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Article:

Conceptualising humanity in the English School

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The article advances three options to shape future English School (ES) appeals to humanity. First, reject humanity and view interconnectedness as state-centric rather than human-centric, with international law upheld as the bedrock institution of international society. Second, thin humanity puts forward a reductionist view that the value of humankind lies in the human worth of its members - human beings. In short, humanity is the sum of its parts. Third, thick humanity, which views humankind as an independent value in its own right. From this perspective, the value of humanity lies in its ubiquity, which reveals that it is not just more, it is different, to the sum of its parts. It is important to note that this is not a purely theoretical issue. One's view of humanity shapes one's view of whether citizens of one state should care for the citizens of another, which lies at the heart of contemporary debates over issues such as the responsibility to protect, human security, and redistributive justice. In so doing, the article speaks to broader debates on humanity that reflects the need for greater interdisciplinary research in the future.

In a recent interdisciplinary study on 'human dignity', the contributors set out to address the concept's vague and open meaning.[2] We are told historically that '[m]ost people believed that they knew what human dignity was about' but that this attitude has changed, prompting a call for intellectual study on the topic (Düwell 2014, 23). In a similar vein, this article draws attention to the English School (ES) tendency to appeal to a different concept – humanity - as though everyone knows what it means, without clarifying the nature of the appeal. This undermines the claims made in its name. For example, in William Bain's (2007, 561) critique of Nicholas J. Wheeler's (2000) seminal text Saving Strangers: Humanitarian Intervention in International Society, he points out that Wheeler 'invokes humanity as a self evident moral truth - the authority of which requires no further explanation - which in the end cannot tell us the reasons why we should act to save strangers'. For Bain (2007, 558), this forms part of the ES's failure to get to grips with the concept of obligation in international relation, which, it is claimed, is needed to understand what Wight called 'the law behind the law'. This is not to

[2] I am drawing here on the interdisciplinary project that began in 2006 and culminated in Düwell Marcus; Braarvig, Jens; Brownsword, Roger; Mieth, (2014) (Eds.), The Cambridge Handbook of Human Dignity: Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

suggest that we should accept Bain's view as the truth,[3] but that it provides a useful entry point into the broader problem within the ES discourse that this article seeks to address: a weak understanding of humanity undermines any claim made on its behalf.

This is a particular problem for the ES precisely because it has made a name for itself by focusing on non-material explanations of structure (Linklater and Suganami, 2006, 2).[4] ES scholars have differentiated themselves from the mainstream tendency to define structure in terms of 'Waltz' materialist definition as a distribution of capabilities' (Wendt, 1999, 249). To do this, they have looked to issues such as human rights, human justice, humanitarian intervention and humanity to explain how such non-material factors shape the behaviour of states. To be clear, this article does not suggest that discussions of concepts such as human rights, human justice, and humanitarian intervention have to engage with humanity. For example, one can speak of human rights or humanitarian intervention without invoking humanity. As this paper outlines, one can in fact reject humanity and still uphold a commitment to ideas such as humanitarian intervention. Yet as evidenced in section one, at times, ES scholars specifically appeal to humanity in order to facilitate their argument, but more often than not, fail to ground it in a substantive manner.[5] To put this another way, humanity is used without clarifying the nature of its use. Hence, reassessment is necessary in order to reflect on the ES conceptualisation of humanity. This will undoubtedly shape discussions on the relationship between humanity and other concepts such as humanitarian intervention but as stated, the argument here is not that the latter have to be anchored on the former. Nor is it that there is one fixed understanding of humanity. The three options set forth create new ways for thinking about humanity.

The article is structured in four sections. First, it looks at previous ES research to illustrate the various ways in which ES scholars appeal to humanity. The article then devotes three sections to different options that can guide future ES scholarship.

> Option one: reject humanity. This stems from an underlying scepticism toward appeals to humanity within a society of states. Interconnectedness is viewed as state-centric rather than a human-centric with international law identified as the bedrock institution of international society. To return to the question of 'why should we save strangers?' the focus is on the implications for international order rather than the idea that acts such as genocide terrorize us all by demeaning our common humanity.

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[3] The article does offer an alternative formulation of one of Bain's claims and provides a more grounded understanding of Wheeler's position.

[4] In so doing, they have differentiated themselves from the mainstream tendency to define structure in terms of 'Waltz' materialist definition as a distribution of capabilities' (Wendt, 1999, 249),

[5] As this article evidences, the notable exceptions are Andrew Linklater and Matthew Weinert.

Option two: thin humanity. A reductionist approach that reduces the value of humanity as a collective down to the human worth of the individuals within it. In short, humanity is the sum of its parts: human beings. This can provide the foundation for pluralist and solidarist visions of international society, which although radically different from each other, incorporate a thin conception of humanity.

Option three: thick humanity. This section proposes that humanity as a whole is not merely more, but actually different from the sum if its parts (human beings). To ground this, it explores Anderson's notion that 'more is different' to claim that the value of humanity as a collective is not captured through a reductionist focus on the individuals within it. To aid such study, it asks ES scholars to engage more with interdisciplinary studies of emergence.

