'We' are not Amused:
R. B. J. Walker on the State of the Political Imagination

by

Ian Douglas Matthews
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We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

[redacted]

Dr. James Tully, Supervisor (Department of Political Science)

[redacted]

Dr. A. Claire Cutler, Departmental Member (Department of Political Science)

[redacted]

Dr. Gregory Blue, Outside Member (Department of History)

[redacted]

Dr. R. Michael McGonigle, External Examiner (Faculty of Law; and Department of Environmental Studies)

Supervisor: Dr James Tully

ABSTRACT

This thesis is a critical conversation with the work of R. B. J. Walker, major theorist of international relations, and political theory. The attempt here has been to read Walker specifically as a theorist of political imagination, proper, this although he presents no explicit theory of political imagination. He does, however, appear to write according to an implicit and codified theory/praxis of imagination roughly informed by phenomenological concepts of poetic imagination, particularly those of Gaston Bachelard. His major works, we contend, ultimately read as 'super-historical' attempts to convince the reader of the very possibility of political possibility, as opposed to the timeless reign of political essentialisms. Ultimately, it is the principle of sovereignty, he claims, which is, in the modern era, the constitutive principle of the political itself. As such it is also said to present itself as the only alternative to itself. The transfixing *idealism* of this 'historically specific' principle is what must be overcome.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

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[redacted]

Dr. R. Michael M'Gonigle, External Examiner (Faculty of Law; and Department of Environmental Studies)

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While Walker ostensibly claims to offer only a 'tour' of the limits of modern political thought and imagination, there remain many questions concerning his enterprise (e.g.: just what is the modern political imagination and how does it work?; where the muse? &c.). Is his a critical (Marxian) theoretical undertaking or a post-structuralist undertaking or both?; ultimately he argues that even critical thought is to be regarded with suspicion given that the

grounds for critique are unclear; the (Kantian) idea of *humanity* is rejected; it is not, says Walker, a meaningful political category; and yet *modernity*, given his usage, does appear to be.

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There is a now-cliché sense among many that contemporary life is to be characterised as 'globalised'. We live, to this extent, 'after the globe'. It is, as it were, a 'new' world, contemporary historical experience as analogous to that experienced in the early-modern period. However, there is no accompanying 'new' sense of political identity to match our 'new' historical-experiential condition. *Humanity*, for what it is worth, remains, as yet, some mere 'Kantian' aspiration; it is <u>not</u> an effective political category. Concomitantly, the problem of moving from a 'here' (the globe) to a 'there' (the world) is not simply a problem of time (i.e. waiting for History to be realised/end). It is, rather, a structural problem which cannot be overcome, no matter how much time may come to past, if 'our' present (modernist) *idealistic* visions of the political continues to hold. We could wait for

this day of 'world' reckoning longer than humankind has waited for the return of Christ. What 'we' have is a problem of how to reconcile an hereditary conceptual reality (the *modern* concept of the political) with an emerging *contemporary* empirical reality (globalisation). The experience parallels early modern attempts to reconcile a Christian-Aristotelian cosmology with the discoveries of the Scientific Revolution and with the explorations of 'New Worlds'. And while some 'new' kinds of imagined communities are beginning to emerge, they perhaps too closely resemble the imaginings of the Conquistadores (i.e. closer to new *El Dorados* than new *Republics*). There is less the sense, in this respect, of a reconciliation of the old with the new and more a sense of the imposition of the old onto the new. (Where once it was held that 'in the beginning all the world was America', now it would seem as though all the world *must become* America!)

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There is a popular sense that modern political life and thought are severely constrained by inherited political horizons, and yet it remains difficult to even table calls to (re)imagine 'the political'. Such apparent contradiction is produced through the conflation, by Walker, of two separate arguments (intellectual hegemony and imaginative/structural impasse) and two different methodologies (critical theory and post-structuralism). Enlightenment AND double-Enlightenment. Kant, Marx, Gramsci *versus* Nietzsche, Weber, Foucault. Agents AND Structures.

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Walker damns both those who profess to know what we cannot be (because they are so sure of where we are), AND those whose universalist aspirations blithely ignore that, politically speaking, humans are citizens of sovereign states before they are anything else.

Realists are damned for reifying an ideal of sovereign statehood; Idealists are damned for not taking the state system seriously enough. Each represents a side of the sovereigntist coin, the principle of sovereignty producing one world (idealism) and many worlds (realism). Ironically, through such insistence, Walker appears to do as much to reify the principle of sovereignty, and the state, as does anyone else. Ultimately, his analysis comes to parody the binary oppositions of IR. Ironically, his failures serve as a kind of proof that he is right in his claim that contemporary political thought is governed by a specifically modern (and intractable) account of political identity, one expressed most crucially by the principle of sovereignty. All are implicated. Being conscious of such implication changes nothing.

