robert Vitalis's *White World Order, Black Power Politics: The Birth of American International Relations* on any syllabus dealing comprehensively with the twentieth-century history of IR in America. While Vitalis's book is not dedicated to an exposition of realism in the American discipline per se, he does touch upon it and the manner in

[28] John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, "The Case for Offshore Balancing: A Superior U.S. Grand Strategy," *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 4 (2016), 72.

which he analyzes the subject suggests much about the method he adopts in the book more broadly. In contrast to Guilhot, Vitalis's approach to the emergence of something called "realism" casts a wide historical net, tracing its resonances through the thought of those white social scientists whose scholarship provided a rationale for America's expansionist politics during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Vitalis argues that nineteenth-century thinkers who made key contributions to the emerging discipline of political science in America, such as George Stockings, lobbied for "discipline building at home and civilization building abroad" by embracing an explicitly evolutionist attitude toward political hierarchy grounded in organic racial differences.[29] During this period, he argues, scholars working on problems of world politics began theorizing international relations and interracial relations *together* through lenses familiar to both nineteenth-century Social Darwinists and contemporary realists—namely, the struggle for existence, the idea that might makes right, and the survival of the fittest.

According to Vitalis, when an approach to international relations specifically identified as realism emerged in the 1930s, it carried this language forward and it did so in a racialized and colonial context. In contrast to mainstream accounts of the tradition's founding, he maintains, the term "realist" was not introduced to America by repentant Wilsonians or by any of the major figures Guilhot identifies. Rather, Vitalis observes that "realism" appeared for the first time, in italics, in two books written by historian, political theorist, and eugenicist Lothrop Stoddard in the early 1930s. In both texts, this same man, who in the 1920s had proposed creating racially separate and unequal representative institutions, argued that a "realistic" approach to international politics must secure "Anglo-Saxon hegemony" from the threat embodied by "the delusion of international cooperation."[30] According to Stoddard, for American foreign policy experts, the only reasonable response to the decline of Anglo-Saxon civilization (portended by the rise of anti-colonial nationalism) was to become "clear-sighted realists" who embraced a neo-Darwinian approach to competition between races, nations, and Great Powers.[31] And, Vitalis argues, Stoddard was only one among many scholars during the 1930s who believed that American IR ought to be concerned primarily with the relationship between Great Powers and their "colonial possessions."

[29] Vitalis, 46.
[30] Vitalis, 83.
[31] Vitalis, 84.

In this way, Vitalis draws our attention to the "vast gulf" between "what appeared to matter in the professional study of international relations" in the 1930s and the "imaginary world that a Cold War cohort of realists would begin to conjure a decade or so later" during the period that Guilhot examines.[32] These myths of origin fail to note that race and imperialism remained absolutely central to international relations thinkers who called themselves realists during 1930s. Perhaps even more importantly and more tragically, such histories fail to recognize, or even acknowledge the existence of, the work of Black scholars such as W. E. B. Du Bois, Alain Locke, and Merze Tate—the latter two part of what Vitalis calls "the Howard School"—who were actively making critical connections between race politics in the United States, IR (as theory and practice), and the threat posed, in Locke's words, by "the imperialist world powers, America included."[33]

In its essence, Vitalis's goal in his book is the same a Guilhot's: to take the smooth skein of our flattened historical account of the discipline and re-knot it, to complicate and contextualize the development of IR in ways that challenge orthodoxies and, in the process, expose uncomfortable truths. For Guilhot, these truths cluster around the tetchy affiliation between classical realism and neo-Burkean rejections of democracy. Vitalis is interested, by contrast, in the role played by race, imperialism, and decolonization in the development of both American foreign policy and the discipline of IR from the late nineteenth century to the early 1960s, an endeavor facilitated by his understanding of the field as a fungible ideological constellation rather than a more or less coherent body of thought. On the one hand, Vitalis cares about the development of IR as a discipline, acknowledging that it is difficult for readers today to accept that our "academic ancestors" once identified the " 'international' in international relations" with racialized conceptions of populations and an abiding concern with colonial administration.[34] But the book is clearly even more interested in the historical development of IR not as a "cloistered world" but one which radiates beyond the academy. Vitalis is drawn toward those "intellectual middlemen" who skillfully translated academic discourse for a wider non-academic audience, men like Stoddard whose work on race and culture, he argues, played a similar opinion-shaping role to that of Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations* today.[35] Vitalis's book bores into the intellectual

[32] Vitalis, 86.
[33] Vitalis, 81.
[34] Vitalis, 174.
[35] Vitalis, 4.

insecurities and interdisciplinarity of the early field and examines how scholars and public intellectuals often flailed around looking for areas of expertise in which to ground the many-headed hydra of American IR as it coalesced into a discipline: flitting from history to racial science, from geography to colonial administration. In this manner, the book re-examines those forgotten modes of scholarship and policy discourse that accompanied the historical development of American power in the world.