The fact that the article advances three alternative understandings of humanity reflects this author's view that there will never be one defining articulation of humanity. The aim here is to start a conversation rather than produce an end-point. Essentially, ES scholars have engaged with the concept of humanity in a variety of ways (section one) and no doubt this will continue to do so. It is this author's hope that in the future, ES scholars will clarify their appeals to humanity in a more rigorous manner. The three options (sections two, three and four) aid this goal. This will of course have broader interdisciplinary implications. Because the concept of humanity is studied extensively in disciplines such as International Political Theory, Moral Philosophy, International Law, and Sociology, it is evident that ES study of humanity is not a one-way street. ES scholars need to draw insight from other disciplines and indeed this article does. The hope is that in time, the ES will be able to contribute to far-reaching debates on humanity.

Previous Research

At the outset, it is necessary to say a few words regarding the rationale for focusing on the ES scholars identified below. First, it is important to recognise that Wight, Mayall, Wheeler, Jackson, Linklater and Weinert specifically invoke humanity. Second, the examples reveal that ES scholars use humanity in different ways. This in itself is not a problem and the purpose of this article is not to suggest ES scholars should have one static understanding of humanity. Hence, the three options reflect radically different positions. Third, it underlines the fact that more often than not, appeals to humanity are not grounded in a substantive

manner. Fourth, the varieties of use signpost how the three options in sections two, three, and four, can advance existing ES appeals.

Prior to analysing ES applications of humanity, it is important to say a few words on concept itself.[6] Humanity is often portrayed in two ways: humans and humankind. The first is defined as 'the quality or condition of being human', the second, 'the human race' itself (Onions 1973, 995). The former focuses on the inherent quality of humans. Whether framed in terms of biological sameness, human nature, human essence, or human dignity (which are contested concepts in themselves[7] and often overlap[8]), they invoke the idea that humans have an intrinsic value. For example, Nussbaum (1993, 243) defines human nature as 'features of humaneness that lie beneath all local traditions'. The second understanding views humans as a collective 'common humanity'. This is not to suggest that the two are mutually exclusive. For example, Geras (2005, 168-181) claims that acts such as genocide should be understood as 'inhuman acts' (the first understanding of humanity) that 'terrorize us all' (the second understanding of humanity). Therefore, when one reads statements such as 'genocide killing in Africa diminishes us all' (Keane, 1995, 30), one can see the logic of both humanities at play. This brief overview illustrates that humanity is a multi-faceted concept. Moreover, one needs to consider whether humanity represents an empirical or normative concept. It may be the case, as Clark argues, that one cannot separate the normative from the empirical (2014, 22), but at present such clarity is not evident in the ES's use of humanity.

For Wight (1992, 73), there are 'three stages of society and law', which help us make sense of the relationship between international society and humanity. The first stage is that of the State which is bound my municipal law, the second stage is that of international society which is bound by the positive law of nations, the third stage is that of 'mankind' which is bound by natural law. From this view, international society operates at a different level to that of humankind with the two bound by a different body of law. Drawing on Christianity, Wight argued that despite living in a world of states, humanity can be unified (as suggested by Jesus) but went onto claim that this 'depended on the individual's choice whether he would join the human race, so to say, or opt out' (cited in Hall 2006, 85). To return to the two understandings of humanity outlined above, the statement implies that

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[6] There have been a number of substantial works done on the topic in the post-Cold War era (Nussbaum, 1997; Berlin 1998; Gaita 2000; Glover 2001; Wilson and Brown 2009; Teitel 2011; Pinker 2011).

[7] For example, Zhang's trilogy of work on the concept of human dignity (2000; 2007; and 2013) stems from his claim that discussions of it are mired in 'conceptual chaos' which he evidences through twelve different applications of the concept (2000, 300). See also, (Donnelly, 2015).

[8] On the relationship between human dignity and human worth, see Schachter (1983).

humans can choose to opt out of being interconnected whilst still being human. He does not imply that opting out is beneficial and instead treats humanity as an empirical rather than normative concept. The outcome gives weight to the idea that state-centric interpretations of international society do not have to factor humanity into their understanding of international relations (option one).

In contrast, sometimes humanity is put in an empirical context to underpin normative claims. Mayall invokes humanity in order to shed light on the difference between international system (realism) and international society (the ES).[9] Claiming that international system 'diminishes the human component' in international relations, he prefers international society because it 'draws attention to the fact that states are made up of human beings' and that 'states can act only through the agency of human beings' (1993, 282). This underpins Mayall's claim that the term international society is 'worthwhile' precisely because it represents humanity. In a similar vein to Wight, Mayall views humanity as an empirical reality but there are two key differences. First, the relationship between humanity and international society is portrayed as one in which the latter incorporates the former. Second, taking a normative step, Mayall argues that because the ES brings humanity into its understanding of international relations this helps explain why it is more valid than realism. Establishing what this value is, however, is unclear. Saying that states are made up of human beings does not tell us anything substantive about humanity. It also creates a straw man of realism. Since ES scholars do not have a monopoly on the concept[10], if they do wish to claim that the ES approach best captures humanity (as Mayall implies), they need to demonstrate this more rigorously.

A more detailed engagement with humanity is evident in the ES pluralist/solidarist debate. In a bizarre twist, Jackson's (2000) defence of pluralism and Wheeler's (2000) defence of solidarism use the term humanity thirty four times each. For Jackson '[a]ll people share a common humanity, but most people are inclined to live in families, countries and other restricted political groups. They are thus inclined to live apart from others' (2000, 43). The statement implies that humans share a common humanity yet emphasises the value of

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[9] Mayall identifies humanity as one of six reasons why he prefers the term international society rather than international system. The others are grammar, usage, commonality, volition, and exclusivity (278-286).