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The sovereigntist aporia is the inevitable result of framing the world in implicitly spatial/geometric terms. This, Walker tries to convince us, is what Hobbes (the proto-liberal) figured out very early in the game and we have all been drawing lines like mad ever since. However, while we may choose to (though perhaps to 'our' peril), we no more need look at the world in terms of early-modern spatial resolutions than did Alexander need to 'untie' the Gordian Knot in order to solve it. Just as Alexander *cut open* the Gordian Knot, modernist political resolutions may, in effect, be *cut free* of their world-historical pretensions.

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Modernist political principles, as the qualifier suggests, are *historically specific* resolutions; they are not timeless. So argues Walker. To become 'fascinated' with modernist political and historical *ideals*, as we have, is to lose the plastic and healing powers of life; it is to become old and brittle. The fortress of sovereign logic, once built to withstand the forces of time and *doxa* has become a prison from which we cannot or will not venture. The veracity and specifics of such history are almost beside the point. At any rate, the 'truth' of any modernity thesis lies buried with the dead. Walker's concern with the past, on the other hand, has everything to do with the future. In short, a (re)imagining of the past is that which he hopes will allow for a (re)imagining of the future, a future in which we may feel and act *unhistorically*. Ironically, Walker offers an antidote for the abuses of a modern political historicism, a historicism which condenses the totality of political becoming into a few trite and timeless maxims which are to be swallowed whole in the form of ultra-dense 'knowledge stones' (as Nietzsche would have it). It is precisely these knowledge stones rattling around in the bellies of us political moderns — as in the fairy tale (Little Red Riding Hood) — which

now threaten to kill us with indigestion and immobility. If not indigestion, then certainly they will cause us to drown in the waters of *Fortuna*.

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Preface

imagination is more important than knowledge

— Chinese fortune cookie

While this thesis is primarily concerned with a single author, he has been chosen because it is believed that his work and idea(l)s are paradigmatic of a broader discourse on the prospects for a 'truly' global politics in an era of 'globalisation'.[1] At the same time it is believed that within this paradigmatic view there are contained certain idiosyncrasies which make the view unique and also deserving of sustained interrogation. What follows, then, is just such an interrogation. The wager, here, is that something promising may come of it.

Admittedly it is difficult to know what to make of a scholar who is so highly critical of the very discipline he has used to establish much of his academic notoriety, just as it is difficult to know what to make of a scholar who, in his best known book, deliberately resists developing any 'straightforward thesis or conclusion'.[2] Likewise, it is difficult to know what to make of a recognised theorist of international relations who openly declares that he does not 'hope to contribute a better explanatory theory, at least not one about international relations'.[3] Still, as frustrating as it can be at times, Walker's work manages to retain a certain allure, especially through its incisive critical insights into the nature of modern political life and in its repeated insistence on the importance of the political in human life.

As a conversation with the texts of Rob Walker, this thesis will inevitably reflect some of his ambivalences. It will also contribute some of its own. Likewise, and perhaps

predictably, this paper also promises no straightforward thesis or conclusion. What one may expect here is a reasonably rigourous and critical exploration of certain themes pursued in discordant concert with some of Rob Walker's pivotal mediations. What follows, then, may be best characterised as a series of 'riffs' on a trinity of connected ideas — specifically: sovereignty, imagination and history — in the broad context of what will here be deemed 'the political' and 'the global'.

While there is no reason not to write on Rob Walker, the choice perhaps deserves some explanation. We are, after all, talking about a scholar who was cited a grand total of sixty three times in 1999[4] — not an entirely disrespectable number, but hardly a number indicative of 'canonical' status in any field. However, more important than how many may be who. Who is citing him? For, arguably the most intriguing thing about Walker as a scholar is his placelessness. Ostensibly, he is most readily recognised as a theorist of international relations, though to the extent that one is willing to recognise a coherent, professionalised and institutionalised academic discipline of International Relations (IR), Walker is oddly situated both inside and outside of it at the same time. Somehow and truly he has managed to become both an 'exile' and a 'master in the making' of 'his' discipline at the same time, one who deconstructs and constitutes in the same moment.[5] This is the 'context' in which we will try to examine him here. To do so, an introductory word will need to be said about IR as a discipline.

The conventional way of making sense of the relatively young discipline of IR is in terms of a series of 'great debates' or binary oppositions, the first of which actually divides — in accordance with Martin Wight's famous formulation — the field of international theory itself from a prior progressive tradition of statist political theory proper.[6] Wight, a founding member of the so-called 'English school' of IR, also distinguishes three distinct traditions of international theory which he calls the realist, the rationalist and the revolutionary — or the Machiavellian, the Grotian, and the Kantian. Roughly, the first of these 'schools' is said to view international community as being fundamentally anarchical

in nature, the second of these finds a mixed domain of conflict and cooperation, and the third envisions a society of humanity — the *civitas maxima* — a 'natural' community of humankind which may be realised only through a transcendence of the society of states.[7] Of course, the obvious comment to be made about viewing international theory in this way is that it relies on a fundamentally statist conception of 'authentic' political thought, both in its positive projections and in its negations. For this, Wight was decidedly unapologetic.