Vitalis focuses the razor's edge of his critique on "two combined myths of IR" that continue to structure the discipline and practice of international relations today: the conviction that the United States is not and has never been an imperial power, and the belief that the discipline has never shown much interest in the study of race and imperialism. The strength of this willful ignorance—or as Vitalis beautifully puts it, the "norm against noticing"—enables mainstream accounts of American IR to proceed:

(a) *as if* this imperial history never occurred, and,
(b) *as if* this interest in race and imperialism had no long term impact on both the shape of American foreign policy and the intellectual object that is IR today, and
(c) *as if*, until Michael Doyle wrote *Empires*, no one in IR showed any interest in imperialism as an object of inquiry.

The book is structured chronologically and each chapter both analyzes the actual presence of race and empire in IR's discursive past (as well as the practice of unseeing this past) and also critically re-engages the work of those Black scholars who sought to trouble this emerging consensus. The book thus exemplifies a dialectical attempt to reveal and recover at the same time.

By critically reappraising the largely forgotten scholarship of Locke, Ralph Bunch, Tate, and other scholars associated with the Howard School, this book punches through what Vitalis calls the "virtual barrier" between critical race studies and mainstream IR in America today.[36] He tells a fascinating and disturbing story of the way white social scientists in the nineteenth and early twentieth century first integrated the "Negro Problem" in the South into their accounts of the emerging field. Equally fraught is the story of how these accounts were nested within what Edward Said famously called "imaginative geographies" that divided the world into populations of Anglo-Teutons and inferior races within both the United States and along

[36] Vitalis 14.

its aspirational fringes (Indian Territory, Mexico, the Caribbean, and the Pacific). But the story of how mainstream white IR (acting in collusion with the Cold War university) blithely ignored these connections at the same time Black scholars in America were actively making them, is simply shameful. In a perfect world, Vitalis's book would lead immediately to a cross-disciplinary reengagement with, for instance, Tate's prescient analyses of American expansion in the Pacific and Dubois's writings on race, imperialism, and international politics.

Ironically, while Vitalis's work has much to tell about myth construction and institution building in American IR, its sole focus on America could itself be interpreted as slightly exceptionalist, a criticism one could also make of Guilhot's work. Guilhot and Vitalis have both written books that are interested primarily in the responses of American (and/or émigré) scholars to either the problems they believed flowed from an Enlightenment faith in democracy or from America's racial and imperial politics. As such, these books concentrate almost exclusively on the American academy and the Cold War networks that enabled a particular historical understanding of the discipline to triumph in an American context. Even when Vitalis addresses the Atlantic Charter, or the relationship between mainstream American scholars and their UK equivalents, or notes the influence of larger decolonization movements on the Howard School thinkers, the primary debates, discussions, and instances of institutional king-making which he interrogates all took place largely within an American academic environment or the broader policy world of American think tanks. This concentration on American foreign policy and the discipline of IR in the United States makes sense given both the global influence of the American academy and, more importantly, the extraordinary political, economic, and military power wielded by the United States since the Second World War. Unsettling the myths and delusions that undergird American IR thus plays an essential role in challenging these particular constellations of power. What such an account loses, however, is a sense of both the transnational forms of cooperation that went into the creation of today's "international order" *and* the extent to which both British and American intellectuals were actively involved in theorizing the twentieth century's transition from a system of empires to a system of states through the emerging and ideologically unstable concept of "the global."