[10] For example, revisionist accounts have claimed that 'a wide range of classical realist, critical theory, and poststructuralist writings emphasise the return of the human and humanity into political and social order and its theorising' (Behr and Rosch 2012, 25).

difference.[11] Explaining this, Hurrell states, '[i]t is precisely differences in social practices, values, beliefs, and institutions that represent the most important expression of our common humanity' (2007, 40, emphasis in original). This leads Jackson to reject humanitarian intervention on the grounds that each state should be allowed to tend their own patch (2000, 410). Despite the considerable merit of Jackson's study, the under-theorised understanding of humanity creates two problems. First, the elite-centric view of humanity is unfounded. The reader is informed that 'leaders represent humanity in its full heterogeneity' (2002, 22) but is this true? Without evidencing this, Jackson falls into the same trap as Wheeler as he presents his version of humanity (albeit a very different one) as a self-evident truth. Second, Jackson grants leaders the political freedom to tend their own patch without considering that genocide occurs precisely because elites eradicate the 'weeds' they do not wish to see in their garden (Bauman, 1989, also, Levene 2005, Vincent 2010, 104-129). Because of this, a case can be made that Jackson's argument fails according to its own logic. If one accepts that genocide erodes the diversity of humanity – because it destroys 'the essential foundations' of groups whose culture, identity, and traditions made up the fabric of humanity[12] – then granting elites a level of autonomy that facilitates the likelihood of genocide erodes the diversity which Jackson sets out to defend in the first place.

Wheeler (2000, 36) draws on Walzer to claim that certain crimes 'shock the conscience of humanity'. Because of this, humanitarian intervention is required in order to uphold 'the basic standards of humanity' (41, 277, 295, and 307). There are two problems with this. First, to return to Bain's analysis, precisely because humanity is not anchored on stronger philosophical foundations, it does little to tell us why we should act to save strangers. To offer another example, in 2005 Wheeler questioned whether the Responsibility to Protect agreement represents 'A victory for common humanity?' yet fails to explain the idea of common humanity thereby, once again, invoking humanity as a self-evident truth.[13] To be fair to Wheeler, in his original study he does explain that 'solidarism is committed to upholding minimum standards of common humanity, which means placing the victims of human rights abuse at the centre of its theoretical project', but essentially that is as far as he

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[11] From this perspective, the focus on cooperation and collectiveness within solidarist accounts represents a misreading of international relations. Humans, we are informed, are not like this. This is rooted in human nature, for example, Williams (2005, 29) claims diversity 'is not a product of the state system but a fundamental feature of the human condition'.

[12] I am drawing here on Lemkin's original formulation that genocide is 'intended rather to signify a coordinated plan of different actions aiming at the destruction of essential foundations of the life of national groups, with the aim of annihilating the groups themselves' (2005, 79).

[13] For further analysis, see Gallagher and Brown (2015).

goes (2000, 38). Second, Wheeler's focus on statements made by political elites who make reference common humanity fails to get to grips with Schmitt's critique that 'whoever invokes humanity wants to cheat' (cited in Luban 2010, 464). More often than not, Wheelers discussion of humanitarian intervention tells us how it could, as opposed to why it should, become a norm in the 21st century. Ultimately, in both Jackson and Wheeler, we find an appeal to humanity (x) underpinning policy claims made in its name (y) which represents non-intervention for Jackson and intervention for Wheeler. The problem is that because (x) is not grounded in any substantive manner, the call to implement (y) is unfounded. To tackle this, option two puts forward a reductionist approach that roots the value of humanity in the human worth of its individual members.

In the work of Andrew Linklater we see ES scholarship that paves the way for analysing the value of humanity at the collective level. Essentially, Linklater's on-going studies on 'human interconnectedness' (1998) address 'the problem of community in international relations' (2007, 30-35). In so doing, he critiques the dominant narrative that because humankind is divided up into states, 'insiders' within states, have very little in common with 'outsiders' in other states.[14] Drawing on Norbert Elias's seminal (though not influential in IR) studies on civilizing and decivilizing processes, Linklater examines the potential for 'collective social learning' at the international level (2011, 12). Evidencing this through a focus on harm, he concludes that a 'global harm narrative' has emerged in international relations (2009, 491) as evidenced in agreements such as the 1948 Genocide Convention and the 2005 Responsibility to Protect (R2P). Thus, collective social learning goes beyond borders as 'cosmopolitan harm conventions' such as these, demonstrate how concerns for humanity shape the behaviour of states.[15] The pressing point for this article is that Linklater's studies provides a rare insight into how ES scholarship can examine 'the long-term trend towards the social and political integration of humanity' (2011, 26). The implications of which is that the ES can in fact begin to address the question, is humanity a general feature of international societies? This can of course, also help us understand the place of humanity in contemporary international society but perhaps most importantly, begin to analyse the potential value of humanity as a collective (see option three).