Another traditional way of characterising the discipline of IR is to view it in terms of a *chronological* series of 'great debates' which correlate to the hegemony of a successive series of theoretical orientations spanning the twentieth century. The 'progression' of influences in this case is said to move generally from 1) an 'idealism' (associated with the founding by David Davies of the Woodrow Wilson Chair in post-WW1 Aberystwyth, Wales); to 2) a 'realist' reaction against such supposedly dangerous and naïve idealism in roughly the 1930s and 1940s; to 3) to the behaviouralist 'social scientific' revolution of the early 1950s and into the 1960s. According to this chronology, the first and most prominent debate in the discipline of IR comes to be that of 'idealism' versus 'realism', while the second 'great debate' is conventionally understood to be one which pits ' new' 'social-scientific' methodologies against 'traditionalist', historicist methods of scholarly inquiry. Currently, there is some question as to what any third 'great debate' might consist in. While some point to contemporary arguments between 'state-centric' realists (or neorealists) and contemporary transnationalists (neo-liberals), others focus on the rise of debate between positivism (which characterises all previously dominant theories) and a post-positivism which challenges all assumptions of positivist theory be they realist, neoliberal, Marxist, historicist or what have you.[8]

While this represents only the briefest of overviews, the purpose here is simply to provide a degree of context for our discussion of Rob Walker and his work. At any rate, his critique of — and association with — IR will become clearer as we precede. But for the moment there is some reluctance to over-state here any connectedness between Walker

and IR. We mention such debates because, in his choosing to write on international relations, Walker is generally obliged to engage with these debates, both because such debates serve to constitute the discipline, but also because such debates work to *discipline* the discipline, if you will. Such debates, Walker, for one, claims, serve to 'officially' establish within the discipline that which is supposedly 'authentic', 'real' and serious as opposed to that which is considered to be merely hopeful, idealistic or fanciful. In so doing, these debates are said to distinguish that which is supposedly important and pressing from that which is supposedly only airy, idealistic or academic. Thus, through the separation of 'legitimate' discourse (be it 'realist', 'social-scientific' or 'statist' discourse) from what is, by negation, ill-legitimate discourse (be it 'idealist', 'traditionalist', or 'globalist'), a sovereigntist inside/outside dichotomy serves to constitute the very discipline of IR. Thus the very constitution of the discipline comes to reflect the very inside/outside constitution of 'the political' more generally. Thus, to read theories of international relations as does Walker is to 'understand them less as an explanation of contemporary world politics than as an expression of processes they are claimed to explain'.[9] Of course, in order to interrogate the assumptions, reifications and textual strategies of international relations theory Walker understandably finds it necessary to engage with the constitutive debates of the discipline. Thus, *Inside/Outside*, for example, is so designed as to offer two chapters on each of the three 'great debates' (Walker identifying the third debate in this case as one between 'statist' and 'transnationalists', as above). However, in each case his objective is to explain why such debates occur at all; it is not to engage with them as such. Whether ironically or predictably, Walker attempts to position himself inside and outside of these debates simultaneously.

The greater point to be made for the moment is that one could easily spend a great deal of time attempting to situate Walker within in this or that school, or this or that debate as one saw fit to do. But to do so would be to miss the central thrust of his critical commentary, a commentary which is first and foremost taken up with the problems of

dualism in political thought and, secondarily, with the problems of a modernist political *idealism* (in the Kantian/Hegelian sense of the word). Such *idealism*, Walker contends, is constructed around the articulation of a specifically modern and three-dimensional subjectivity — understood at the micro-cosmic level as autonomous individualism, and at the macro-cosmic level as sovereign statehood. Herein, then, lies the critical leverage of a book like *Inside/Outside*. For Walker, the critical question which any would-be theory of politics must answer is this: Politically speaking, who is (sic) 'we'? It is his conviction that there is, as yet, no plausible alternative to the 'official' answer to this question, which is generally taken for granted, and which was worked out in the early modern era in the articulation of the twin absolutes of the sovereign state and the sovereign individual. This is the thesis that *Inside/Outside* in particular drives home A) through its exploration of the constitutive debates of international relations; but also B) through its exploration of the dichotomy which posits a 'realm' of political theory and a 'realm' of international relations, a dichotomy paralleled in the development of a distinct discipline for the study of each respective 'realm'. Consequently, although this paper is concerned with Walker as a theorist in general and therefore with his *corpus* on the whole, it will nevertheless consist for the most part in a critical investigation of this single work (*Inside/Outside*). However, a significant amount of attention will also be directed at *Inside/Outside's* promised sequel, which for the moment remains in manuscript form with the working title: *After the Globe/Before the World: politics in the wake of sovereign subjectivities.*

Having said this much we may add that if there is one major contention this paper wishes to advance it is the following: that as intriguing as Walker's questioning of *modern* (political) subjectivity may be, in the end it seems to require of him to be more critical historian than critical theorist of political thought. Of course, the greater point may be that there is little to distinguish these two modes of thought.