Or Rosenboim's *The Emergence of Globalism: Visions of World Order in Britain and the United States, 1939–1950* can, in this sense, serve as an important supplement to both Guilhot's and Vitalis's histories. Her analysis, for instance, expands on Vitalis's critique of the assumption in academic

IR that the "subject matter of international relations has forever been found on one side of a geographic border between the 'domestic' and the 'foreign.' "[37] Vitalis makes this argument by exploring how IR scholars once included the "Negro Problem" in the American South in their studies of global politics.[38] Those thinkers who played key roles in the formation of the discipline in the first several decades of the twentieth century, he maintains, conceptualized international politics not merely as the relations between states but, also, in terms of both "territorial and phenotypical units" as well as analyses of "anthropo-geographical boundaries."[39] His argument about this broader, racialized conception of borders, however, stops short of addressing the ways geography and imagined forms of non-state, imperially inspired space did not disappear from the horizon of a mainstream discipline that—in its own fictional account of itself—was always wedded to sovereignty and to the distinction between "domestic" and "international" politics. Instead, as Rosenboim suggests, these concepts continued to occupy the imaginations of both conservative and liberal scholars of international politics during and after the Second World War. Rosenboim's book fills in some of the untold story about what happened to "geographic" accounts of international politics after the war by tracing them through the debates surrounding "unrealized plans" for a postwar world order.[40] For instance, her chapter on the thought of Owen Lattimore and Nicholas Spykeman (who makes a few brief appearances in Vitalis's book) focuses on the use these thinkers made of "cartographic representations, geographic knowledge, and geopolitical concepts" in order to forge a vision of world order that was "a response to the post-imperial age."[41] In so doing, she provides us with a glimpse into the continued relevance (and continued discomfort) created by the intersection between imperialism and sovereignty well into the 1940s.

While Vitalis aims his recovery work at the marginalized and forgotten tradition of Black IR scholarship on race and international politics, Rosenboim's book delves into a number of mainstream but forgotten (largely failed) efforts in Britain and America during the 1940s to reconceptualize world order as globalism. In contrast to the discipline's own myth of origin, Rosenboim's emphasis on the extraordinary range of intellectual efforts that went into theorizing what were ultimately unfulfilled plans for a post-war global order, paints a remarkably diverse picture of the intellectual

[37] Vitalis, 26.
[38] Vitalis, 26.
[39] Vitalis, 57.
[40] Rosenboim, 15.
[41] Rosenboim, 56.

terrain upon which twentieth-century international relations evolved. At the same time, the book highlights just how much these ideas about global ordering were bound up with British and American anxieties about providing global politics with "an alternative to imperial relations."[42]

Like Vitalis and Guilhot, Rosenboim organizes her book both chronologically and topically. With these authors, she also writes about theories of international relations after the war developed by public intellectuals who often moved between the worlds of academia and policy think tanks. The failure of these public intellectuals to transform their plans and debates into settled schemes for international organizations and/or international law has resulted in their near disappearance from mainstream accounts of the discipline and the history of international politics in the twentieth century. The result, for Rosenboim, is a collective scholarly failure to appreciate the rich and ideologically tangled presence of "the global" in the intellectual history of IR. This is true, Rosenboim argues, for both mainstream accounts of the discipline and for critical reassessments (such as those of Vitalis and Guilhot) that focus primarily on the "American history of IR."[43]

Rosenboim's comprehensive and internally rich account of the 1940s highlights two crucial points of ideological convergence at the fulcrum of this postwar moment. First, there was considerable collaboration (alluded to in Vitalis) between American and British intellectuals and think tanks during this period, which suggests a form of imperial baton passing. Second, the theorizing around world order to emerge from these collaborations reflected the intellectual and political tensions that plagued both American and British thinkers in the 1940s. In essence, many of these debates channeled the collective desire of their participants to shore up a form of world order that preserved the political and economic hegemony of Europe, America, and the West without actually seeming imperial. At the same time, Rosenboim's reading of these debates suggests that those involved also investigated a broad range of ideas regarding the status of democracy on a global scale and were deeply conflicted about the relationship between universal and pluralist approaches to order.

Unlike Vitalis and Guilhot, Rosenboim is less interested in telling a cohesive story about the development of a discipline or set of ideas over time. Rather, the strength of her book lies in its capacity to flesh out robust accounts of particular debates and the discursive worlds that surrounded

[42] Rosenboim, 6.
[43] Rosenboim, 13–14.