Perhaps the most detailed ES study on this topic to date is Matthew Weinert's Making Human: World Order and the Global Governance of Human Dignity (2015). Weinert starts

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[14] For a critique, see Schweller (1999).
[15] See also, Shapcott (2008).

from the premise that we cannot understand the construct of humanity without understanding its component parts: human beings (22). He defines 'human *being'* as 'intersubjective understandings and standards that determine who is human. These, in turn, are both informed by and limit being human, meaning all those activities, affiliations, identities, memberships, programs, and projects that give our particular lives meaning' (2). To explain, through a focus on cruelty, Weinert investigate the process of humanisation (rather than dehumanisation) to question how individuals who have previously been dehumanised are re-incorporated back into international society. Although the book represents a major contribution to the discourse, it also emphasises the complexities involved for those trying to make sense of how the ES uses humanity. Critically, Weinert does not assume humanity has members. The starting point of his analysis is not the biological sameness or equal moral worth[16] but instead sees being human as a social construction. The implications for the ES are quite striking as he offers a radical departure from the traditional ES view of human rights. Classically, the ES has upheld the Grotian commitment to natural law for example; natural rights are a pre-cursor to human dignity (see Westerman, 2015, 110-116). Putting forward a very different approach, Weinert sees humans as constructed and therefore notions of rights and dignity as relative.

Surveying the ES's use of the term humanity, some key trends appear. First, ES scholars invoke humanity in both an empirical and normative context but fail to distinguish between the two. Second, scholars such as Jackson and Wheeler question whether humanity is a feature of contemporary international society, whereas Linklater and Wight offer insight into humanity as a general feature of international societies. Third, most accounts fail to clarify the nature of their appeal to humanity (with Linklater and Weinert being the notable exceptions). Against this backdrop, the article shifts its focus to outline three different positions to guide future ES appeals to humanity.

Option one: reject humanity

In the 19th century, Alexander Herzen stated '[t]he word 'humanity' is repugnant; it expresses nothing definite and only adds to the confusion of all remaining concepts a sort of piebald demi-god. What sort of unit is understood by the word 'humanity'?' (1982, 523). Although

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[16] This is notably different from, for example, Jackson (2006, 137) who specifically invokes Kant's claim that human beings should not be treated as a means to an end thus implying equal moral worth.

such thinking is not commonly associated with the ES, the claim here is that ES scholars can uphold such thinking to reject the existence of humanity.

Locating this perspective within the ES asks us to return to the relationship between order and justice at the international level. Bull famously developed an 'order versus justice' dichotomy (2002, 74-94) in which he claimed that order should be understood as an empirical reality rather than a normative value, goal, or objective (xxxv). Despite this, he argued that international order (based on the absence of conflict) should be preserved because pursuits of justice represent moral overreach that threaten it. Revisionists have rightly pointed out that Bull's approach is in fact grounded on an appeal to the moral value of order and because of this, the reader is presented with a 'rather arbitrary separation between two kinds of values': social order and social justice (Linklater and Sugunami 2006, 264). Although still firmly moored in a commitment to the value of order, Bull (1982) and Vincent (1986) advocated a broader commitment to social justice when faced with the empirical reality of how the status quo did not seem to be addressing problems such as apartheid and starvation. This solidarist turn, underpinned the pro-humanitarian intervention movement within the ES (Wheeler 1992; Wheeler 2000; Bellamy 2015), which has been somewhat counter-balanced by a continued commitment to pluralism (Mayall 2000; Jackson 2000; Williams 2015).

Regarding option one, the key aspect to understand is that appeals to ES pluralist coexistence and solidarist convergence can be grounded on the primary institution of international law rather than humanity. For example, Mayall states that international law is the 'bedrock institution on which international society stands or falls' (cited in Buzan 2004, 170). Moreoever, international law is as a primary institution identified by Wight, Bull, Mayall, Holsti, James and Jackson (Buzan 2004, 174). The point is that in very simple terms, for international law to exist, it does not mean that humanity has to. Yes, states are made up of human beings and political elites may even invoke concepts such as humanity when constructing international agreements but this does not mean that common humanity exists. It is important to stress that there are many reasons why solidarism may emerge. Solidarity refers to an establishment of common interests but this does not presuppose on what grounds these interests are forged. Thus, individuals, trade-unions, non-governmental organisations and states represent different actors that can forge solidarity based on radically different foundations. For Bull, a 'solidarity of states' is based on states adhering to constitutional principles that they forge through deliberation (Bull 2000, 230-232). This may stem from a

state-centric construction of international law that stops short of embodying a cosmopolitan ethic associated with humanity (Habermas 2010; Brown 2010, 256).

Putting option one into context, let us consider the debate over the R2P as this directly relates to the question, why should we save strangers? On one hand, scholars could argue that the R2P does not bring anything new to the legal table (Reinhold 2010; Hehir 2011). Thus, ES pluralists such as Mayall and Jackson may claim that it has done little to alter the norm of non-intervention enshrined in articles 2 (4) and (7) of the UN Charter. In contrast, scholars could claim that even though the R2P does not represent a new legal system, this does not mean that it is legally void (Bellamy and Reike 2010). Instead, it is important to recognise that 'the legal core' of the R2P rests on pro-intervention legal frameworks such as the 1948 Genocide Convention (Arbour 2008, 450). The point here is not to suggest for one moment this will help resolve the debate over the legality of humanitarian intervention (Hurd; 2011) but to simply highlight that the debate can take place without invoking the concept of humanity. Additionally, it would not tie ES pluralism and solidarism to fixed principles as their claims of legitimacy would alter as changes in international law take place. This could also allow ES pluralism to uphold a narrow understanding of human security that could favour limited forms of intervention (Weinert 2011, 32) as long as they were grounded in international law.