Caution Minotaurs

1 Sovereignty, Imagination, History

> ... precisely this treatise, as I will not conceal, shows its modern character, the character of weak personality, in the excess of criticism, in the immaturity of its humanity, in the frequent transition from irony to cynicism, from pride to scepticism. And yet I trust in the inspiring power which instead of a genius guides my vehicle, I trust in *youth* to have guided me correctly when now it *forces me to protest against the historical education of modern youth* and when in protest I demand that above all men must learn to live and use history only *in the service of the life they have learned to live.* One has to be young to understand this protest...
>
> — Friedrich Nietzsche[10]

1.1 INTRODUCTION

the 'state' of the political imagination: 'we' are not amused

While somewhat unorthodox by design, this opening chapter is intended as an introduction of sorts. It will purport to be, in effect, a schematic over-view, written in three basic parts, of the larger treatise contained herein. Each part will be loosely dedicated to one of three main themes, namely: Sovereignty, Imagination, and History. In this way it is hoped that a broad framework for analysis will be established. Two subsequent chapters (one largely expository and the other largely critical) will thereafter precede backwards, as it were, in hopes of retracing in greater detail the several paths laid-out in this opening chapter. Ultimately, then, this thesis will begin and end in roughly the same place: with an invocation, following Rob Walker, to act during what appears in many respects to be a grand historical window of opportunity for change.

We are to begin with a plain proposition: that there is something wrong with the state of contemporary political imagination. Rob Walker wishes to suggest to us that, to the extent that there is any, such imagination would seem to be dormant. Confronted as we are in these times, he says, with 'demands that we move "beyond" a geopolitics of static fragmentation',[11] the political imagination is unresponsive, seemingly frozen in place, knowing not how to become other than what it has been for some centuries. The 'architectonic' plates of contemporary — global — political life are now shifting in ever more violent ways and it does not appear as though the statist political 'architecture' that has been so successful in withstanding tremors of change for centuries will continue to be able to hold. Still, the imagination sleeps. While the earth, it would seem, has once again been set in motion, the political mind remains at rest.

Accepting that this is the fundamental problematic posed to us by Rob Walker, it will be supposed here that it is actually more edifying to try to read Walker as a theorist of political imagination, that is, as a theorist of politics in general, and as a theorist of political imagination in particular. His chief intellectual interest, it will said, is the political imagination itself, particularly as such relates to contemporary attempts to (re)articulate conceptions of 'world politics' more suitable to a global(ising) era, and this even though, given the caprices that can attend an academic career, Walker has come to be most readily identifiable as a theorist of international relations proper.

This attempt to read Walker as a theorist of political imagination notwithstanding, no foolhardy attempt will be made here to deny that, as a scholar, Walker has gained the larger part of his infamy through his association with a — variously — post-modernist or post-structuralist movement actively involved in the deconstruction of IR as a discipline, a movement earnestly under way by the mid-nineteen eighties and including such notable IR theorists as Michael Shapiro, James Der Derian, Richard Ashley, and of course Walker himself. As a 'movement' (if it is right to speak of such as a movement), the post-structuralist/modernist moment in IR has cohered around a number of core publications, the

preeminent example of which may be Richard Ashley's, 'The Poverty of Neo-Realism', included in Robert O. Keohane's discipline defining *Neorealism and Its Critics* (1986), although another high-water mark was the publication in 1990 of a special edition of the journal *International Studies Quarterly*, co-edited by Walker and Ashley, and dedicated to post-structuralist readings of international relations and world politics. There is, though, some confusion as to whether this 'movement' is best described as postmodern or poststructural. For the sake of clarity it will be maintained here that, although poststructuralism — as a critical-theoretical enterprise involving contemporary currents of continental European philosophical thought — does engage to some extent with discourses about a perceived (contemporary) post-modernist turn, poststructuralism and postmodernism are nevertheless not synonymous nor even easily conflated. Any deference it may make to the experiences of a post-modern turn notwithstanding, poststructuralism, as it will be interpreted here, insists that 'the world', for all of its present metamorphoses, remains stubbornly modern in crucial ways, particularly in its continued adherence to modernist ideals about subjectivity. This is the case regardless of whether postmodernist claims are articulated through architecture, literature, history, political theory or what have you. For reasons that should become clear, taking into account the foregoing *caveats*, Rob Walker will be deemed here, for what it is worth, a poststructuralist and not a postmodernist. In fact, according to Walker, there is reason to question altogether the currency of the later term, though in typically ambivalent fashion he appears to accept the idea of imminent historical transformation and the attendant historical periodizations of post-modernist theory. On the other hand he also claims that the problems generally associated with a so-called post-modernist turn are not all that novel and have in fact been around from *at least* the time of the late-nineteenth- early twentieth century critiques of Enlightenment thought which were eventually taken up and addressed by specifically Max Weber, but also by the so-called Frankfurt school of critical thought. Walker argues that it must involve a systematic process of forgetting in order to believe that the problems

associated with a so-called post-modern turn are anything new.[12] He further suggests that an engagement with, say, Hobbes, Spinoza, Rousseau, Hume, Kant, Hegel or Marx is just as helpful for coming to terms with the problematic character of modernity as is an engagement with the texts of Nietzsche, Foucault or Derrida.[13] The general problem for him is that postmodernist thinkers suggest a clear philosophy of history — as, for example, in a progressive move from the modern to the postmodern — that he, as a sceptic, rejects.