them. From examining these debates up close and in context, Rosenboim draws out interesting observations about the political and intellectual concerns of the people involved. All of these thinkers, British and American, clearly worked under the assumption that the Second World War, decolonization, and the decline of the European empires created a power vacuum on a global scale and that some system of global ordering must take its place. Public intellectuals involved in these conversations mulled over a variety of solutions and approaches, and, "in their quest for new conceptual tools for the interpretation of international relations" found "inspiration in other disciplines."[44] The plans themselves ranged from watered down derivations of the British Empire (Lionel Curtis) to new schemes for economic federalism (Barbara Wooten and Friedrich Hayek) to the creation of a world constitution (Robert Hutchins). Moreover, these thinkers rooted their theorizing in markedly different epistemological grounds, from particular perceptions of science (H. G. Wells) to the Catholic doctrine of the human person (G. A. Borgese). At the same time, despite this diversity, the overall picture that we get from Rosenboim's portrayal of these thinkers is that, for a sizeable group of incredibly well-funded and influential public intellectuals in Britain and America, the question of "what happens after imperialism?" could be answered only through a conceptual framework that was both universal and committed to a hierarchically ordered world. For all of the thinkers, a world inhabited by sovereign states relating to each other in the absence of some deeper ordering principle—geographic, spiritual, humanistic, legal—was unthinkable.

For Rosenboim, this is the moment when something we call "the global" first emerged, and she does an excellent job of demonstrating—throughout the book, in different iterations—how this idea often worked to occlude its own internal incoherence. This incoherence, she argues, was frequently the result of these thinkers' wartime and postwar desire to align whatever form of global order they were theorizing with a "political commitment to assist liberalism in the cause against totalitarianism."[45] Totalitarianism, Rosenboim continues, functioned as a consistent, looming "other" against which globalists could define their political agendas, often in ways that seriously downplayed the ideological disagreements that existed between them. Rosenboim also ably demonstrates the myriad ways in which these putatively "global" responses to international political crises remained deeply committed to very specific, almost nostalgic, accounts of

[44] Rosenboim, 61.
[45] Rosenboim, 276.

Western civilization. In terms that resonate with Guilhot's analysis of realism, many of the public intellectuals Rosenboim discusses oriented their visions of global order "toward the preservation of the best of Western civilization, as they defined it, from the menacing power of bourgeois liberalism, dictatorial totalitarianism, and communism."[46]

Thus, despite differences between these thinkers, there was a streak of conservatism inherent in the clear majority of their visions, a conservatism apparent in their desire to retain and sustain liberal principles and a civilizational tradition that they failed to acknowledge was also deeply hierarchical, exclusive, and entirely Eurocentric. Despite the fact that most of them were committed to making democracy a "global political principle," these "builders of utopia" never imagined that the plans for a postwar order they theorized—however universal, pluralist, and democratic—would ever be influenced *by* thinkers from the Global South and the formerly colonized world.[47] Rather, they relied on the deeply imperialist assumption that, eventually, with enough time and tutelage, formerly colonized people would be able to join as equal and free members of a global community already established by former colonial powers. The "global," as Rosenboim's analysis of these first forays into the concept demonstrates, was constrained from the beginning by intellectual, cultural, political, and economic assumptions carried over from precisely the imperial order that these thinkers were ostensibly committed to replacing. By "attributing a global value to a particular interpretation of humanity," she maintains, globalists "developed a range of implicit and explicit strategies to limit the space for diversity within their proposed global order."[48]

If there is one thing that would significantly enrich this excellent book, it would be a brief examination of the long-term and contemporary implications of precisely this exclusionary historical framework (and the liberal rigidity it implies). What, for instance, do close studies of these *unsuccessful* liberal attempts to theorizing global order reveal to us about the *successful* theory of liberal order that has been so mythologized in the work of contemporary liberal internationalists like John Ikenberry and Daniel Deudney? By their reckoning, after the Second World War, liberal democratic states (some of which happened also to be empires) "joined together" and founded "an international order that reflected their shared interests."[49] As

[46] Rosenboim, 269.
[47] Rosenboim, 166, 169.
[48] Rosenboim, 211.
[49] Ikenberry and Daniel Deudney, "Liberal World: The Resilient Order," *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 4 (2018): 16.