To return to Bain, the obvious criticism of option one is the question of where the normative content of international law comes from. In other words, how can we explain the law behind the law? Bain (2007, 570) proposes two laws – the law of reason and of will – which it is claimed stem from one order: 'a world in which the law of reason that expresses human community is held out as the rule and measure of a law of will that expresses the society of states'. In so doing, Bain invokes a commitment to human community in order to ground normative theory within the ES. Although this author does not disagree with the idea that normative theory can be grounded on an appeal to human community, there may be other reasons that further explain the normative content of international law. It seems perfectly plausible that one could argue that in a world full of competing legal, moral, and political claims, the moral value of international order is best served by a commitment to international law. As a result, even if we accept Bain's two laws - of reason and will - one can still reformulate his ordering principle: a world in which the law of reason that expresses the moral value of order based on international law is held out as the rule and measure of a law of will that expresses the society of states. Whereas Bain invokes natural law (which Wight

associates with humankind) to provide the normative underpinnings of international society, there remains scope for upholding a commitment to utilitarianism as the ordering logic of international society.

To put this thinking another way, perceived advances in international law can be viewed as progressive because they further serve the goal of international order rather than common humanity. This understanding poses a direct challenge to those that champion the idea that the historical evolution of international law has developed in accordance with an increasing concern for humanity. For example, Teitel claims that we now live in 'new discourse of politics' which represents 'humanity's law' (Teitel 2011, 216). In sharp contrast, Koskenniemi (2012, 136) argues Teitel's interpretation of international law 'reads like ideology' 'rather than history...[r]eading acts or statements by international institutions as automatically representative of humanity law overlooks the routine of hegemonic politics that leads to their adoption'. To illustrate this critique, consider the many statements made by US Presidents who declared that they will "never again" allow genocide to occur but in reality never actually acknowledged genocide in the 20th century - whilst it was actually occurring (Power 2003) and when they did, in the context of Darfur in 2004, very little was done (Mayroz 2008). Such an approach would aim to shine light on the power politics at play beneath the slogans that are often latched onto by those that claim the emergence of an 'international humanitarian order' (Barnett 2010, 2011; Barnett and Weiss 2011).

Although no ES scholar has explicitly rejected the idea of humanity, there are insights into such thinking in Bull and Byers. For instance, within the competing pelagian and anti-pelagian voices evident in Bull's Anarchical Society (see Rengger 2006) there is a strong state-centric view that questions the existence of humanity '[it could not be seriously argued....that the society of all mankind is already a going concern' (Bull [1977] 82-83; also Bain 564). Placing this within the context of Bull's work, this particular voice suggests that international society can exist despite not being concerned with humankind. In a similar vein, Byers (1999, 162) understanding of international law is evidently influenced by Koskenniemi's scepticism outlined above. This option therefore, paves the way for ES thinking which rejects, or at the very least, neither rejects or accepts (Gallagher 2013), the existence of humankind in the interconnected sense. This would allow ES pluralists and solidarists to re-formulate their positions in accordance with international law whilst distancing themselves from the 'piebald demi-god' concept of humanity.

Option two: thin humanity

If we return to Herzen's question, 'What sort of unit is understood by the word 'humanity'?', this section puts forward a reductionist approach that grounds the value of humanity on the inherent worth of its members: human beings. It is thin therefore in the sense that it reduces the value of common humanity down to a minimalist focus on human worth, basic rights, and human dignity. Of the three options, this will strike the reader as the most conventional; however, an acceptance of minimalist humanity can still underpin radically different pluralist and solidarists worldviews.

In Vincent's analysis on human rights, he identifies four positions on a minimalist maximalist spectrum (1986, 112). Regarding the former, he places i) H. L. A. Hart who upholds the equal right to be free and, ii) Henry Shue's commitment to 'basic rights' which act as a prerequisite for the purist of all other rights. Regarding the latter, he identifies, iii) John Finnis's 'all the requirements of practical reasonableness making possible the basic goods of human flourishing', and iv) more expansive accounts of human rights found in treaties, conventions, and declarations such as the 1948 Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Putting forward his own position, Vincent (1986; 126) explains that basic rights represent 'the minimal modification of the morality of states: it seeks to put a floor under the societies of the world and not a ceiling over them. From the floor up is the business of several societies'.[17] Drawing on this logic, option two develops the idea that the human worth of the individual puts a floor beneath states. This acts as an alternative to the rather ambiguous and lofty ideal of common humanity. It does not aim to uphold broader commitments to human rights associated with hard-line liberal and neoconservative positions (Dunne 2013; Ralph 2014).

To further flesh out the meaning of 'thin' in this context, let us turn to Walzer (whose earlier writings influenced Vincent):

> Societies are necessarily particular because they have members and memories, members with memories not only of their own but also of their common life. Humanity, by contrast, has members but no memory, and so it has no history and no culture, no customary practices, no familiar life-ways, no festivals, no shared understandings of the social good (1994, 8).