In IR, post-structuralists such as Walker have been grouped-in — most specifically by neo-realist heir-apparent, Robert O. Keohane — with a broader so-called 'reflectivist' movement in IR which, it is said, seeks to challenge a self-titled *neorealist* (and highly Americanized) consensus within the discipline. Post-structuralists (undifferentiated from post-modernists) have also been classified, by Miles Kahler for example, as part of a would-be 'third' wave of great debate within the professionalised discipline of International Relations (IR). The proponents of this 'would-be' debate Kahler describes as A) 'postmoderns' who tend to focus their criticism on method and epistemology; and B) 'sociologists' who do not question the scientific pretensions of the field but who do reject the individualist and state-centric premises of both the neorealist and the neoliberalist schools of IR theory. Kahler refers to this 'debate' as a 'would-be' debate because it is bound to fail, he says, for two reasons: 1) because 'postmoderns' reject the totalizing claims of mainstream theory, the debate would end up as one where one side refuses to win and also refuses to accept defeat; and 2) 'postmoderns', he contends, will forever have trouble finding converts willing to 'reject the claims of scientific certainty in favor of an interpretive stance'.[14] One must, however, doubt the usefulness of Kahler's system of classification in this instance. Not only does it reflect a jejune (mis)understanding of postmodernism and (through the absence of its mention) poststructuralism, it blatantly concedes victory at the onset to some supposed scientific certainty already reigning in IR before said debate even takes place. 'Postmoderns' also seem implicitly damned for an unwillingness to accept the rules of debate pre-established by the reigning orthodoxy, as

though such rules represent the only possible kind of rules for any engagement what-so-ever. In a prized moment of navel-gazing, Kahler simply assumes that there is actually some desire among those involved in the so-called 'new theoretical turn' to even engage in such discipline-defining debates as such. All in all, Kahler's classification either badly misunderstands the post-structuralist critique of IR/political theory or simply refuses to take it seriously.

Neither the category of 'post-modernist' or that of 'sociologist' fit Walker very well, though admittedly his enterprise does involve both a healthy dose of criticism for those 'who would confidently lay claim to modernist epistemologies in order to discipline contemporary eruptions of scepticism'.[15] It is also true that Walker is highly critical of the broad and uncritical assumption of modernist political ontologies that one finds in IR and political theory alike. Nevertheless, *Inside/Outside*, for example, as 'a sequence of meditations on a discourse about the horizons of modern politics', writes Walker, ' ...most certainly rejects the notion that the postmodern turn offers some new research paradigm as these have come to be conceived within modern social science'.[16] Moreover, to what degree the deconstruction of IR can be considered part of a debate occurring 'within' the discipline of IR is entirely questionable. So, while such work has, to some extent, been subsumed into one or other 'school' of thinking within the discipline of IR through imperial acts of classification such as Kahler's and Keohane's, such acts are thoroughly antithetical to what the proponents of a post-structuralist approach to world politics have intended and can, furthermore, only be undertaken at the expense of the theories being subsumed. Acts of classification in this instance are acts of exclusion; they are dismissive acts. In the end, it is not at all clear how a Kahler or a Keohane or anyone else can justify their Archemedian over-views of the discipline.

One can run-out classification schemes for IR (or any discipline, for that matter) in any number of ways. However, the proliferation of such schemes in IR is perhaps suggestive of an identity crisis in this nascent professional discipline which, at any rate,

Martin Wight says is devoid of any kind of true theory save that which is simply the negation of a prior statist tradition of political theory.[17] Kal Holsti calls it the 'dividing discipline'.[18] Steve Smith identifies ten 'self-images' of the discipline (and counting).[19] Walker, for his part, as we saw above, identifies a completely different 'third debate' in IR than that suggested by Kahler. No doubt there could be other renderings as well. The 'third debate' which Walker recognises is one which pits 'statists' against 'globalists' in a dispute which hails the supposed obstinacy of the state on one side while announcing the supposed obsolescence of the state on the other. And while one might suppose that there is a certain element of post-modernist theory entailed in such debates (i.e. is the modern statist era coming to an end? is the state a 'real' thing, or merely an ontological projection?, &c.), the real significance of this debate for Walker is, again, that it occurs at all. This latest 'debate', he says, is simply indicative of a broader, structuralist and very dualistic modality of political thought which appears, at present, to be impossible to escape. Thus his concern with the puzzles of *post*--structuralism.