Ikenberry argues elsewhere, the process whereby America was appointed leader of this new order occurred when these states simultaneously agreed to transfer "the reins of power to Washington, just as Hobbes's individuals in the state of nature voluntarily construct and hand over power over to the Leviathan."[50] Comprised of cooperating nation-states, Ikenberry and Deudney maintain, the liberal world order may have originated in values that first "emerged in the West" but these values have since "become universal."[51] Their blithe disregard for postcolonial history aside, how might exploring the intellectual richness of the actual (rather than the mythological) postwar debates described by Rosenboim alter this rose-tinted vision of history and why does that matter? Does exposing the multiple ideas at play in this moment suggest that the process of creating something we today call the "liberal world order" was decidedly more contested and less liberal than Ikenberry's story of how, one day, multiple nations woke up in the morning and decided spontaneously to nominate America to become, like Caesar, the world's "first citizen"?[52] Or, are the implications of her analysis even more damning? One is struck by how the conceptual assumptions in Rosenboim's descriptions of these failed plans *mirror* the most enduring qualities of liberal internationalism today. Both schools of thought, for example, are grounded in a faith in Western civilization and a singular unwillingness to identify or acknowledge extant forms of federalism or cosmopolitanism put forth by scholars and leaders from the Global South. Both appear simultaneously committed to and squeamish about international democracy and they share a belief that some form of global liberalism is the only bulwark against totalitarianism. Given these similarities, what might a close examination of the deeply conflicted history of "globalism" tell us, for instance, about liberal internationalism's existential crisis in the wake of the 2016 election? What might it add to the current spate of arguments debunking the "myth" of liberal order?[53]

One also wonders what a close examination of these early debates might tell us about the conflicted attitudes toward spontaneity, order, and politics that clearly plagued so many postwar thinkers, liberals, and realists alike. Guilhot confronts this discomfort head on by tracing family resemblances between the ideological content of classical realism and contemporary neoliberalism, particularly the shared fixation with imagining

[50] Ikenberry, *Liberal Leviathan*, 10.
[51] Ikenberry and Deudney, "Liberal World," 20, 18.
[52] Ikenberry, "The Plot Against American Foreign Policy," 2.
[53] See for instance, Graham Allison, "The Myth of the Liberal Order," *Foreign Affairs* 97, no. 4 (2018): 124–33; Patrick Porter, "A World Imagined: Nostalgia and the Liberal

"individualized exchanges in the market as in international relations" as an "infinity of interactions that took place in a space deprived of central authority," a space that resisted ordering and centralization. At the same time, he maintains, both realists and neorealists insist that, despite the absence of centralized authority, the space in which these spontaneous individual exchanges take place require some form of political ordering which cannot, ironically "be simply left to spontaneity." Realist and neoliberal order, Guilhot thus maintains, required an intricately constructed "framework" that "had to be maintained through political means."[54] Guilhot's account here resonates most obviously with Rosenboim's discussion of Hayek's similar attempt to theorize the global economy beyond states. Thus, as Rosenboim describes it, Hayek's "democratic federalism" also coupled an epistemological aversion to planning with a permanent, rationalized framework "within which individual initiative would have the largest possible scope and would be made to work as beneficently as possible."[55] But the similarities extend beyond Hayek who remains, after all, neoliberalism's most luminous ancestor. Rather, from Charles Merriam to Michael Polanyi to David Mitrany, the various thinkers whose work sits at the core of Rosenboim's book actively debated the extent to which a global "order" that was insulated from the potentially damaging influence of politics (and democracy) could protect "liberty." In other words, many of the thinkers involved with these failed attempts were clearly envisioning a global system that wasn't constrained by politics but didn't appear to be anti-democratic or overly systematic. Given this tension, just as Guilhot cautions against looking for solutions to neoliberalism in classical realism, what lessons might critics of both neoliberalism and liberal internationalism today learn from an examination of these early attempts to imagine order without ordering, systems without systematizing?

Eglė Rindzevičiūtė's *The Power of Systems: How Policy Sciences Opened Up the Cold War World* is concerned precisely with this relationship between politics and systems in global intellectual history. Her approach to the material, however, is somewhat different from that of the other authors analyzed here. The book explores the rise of what Rindzevičiūtė refers to as "systems cybernetic governance" by carefully tracing the institutional development of the heretofore ignored, International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis (IIASA) from its origins in in the 1960s

Order," CATO Institute, Foreign Policy Analysis, no. 843, https://www.cato.org/publications/policy-analysis/world-imagined-nostalgia-liberal-order.

[54] Guilhot, 7.