The statement captures two important aspects. First, it asserts the idea that humanity does in fact exist for it has members and therefore challenges the scepticism put forward by Herzen in option one. Second, it argues that unlike domestic societies, the members of humanity do

not have any shared memories, history, culture, practices or understandings of the social good. In so doing, it casts a sceptical light on the idea that humankind has an independent value in its own right (option three). As it is well documented, this led Walzer to challenge the notion of distributive justice on the grounds that it is relative to social meaning (1983, ch.1) but advocate humanitarian intervention in order to stop acts that 'shock the moral conscience of humankind' (1992; 107; also, Wheeler 2000, 28; Bellamy 2015, 4). On scrutiny, the rhetoric seems somewhat surprising. On one hand, Walzer implies that humankind has no shared experiences (or at least not enough to create a memory, tradition, culture, practice or festival) yet on the other hand, he invokes the idea that it has a conscience that can be shocked.

To return to the idea of thin humanity, it seems that the calls for intervention are rooted in the knowledge that such acts violate the basic rights of human beings. Humanity's value therefore, stems from the human worth of its members. Accordingly, this author proposes that a stronger engagement with related concepts, for example, human dignity may help ES scholars substantiate the claims made in the name of humanity. Returning to the pluralist solidarist debate, we can clearly see concepts such as dignity at play. For Jackson's '[p]luralism embraces the principle of common humanity while fully respecting the dignity of different cultures and civilizations' (2000, 408). From this perspective, the value of humanity (x) stems from each state having the right to develop its own vision of civilization, because without this the human dignity of its members is violated. Dignity stems from the right to be different. For the pluralist, this is best served by the policy prescriptions (y) of state sovereignty and non-intervention. Without saying so, the solidarist challenge asks us to consider what should be done when a clash of dignities occurs in international relations. By this, I mean, the dignity of difference that pluralists tell us serves human dignity versus the mass violation of human dignity embodied in crimes such as genocide. For example, Wheeler (2000) cites the empirical claims made by state representatives who appeal to the 'dignity and conscience of the international community' (185), 'the triumph of freedom, justice, and human dignity' (125), 'the dignity of the sons and daughters of Africa' (129). For solidarists, the dignity of the state embodied in state sovereignty is forfeited when states massively violate human rights.

This is not to suggest that incorporating the concept of dignity is an easy task. For example, writing at the same time as Jackson and Wheeler, Zhang (2000; 300) claimed that

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[17] For more recent accounts on Vincent see Linklater 2011b; Rengger 2011; Welsh 2011.

the concept of human dignity was mired in 'conceptual chaos' and illustrates this through twelve different applications of the concept. Essentially, the pluralist position suggests that states would respect each other's right to independence. This enables each state to codify their understanding of human dignity into domestic law.[18] This is the inherent right of states and should not be violated by other states. For solidarists, it is worth remembering that 'human dignity was established in 1948 as the foundational concept of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights...as a statement against the Shoah, against totalitarianism, and against the atrocities of war' (Duwell, Braarvig, Brownsword, and Mieth 2014; xvii). Our moral revulsion stems from an acknowledgement that crimes such as genocide violate the human dignity of victims to the point that states have a responsibility to protect them. As Donnelly explains, the consensus that underpins the anti-genocide norm stems from 'the underlying idea that human rights are about a life of dignity and not mere life' (Donnelly, 2003, 247).

To put the two approaches to human dignity in context let us return to the question, should we save strangers? In 2001, The International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty published its seminal report, The Responsibility to Protect, in which the Commissioners invoked both understandings of dignity. Regarding the pluralist commitment to the dignity, the report sets out the following (8):

> For many states and peoples, it is also recognition of their equal worth and dignity, a protection of their unique identities and their national freedom, and an affirmation of their right to shape and determine their own destiny. In recognition of this, the principle that all states are equally sovereign under international law was established as a cornerstone of the UN Charter (Article 2.1)

The statement implies that each state's worth and dignity comes from its inherent right to pursue its own identity and freedom. The understanding is clearly in tune with Jackson's notion that humanitarian intervention represents a violation of this dignity (but does not go as far as to suggest that state elites represent humanity in its full heterogeneity). In a seminal step, the Commissioners went on to reconceptualise sovereignty in order to capture both understandings of dignity: 'Sovereignty implies a dual responsibility: externally – to respect the sovereignty of other states, and internally, to respect the dignity and basic rights of all the people within the state' (ICISS, 2001, 8 emphasis added). The statement recognises the

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[18] For a discussion on the legal implementation of human dignity in France, Germany, the US, South America,

dignity of difference embodied in state sovereignty but grounds this on a conditional understanding that state elites do not use their power to violate human dignity on a mass scale. When they do, the Commissioners upheld the solidarist ethic (Wheeler, 2000, 12, 38, 94, 126) that states forfeit their right of sovereignty. This is not to say that the Commissioners were right in their prescription. It is worth remembering that three pro-humanitarian interventionists wrote the final report: Evans, Thakur, and Ignatieff (Bellamy, 2009, 38). Although states endorsed this in 2005, R2P critics have upheld a pluralist ethic to reject the reconceptualization of sovereignty (Cunliffe 2010).