The fact of the matter is that, although he clearly does at times get drawn into some of the esoteric debates which are said to constitute IR, it is obvious enough that Walker intends his general analysis of IR to be an external critique, and even then only one part of a more meta-theoretical thesis (although this is confusing because his post-structuralist approach begins with a clear recognition of his own inevitable implication in his own subject matter). It should also be fairly clear from reading him that he does not readily identify himself with IR as such. Indeed, one gets the sense from reading Walker (especially *Inside/Outside*) that, had he his way, IR would go down in the annals of academic history as a short-lived anomaly in the history of modern social science. Ultimately, for him, IR is something *to be explained*, not something which itself explains anything. So while it is possible to suggest, as does Kahler, that a so-called 'post-modernist' movement within IR has in recent years begun to lose its momentum, to do so is again to miss the point. Similarly, one understandably might wish to read Walker's

analysis of IR, for example, as being somewhat less than topical. After all, he does seem to be inordinately fixated in *Inside/Outside* on Kenneth Waltz and Inis Claude, the former whose last major contribution was in 1979, and the latter who, to put it politely, is now fairly obscure. On the other hand, one can read Walker as a *political* theorist with a heightened interest in dualism, as one, in other words, who has said his piece on an IR/political theory dichotomy and now wishes to move on. And while it is true that some more-recent publications in IR proper have begun to look more nuanced and less mechanical in their ontological and epistemological presuppositions, it would be something of an over-statement to suggest that the theoretical foundations — and the intellectual epi-center — of IR have changed dramatically over the past decade, or even since Kenneth Waltz re-fashioned them in 1979.[20]

To the extent that such self-proclamations are worth anything, Walker does not consider himself to be a theorist of IR. He does not seek to write on IR, necessarily; nor does he, for example, teach courses in *International Relations* at the University of Victoria where he has been working and teaching since 1981: from 1986 as an associate professor with tenure, and from 1992 as a professor.[21] And yet, all of this notwithstanding, one cannot simply ignore the impact that Walker has had on IR as a discipline, and this principally with the publication in 1993 of *Inside/Outside* as part of the *Cambridge Studies in International Relations* series. This single book is far and away Walker's most cited work, and deservedly so. Among other things it contains a brilliant critical analysis of the principle of state sovereignty read as the constitutive principle of the political itself. Certainly, also, the book is highly critical of neorealism, but this is not so important simply because the 'poverty of neorealism' was already well established by 1993. No, the greater significance of *Inside/Outside* lies in its attack where one might least suspect it, on state-centric, 'Kantian' critical theory in IR.[22] As such, it represents a kind of revival of classical Realism and of the historicist method of the 'English' school. To this extent, it is appropriate to associate Walker with a tradition of IR which, in effect,

recognises no tradition. What is recognised, rather, is the 'impossibility' of a truly global politics in modernist terms, an impossibility which is the dark residual of the Kantian/Hegelian *idealism* of modern state-centric political thought. Again, Martin Wight's 'Why is there no International Theory?' is probably the most significant work in this context. Certainly, for Walker, Wight's essay is a key point of entry into broad discourses on world politics. But where Wight finds a limit, Walker sees a beginning. For, having established what he takes to be the 'recalcitrance of international politics to be theorized about,'[23] Wight seems almost quiescent, willing to simply slide into benign 'ruminations' about 'the philosophy of history' in apparent resignation to the permanently tragic nature of modern political life. And yet, in a way, such resignation may be read as its own kind of tacit acceptance of the very Hegelian *Zeitgeist* which Wight so brilliantly identifies as being so problematic in the first instance. As Walker puts it, Wight simply ends up providing us with 'a clear boundary beyond which theories of international relations should not trespass'.[24] Wight's analysis, therefore, amounts to little more in the end than a comment on the methodology of a discipline. It is not a critique of the discipline as such, nor of the concept of the political as such. The upshot of his commentary is that there is simply no point to the pretensions of a 'scientific' method applied to an arena which is beyond reason by definition, the platitudes of Kantians and Grotians alike notwithstanding. Wight, to this extent, has a very simple point to make: 'the qualities of international politics, the preoccupations of diplomacy,' he says, 'are embodied and communicated less in works of political or international theory than in historical writings.'[25] History, while it may not be changed, may at least provide us, he believes, with some insight into the *art* of diplomacy, and this is at least some consolation. IR, on the only hand, that is to say, Americanized IR, seems to him to exist only as the pseudo-scientific justification of a more or less American status quo. Walker, however, is not so content as Wight. Where the influence of Wight on him ends, an alliance with none other

than Michel Foucault begins in what looms as a titanic struggle with the ghost of Hegel himself![26]