[55] Rosenboim, 161.

through its heyday in the 1980s and the fall of the Soviet Union.[56] Rindzevičiūtė describes the systems approach developed by the IIASA as a "universal, non-political science of governance" that leans heavily on technology, on the gathering of big data, and on identifying those complex, global problems that have become increasingly prominent in policy circles around the world since the 1970s.[57] Significantly indebted to Foucault's theory of governmentality to explain this mode of governance without government, Rindzevičiūtė is also attentive to the not insignificant fact that Foucault developed his theory precisely at a historical moment when the "systems approach" was gaining prominence. "Indeed" she argues, "there might be more than just a parallel" between Foucault's historical exploration of a developing "art of government" and the extant assertions of policy scientists to have invented an "art of systems analysis."[58] Rindzevičiūtė also notes the homologous evolution of this "non-political science of government" with the rise of neoliberal modes of economic and managerial discipline.[59]

The book, however, rejects typical historical analyses of the parallel emergence of systems analysis and neoliberalism as too heavy handed. Historians of Cold War science, Rindzevičiūtė argues, have typically argued that "operations research" and systems analysis were both developed by "a sprawling evil empire of techno-scientific experts who eventually morphed from being wizards of the Cold War military-industrial complex into prophets of neoliberalism."[60] In this narrative, systems analysis overflows its military banks to flood the civil sphere, gradually eroding democratic approaches to planning and policy. Rindzevičiūtė does not deny the "colonizing" capacity of systems governmentality but she challenges the high modernist assumptions of the military narrative, arguing that this analysis alone cannot explain the extent to which systems analysis was embraced by both liberal states and non-liberal states alike. Yes, she argues, the systems approach was indeed a Cold War phenomenon but it was also explicitly (and somewhat counterintuitively) a transnational, non-military, and non-governmental Cold War phenomenon. An analysis of the way the IIASA approached systems, she maintains, enables us to grasp the complex organizational and transnational efforts that went into the construction of the scientific, non-political mode of governance that now seems essential to global policy making.

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[56] Rindzevičiūtė, 3.
[57] Rindzevičiūtė, 13.
[58] Rindzevičiūtė, 8.
[59] Rindzevičiūtė, 15.
[60] Rindzevičiūtė, 73.

Rindzevičiūtė's methodologically rich approach combines archival research with interviews and ethnographic detail to paint a fascinating portrait of the policy landscape within the Soviet Union in the 1950s and within the international culture of the "IIASA family."[61] The book interrogates how the changing strategic interests of the Soviets dovetailed with both transformations taking place within American policy and planning sciences and changes occurring in the Cold War geopolitical landscape. Both "a symptom and a cause of the changing postwar governmentality," Rindzevičiūtė argues, the IIASA was created specifically to produce a politically neutral systems approach to policy.[62] A truly international think tank that included Soviet scientists from its inception, the IIASA served as a transnational space for linking emerging modes of thought about policy science, "a node," as Rindzevičiūtė puts it "where loosely coupled networks intersected, linking nascent global thinking with emerging policy sciences."[63] Those chapters in which Rindzevičiūtė brings her closely wrought, interdisciplinary sensibilities to an analysis of these communities and networks are some of the most fascinating in the book.

Perhaps the most powerful aspect of *The Power of Systems* is the question it raises about the relationship between the history of ideas and the shape of contemporary politics, a concern that also motivates this review essay. All of the authors under consideration here believe that the history of ideas *matters*, that writing counter-histories which highlight the intellectual complexity of the past open up our contemporary horizons in ways that allow us to reflect on the resonances of these original ideas and movements and, in the process, to think differently about the present. But the authors' various methodological commitments lead them to somewhat different conclusions about these resonances, particularly with regard to intention. Guilhot, for instance, believes it is a problem that contemporary left realists are turning to classical realism as an antidote to neoliberalism without taking into account the political resemblances between the two schools of thought. It isn't entirely clear from his book, however, if he thinks the presence of anti-Enlightenment ideas within early realism necessarily vitiates the radical possibilities of realism altogether or if these original intellectual intentions are simply something of which contemporary realists ought to be aware. By contrast, in her Foucauldian fashion, Rindzevičiūtė is very clear that the line between ideas and political outcome is more complicated than meets the eye.

[61] Rindzevičiūtė, 97.
[62] Rindzevičiūtė, 71.
[63] Rindzevičiūtė, 5.