The intention here is not to resolve the pluralist solidarist debate. Instead, it merely offers a way to make sense of humanity. As explained in the introduction, ES scholars are guilty of invoking humanity as though everyone knows what it means. Quite simply, we need to move beyond this as any claim made in the name of humanity needs to be built on a more rigorous understanding of the concept. This section put forward a reductionist account that strips the value of humanity down to the human worth of its members: human beings. To put this another way, it anchors the basic standards of humanity on the basic rights of individuals. Engaging more with concepts such as human dignity is essential and more research is necessary. As touched upon in section one, the ES is very much grounded on the idea that human rights come before human dignity thereby aligning with Grotius rather than Pufendorf, but this does not address the recent challenge set forth by Weinert (2015) as he views human worth, human beings, and dignity as constructed and relative. Furthermore, whereas Weinert treats humanity as an institution of world society, in rooting the value of humanity in basic rights, option two enables those that view human rights as an institution of international society (such as Mayall) to put forward the case that thin humanity is an institution of international society.

Option three: thick humanity

Fascinating questions begin to arise when one begins to consider whether humanity as the whole is not merely more, but actually different from, the sum if its parts. Here I draw on the seminal More is Different (1972) by physicist Philip Warren Anderson. Acknowledging Marx's notion that 'quantitative differences become qualitative ones', he asks us to consider how the accumulation of particles can take on a qualitatively different value to that found in each individual particle. To illustrate this he uses the example of crystals, 'built from a

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South Africa, China, Japan, and India see Duwell, Braarvig, Brownsword, and Mieth 2014, 368-444.

substrate of atoms and space according to laws which express the perfect homogeneity of space, the crystal suddenly and unpredictably displays an entirely new and very beautiful symmetry' (395). In other words, the value of the crystal cannot be reduced down to its individual parts. On one hand, the crystal could not exist without the atoms within it but on the other, if one held each atom individually, one would not experience the value of the crystal as a whole. Hence, the title 'more is different' captures the idea that the crystal has an independent qualitatively different value to that of its atoms. Here the ES will benefit from engaging with studies of 'emergence' which seek to show the limits of reductionist accounts in the natural and social sciences.[19] Emergence theorists ask us to consider that '[s]ocieties, people and machines are not collectives, wholes or aggregates of simpler constituents' (Bhaskar cited in Kaidesoja, 2009, 302).With this in mind, this section explores the idea that the value of humanity cannot be explained by option two's reductionist focus on individual human beings. Like a crystal, humanity as whole takes on a qualitatively different value. Unlike the crystal, however, humanity is not to be thought of as a thing of beauty and/or fixed. It is a forever changing process that embodies a ubiquitous value.

Although this may strike the reader as unchartered territory for the ES, Linklater's focus on civilizing processes and Weintert's study on the construction of human beings, being human, and humanity, begin to illustrate how humanity can be understood as an independent value. Consider Elias' explanation of how civilizing and decivilizing processes (even if he does not mention the latter in this quote) have shaped human history.

> It is simple enough: plans and actions, the emotional rational impulses of individual people, constantly interweave in a friendly or hostile way. The basic tissue resulting from many single plans and actions of men can give rise to changes and patterns that no individual person has planned or created. From this interdependence of people arises an order sui generis, an order compelling and stronger than the will and reason of the individuals composing it. It is this order of interweaving human impulses and strivings, this social order, which determines the course of historical change; it underlies the civilizing process (cited in Krieken 1998, 52).

First, the idea of friendly and hostile connections captures the idea that, unlike the crystal, humanity is not some idealistic beautiful output. Instead, it is an on-going interplay of human interaction over space and time. Second, humanity is a blind process in that it is not the conscious design of any individual, community, or culture. This gives weight to the thick

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[19] I would like to thank the reviewers for raising this point. Although not common in IR, 'emergence' as a field of study has gained ground in psychology, sociology, and philosophy, Sawyer (2005). Such research calls for ES scholars to engage more with interdisciplinary study as well as discussions of 'emergence' in the work of scholars such as J. S. Mill, C. D. Broad, and É. Durkheim. The latter captures much of the sentiment here when he states, 'society is not a mere sum of individuals', cited in Sawyer (2002, 231).

understanding of humanity perspective because no individual person, culture, state, or community, created humanity, it is a mistake to reduce the value of humanity to the sum of its parts.[20] After all, one cannot understand a crystal by looking at an atom.

Think of the world prior to humans as a blank canvass. Now consider that each individual leaves its own mark upon the canvass, a paint stroke if you will. Over time, as individuals formed communities and cultures that communicated with one another, the paint strokes began to represent more than just the individuals themselves. To return to Anderson, an increasing population does not simply represent 'more' it represents 'different'. The patchwork of paint strokes represents something thicker than a reductionist focus on individual/thin paint strokes. Hence, the idea of a thick humanity. The idea of a painted canvass (as opposed to a crystal) treats humanity as a continual changing process as opposed to an object. To some extent this is captured in Gaita's understanding of a common humanity in which he states 'our humanity passes through us like the thread of a needle. Everything we do is stitched with its colour' (2000, 283). The statement raises an interesting structure agency dynamic in that it implies that the structure of humanity passes through, and this author would add, shapes the agents involved and their actions in turn shape the structure of humanity. Essentially, as humanity's parts (human beings) die out, they are replaced with new but different parts. From this perspective, it is a mistake to think of humanity as merely the sum of its parts.