Primarily because of *Inside/Outside* (whether Walker is pleased with the situation or not, and whether his book is understood or not), Walker has become part of a 'new' canon of international relations theorists. Take, for example, what is at present the only quasi-biographical work on Walker himself, Lene Hansen's, 'R. B. J. Walker and International Relations: deconstructing a discipline'. This article appears in *The Future of International Relations: masters in the making*, a book which profiles what its editors take to be the twelve theorists they feel will contribute most to the shaping of the future 'self-images' of the discipline. In her article, Hansen reinforces the poststructuralist label and Walker's place in the halls of IR by describing Walker as that author — together with Richard Ashley — who has provided 'the most full-fledged poststructural analysis on the meta-theoretical level'[27] of international relations theory. But this is only part of the story. Much of Walker's early work seems to differ from his more recent publications. The difference between the former and the latter is apparently enough to move Hansen to divide Walker's work into two categories: 1) early, explicitly political texts; and 2) later, explicitly theoretical works. One may wish to take issue with Hansen's classification, but she does seem to be onto something. Walker's earlier works do appear to be fairly concentrated on the study of critical social movements and not with anything one might readily associate with the specific concerns of IR. The key text of the 'early' Walker, as we are calling him here, is his *One World; Many Worlds: Struggles for a Just World Peace*, a book penned as part of Walker's appointment as rapporteur to the Committee for a Just World Peace, associated with the World Order Models Project (WOMP). Part of Walker's task in *One World/Many Worlds* was to bring together many different positions, so to what degree this book in particular reflects his own position(s) is a question. However, what stands as the central insight of this and his other work on social movements is the recognition that they are exactly that: social. As such they are said to somehow fall out of the more authentic and

more serious realm of politics proper. Social movements, argues Walker, always require some mediating agent. Thus, if they are to find expression, they must do so through the explicitly political practices of the state. Then the state has to mediate with other states.[28]

Finally, however, no matter how one wishes to read Walker — whether it be as post-structuralist deconstructing IR, or as a critical theorist of social movements — critical reflection on the state and the state-system remain central to his project, his core argument being that it is simply not possible to even think the political free of some idealised (and chiefly statist) notion of what the political must be. The political always and everywhere involves an inside/outside construction of identity predicated/justified according to the modern principle of sovereignty. At present, he claims, it seems impossible to imagine anything else.

Thus it is argued that it is more edifying to try and understand Walker in broader terms, as a theorist of the political imagination itself. Certainly, if we consider the way he chooses to introduce his most recent books, it would appear that this is what he himself might prefer. In the preface to *Inside/Outside* for example (his main theoretical and pedagogical work), he forthwith and repeatedly declares an interest in 'the modern political imagination' while simultaneously asserting that he has interest in theories of international relations as such only to the extent that they offer a crucial expression of the assumed limits of modern political thought. Theories of international relations, he argues, have 'a very weak purchase on the structures and processes that might plausibly be regarded as a world politics'.[29] However:

> As discourses about limits and dangers, about the presumed boundaries of political possibility in the space and time of the modern state, theories of international relations (do) express and affirm the *necessary horizons of the modern political imagination.*

'Fortunately,' Walker continues 'the necessary horizons of the modern political imagination are both spatially and temporally contingent,'[30] which is to say, such horizons are not *necessary* at all. They are neither 'natural', permanent, universal or immutable. Such limits, rather, are quite subject to change and this, we are to understand, provides us with a glimmer of hope.

Similarly, Walker's forthcoming book, *After the Globe, Before the World*, presently in manuscript form, opens with an immediate invocation of the imagination and a declaration of the 'urgent need to re-imagine what we mean by politics.'[31] Indeed, much of what we might call Walker's recent work, although especially these two texts taken in tandem, may in effect be read as reasonably pithy attempts to draw-out these opening gambits on the state of the contemporary political imagination. Recognising as much, it becomes possible to unravel Walker's sometimes confounding intellectual tapestries by pulling on the golden thread of meditation on the political imagination which he weaves through them.

But why such an explicit concern with the political imagination? That imagination is important to political theory, or any other kind of theory for that matter, would seem to go without saying. And yet Walker does *say* it. He says it explicitly, immediately and repeatedly. Why?

To invoke the political imagination as forthrightly as does he, we will suggest, is to declare a number of things. First, it suggests that 'the imagination', whatever it may be, cannot simply be taken for granted. Imaginative consciousness, rather, is implored from the beginning to reflect upon itself. The influence of phenomenology, in this respect, is immediately discernible in Walker's thinking even before his footnotes make such influence explicit. Imagination, it is tacitly declared, is no easy panacea, but a problem in and of itself! The invocation of the imagination in this context is more suggestive of a deficiency in the present play of political imagination than it is of a simple absence of political imagination. But it is at this point that things begin to get muddled. For, one's desire to

read Walker as a theorist of political imagination notwithstanding, it rapidly becomes apparent that Walker develops no explicit, no rigorous theory of imagination.

That imagination plays a central role in the constitution of society and/or political community is, of course, not a new idea. A quick consultation of, say, the work of a Jean Baudrillard or a Cornelius Castoriadis or a Benedict Anderson is enough to remind one that some kind of imaginative exercise is always involved in the production of social and political orders.[32] Clearly recognising and giving credence to such literature, Walker, perhaps struggling for a broader understanding, does at least appear to want to take this line of thinking further. Recognising the extant role of imagination in the production of social and political consciousness, but at the same time imploring imaginative consciousness to be self-reflexive, he ends up hinting, at least, at a kind of distinction between the play of an authentic imagination and the play of what would otherwise be an inauthentic imagination, the kind of distinction which one finds, for example, advanced in the work of Gaston Bachelard[33] The point is not overt. In fact, we may doubt that Walker would find any such overt distinction desirable, especially when termed in such a way.