This line of inquiry is most apparent in Rindzevičiūtė's extended investigations of those moments when the instrumental origins of systems analysis (to produce policy outside of the Cold War political context) were transformed into what she calls "policy argumentation" or the actual *construction of* global problems that require redress.[64] She focuses, in particular, on the transnational, East-West cooperation that went into the creation of both the IIASA's influential nuclear winter project and its report on acid rain. For a variety of local and global reasons, these projects resonated differently, and had different political consequences, but ultimately, the transnationally produced computer modelling that went into their creations helped draw attention to global problems that *had not yet* been identified. They thus became sites for both cooptation and contestation that, among other things, had an interesting and destabilizing influence on Soviet governmentality. One cannot then, Rindzevičiūtė argues, draw an untroubled line between the rise of global systems analysis and contemporary neoliberalism, because, as the example of the IIASA shows, "the liberalizing effects of system-cybernetic governmentality is always context specific."[65] Through the process of collaboration and creation, scientists involved in the IIASA were sometimes able (as with the nuclear winter and acid rain projects) to transcend the instrumental intentions of the IIASA itself. For Rindzevičiūtė, this means that "sources for critical thinking" can be found not only at the margins or in practices of resistance but also within communities established by centralized forms of power.

There is a critique to be made that, in locating her account of resistance in these deeply contextualized moments, Rindzevičiūtė's book skirts issues of coalition building, organization, and strategy. In other words, for those activists and scholars who truly want to find *political* solutions to the *depoliticizing* steamroller of neoliberalism—including its fixation on systems analysis and computer modelling—it might seem as facile to suggest that we focus our inquiry on individualized examples of resistance from within the systems community as it might be to suggest we locate solutions to global warming in the spontaneous efforts of local organic farms. The question is: at this historical moment, is enhanced "reflexivity" about the complex "political and technical contexts that have generated our current interest into ourselves" enough?

I argue that whether or not it is enough, "reflexivity" has an essential, political role to play in the struggle against not only neoliberalism but also

[64] Rindzevičiūtė, 149.
[65] Rindzevičiūtė, 217.

the rise of Trumpianism and the xenophobic right in Europe and America. Rindzevičiūtė's project thus challenges hegemonic, historical accounts of the Cold War, global policy making, and something now called "global governance." With the other books under consideration here, her historical inquiry throws a wrench in the works of those disciplinary mythmakers who respond to the global backlash against liberalism by doubling down on their versions of how the world became "what it always was" and, in the process, occlude political alternatives to the neoliberal status quo other than totalitarianism. In this sense, just as Rosenboim points out the ways postwar globalism's "commitment to assist liberalism in the cause against totalitarianism" restricted the space for diversity within its vision of global order, so too do the contemporary responses of mainstream IR scholars to Trump's foreign policy narrow our political horizons to the same conceptual frameworks that have held American foreign policy captive since 1945. The kind of humble reflexivity about the roots of our contemporary international order modeled by Rindzevičiūtė and every other author here does a service to anyone trying to expand the pool of possible alternatives to our present historical situation beyond the limited imaginations of today's IR punditry.

By collectively engaging the diverse complexity of twentieth-century international thought and the ideological struggles that went into the construction of IR's "invented history," Guilhot, Vitalis, Rosenboim, and Rindzevičiūtė trouble contemporary truths about international order and global governance. Vitalis's and Rosenboim's analyses reveal, for example, how IR scholars did not always conceive of the world in state terms where "domestic" and "foreign" affairs occupied discrete and unreachable realms. They also demonstrate the way concerns about imperialism, geography, and (for Vitalis) race permeated the earliest iterations of these discourses. Rosenboim and Guilhot each stress the extent to which democracy—in both its "domestic" and "foreign" contexts—was a source of anxiety and promise for scholars in the postwar period and, in so doing, suggest that it might be possible today to imagine democratic practice in a global context differently. Both Rindzevičiūtė and Rosenboim locate unexpected sources of political and intellectual transformation within sites of institutionalized, transnational power. Guilhot, by contrast, warns critics against seeking political inspiration in the founding moments of a still powerful contemporary discourse without adequately analyzing that discourse's connections to precisely the political phenomena these critics seek to transcend. Finally, Vitalis demonstrates most clearly the political stakes involved in allowing contemporary IR to deny its historical affiliations with

racism and imperialism while also denying the contributions of those scholars theorizing from the standpoint of America's victims. In sum, all the books discussed herein demonstrate the power of writing counter histories in a "post-factual" age when most mainstream IR scholars can only respond to the "Make America Great Again" movement by insisting upon the purity of their own invented histories. In so doing, all four authors open up new avenues for inquiry and suggest that a different global future is possible.

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