In Weinert's Making Humans (2015), the relationship between humanity and its components, human beings, we see ES scholarship that embodies a commitment to the thick humanity approach outlined here. Rejecting the idea that humans have a fixed value, he argues that 'being human and the human being prove not to be constants but historical contingencies subject to vicissitudes of power' (23). For Weinert, humans and therefore the notion of humanity, are constructed categories with varied and variable histories. Accordingly, we see a clear intention to capture how the history of human relations at large continues to shape humans. Echoing the structure agency dynamic outlined above, he argues 'individuals may condition (and alter) structures and systems, just as much as systems and structures condition individuals' (26). The understanding of humanity asks us to consider the on-going ever-changing relationship between humanity as a whole and the components within it. Ultimately, this leads Wienert to conclude that 'processes of making human, as

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[20] The understanding here ties in with but develops Linklater's focus on 'culture, community, and communication' (2007, 40)

primordial practices of interhuman interaction, as a primary institution of international relations precisely because they serve as building blocks of human sociability' (218).

Of course, critics may reject such claims as nonsense (option one) and it is here that those wishing to advance such thinking would benefit from studies of emergence. A key aspect to bear in mind is that relationships can emerge without people knowing it. In Porpora's discussion of emergence, he uses chess as an example to show that although the game starts from a set of 'constitutive rules', new relationships are established during the game 'whether or not players are aware of them' (cited in Sawyer, 2005, 89). In this sense, humans may indeed be part of a thick humanity even if they are not conscious of it.[21] Precisely because humanity is ubiquitous, it is difficult to comprehend its value. Its value lies in its ubiquity. Humanity is every part of every life past, present, and future. All we can do is ask 'what kind of world society are we willing to make?' (Weinert, 2015, 201). This does not 'presuppose solidarity between human beings' (ibid) but instead, option three, asks us to consider how we are part of something that is not just more than us but is different from us. In other words, humanity is not simply the quantitative accumulation of every human being in the world right now, it is different and has an ever-changing structure that continues to shape the agents within it.

In closing, I turn to the work of Booth. Although not an ES scholar, his claim that 'humanity has been invented and reinvented through history' (2014, 119; also 2007, 379–380) is clearly in tune with thick humanity. Providing an apt summary as well as a response to Herzen,

> Humanity is both a broad and non-static concept. The best answer to the old question, 'What is humanity?' is therefore: 'It is too soon to say.' Humanity is what humans make of the potentialities immanent in our natural sociality regarding the political, social, economic, and cultural potentialities on earth (2016, 3).

Option 3 therefore implies that policies we choose to implement (y) are dependent on what we want humanity (x) to be. It will never become for it will never be finished. Like the crystal, it has a value in its own right but unlike the crystal humanity does not represent a final product. To return to the idea of civilizing and decivilizing processes, it is an on-going ever-changing process. It may be that we are witnessing the emergence of 'humanity's law'

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[21] Emergence theorists such as Broad have studied this theme as they explore forms of evidence in the natural sciences to offer broader reflections on different types of 'The Unconscious' ([1925]2013, chapter eight).

(Teitel 2011); but even if so, such 'progress' is contingent.[22] Going forward, studies of emergence may guide ES thinking in this area as scholars consider humanity as a complex social system.

Conclusion

In the first edition of International Theory, Duncan Snidal and Alexander Wendt (2009 4) draw on the seminal paper by Martin Wight to compare 'the barren theoretical landscape' of IR in the 1950s, to the 'over-supply' of theory in the present day in order to argue that 'there is International Theory now'. They go onto explain that even though International Theory has arrived, there is a problem in that 'different theoretical communities are not engaging each other in ways that could be mutually productive' (2009 4). Against this backdrop, the aim of the journal is to foster dialogue between International Political Theory (IPT), International Legal Theory (ILT) and IR (2009 5). Accordingly, International Theory provides an apt setting for this article as the objective is to start, rather than end, a conversation on the concept of humanity. Although the article focuses on the ES, going forward, the discussion needs to be broadened out through interdisciplinary research that engages with IPT and ILT. This of course is in tune with ES thinking. ES scholars uphold a commitment to theoretical pluralism as an on-going dialogue between different interpretations of international relations (Dunne 1998, xiii). In relation to humanity, it may be that in time humanity is seen as an 'essentially contested concept' in that there are multiple standard uses that reflect contesting views (Gallie 1956). This author's own view is that there is no Holy Grail definition of humanity. This is not to say one cannot uphold and defend one of the three options outlined above, but that one should always reflect on and consider the opposing voices offered by the alternative positions.

Ultimately, whether scholars embrace humanity or reject it, surely they have a duty to engage with, and provide a more informed understanding of the concept that is, if they wish to invoke it. This is a particular problem in the ES precisely because it has made a name for itself by focusing on non-material explanations of international relations. To help address this, the article offers three alternative positions to guide future appeals to humanity. First, reject humanity. This stems from an underlying scepticism toward appeals to humanity

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[22] See Linklater (2011, 163) who draws on Elias statement that 'the civilization of which I speak is never complete and always endangered'. Such thinking differentiates the ES from liberal teleological approaches (Linklater and Suganami, 2006: 208-216).

within a society of states. Interconnectedness therefore is state-centric rather than a human-centric. Second, thin humanity. This reduces the value of humankind down to its individual member: human beings. It anchors this in a minimalist conception of basic rights, human worth, and human dignity whilst acknowledging that more work is needed on the relationship between these concepts. Finally, thick humanity. This is grounded on the idea that the value of humanity cannot be reduced to the sum of its parts for it is not just more, it is different. It is an on-going ever changing process that shapes us all, as we also shape it. From this standpoint, humanity is the heir of all ages.

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