Nevertheless, what we do find in R. B. J. Walker's work is a sustained attempt to distinguish a modern(ist) political imagination from some other — or would be other — type(s) of political thought. The *modern* political imagination, argues Walker, has become less and less capable of contending with the spatiotemporal accelerations and compressions which now characterise *contemporary* life. And yet faced with demands that we move 'beyond' a geopolitics of static fragmentation, the *modern* political imagination seems entirely intransigent, by his reading. Recognising, the need for something 'else', for some 'other' kind of political thought, Walker undertakes a critical exploration of the historical specificity of modern(ist) political thought in an attempt to try and open up a space of possibility for the exploration of 'new' avenues of thinking. However, what one hopes to achieve through the generation of these novel forms of political thought remains an open

question, though the implicit assumption is that any such move will be a 'progressive' one, as troubling as this term may now be.

Whether any such critique/exploration is best summed up in terms of a theoretical inquiry into authentic and inauthentic imagination is questionable, certainly. However, such an approach to Walker's undertaking is offered up partly in recognition of the influence of Bachelard on Walker's work, but also because it is clear that Walker does actively seek some kind of historical distinction between a *modern* political imagination which, he says, has ceased to be effective, and some — as yet to be articulated — *contemporary* form of political imagination which he hopes will be more effective both in terms of initiating, and in terms of in adapting to, historical change. Whatever the case, Bacherlard's lexicography does provide an interesting entrepôt for an attempt to come to terms with Walker's general enterprise, especially given the undeniable influence of Bachelard on Walker's work.[34]

Of course, if one were to posit any such distinction (as between a supposedly authentic and a supposedly inauthentic imagination), one would not wish to be too overt or crude about it. Concomitant with any number of historical attempts to distinguish some given 'reality' from its 'appearances', these kinds of distinctions tend to conjure up the bad memories of false consciousness theory and/or any number of other intellectual chauvinisms. Walker, instead, in the spirit of Michel Foucault's enlightenment *ethos*, more obviously frames his inquiry into the state of the modern political imagination as a more fashionable inquiry into limits. Nevertheless, it remains possible to see how any imaginative enterprise might come to be deemed 'inauthentic' if too narrowly limited — or limited at all for that matter. In the phenomenology of Husserl, Sartre, and Bachelard *et al*, for example, limits to the imagination are viewed as limits to human freedom. For such thinkers, freedom begins with imagination as the very precondition of any and all freedom. A too-limited imagination is, by definition, a devalued imagination. That such an imagination is to be considered 'inauthentic' may only be a question of semantics.

More positively, according to Bachelard an imagination is 'authentic' to the degree that it is *poetic*. 'All imagination,' he writes, 'must learn again (at some point or other) to dream.'[35] Imagination, to be authentic, must have *poiesis* (the human power to make). Thus, mere *reproductive* imagination, for example, is never authentic. Only a creative imagination can be considered an authentic imagination!

Accordingly it may be said, although with some obvious simplification, that the more limited (or less free) an imagination is, the less is its potential for *poiesis* and therefore the greater its proportion of inauthenticity. Instead of positing distinct kinds of imagination, then, we have a question of degree. Imagination may have a degree of authenticity or it may have a degree of inauthenticity, measured in terms of *poiesis*. But even so, two polar ideals persist in this framework to provide an orientation for judgment. Or, perhaps it is more accurate to say that only *one* polar ideal remains, that of *poiesis*, accompanied by its lesser negation.

According to this line of analysis, it becomes possible to read Walker as ultimately reproducing the kind of *idealist* misgivings which he finds so problematic in the production of international relations and political theory. For, as we shall see, with respect to the idealism/realism debate which still manages to dominate discourse in IR/political theory, it is Walker who wishes to 'heretically' claim that *idealism* is 'the problem, not the solution'.[36] And yet, throughout his meditations, Walker seems to invoke some idealized notion of what proper/effective/authentic political imagination must be. Of course, with Walker it is never quite so simple because he clearly operates with a 'perverted' (in the Deleuzean sense)[37] notion of *idealism*. It is an *idealism* dedicated to the exultation of no particular *ideal*.

And yet, while Walker's work is often- and sometimes self- proclaimed to be 'post-structuralist' (and/or sometimes post-modernist), there is a sense that his general critical enterprise still entertains some fairly orthodox critical-theoretical misgivings to the extent that his project seems taken up with traditional discourses of intellectual and political

emancipation, especially as such discourses are expressly concerned with the emancipation of political thought (and imagination) from what are said to be its statist presuppositions.

Ignoring this specific concern for the moment, the key moments in Walker's thought, then, are threefold: First, his represents one of the earliest and most complete attempts to 'import' a critical post-structuralist moment of thought into the traditionally conservative study of international relations. In short, Walker does not wish to study within 'his' discipline; rather, he seeks to present the discipline itself as being a symptomatic expression of a larger problematic. Second, he very specifically seeks to recast a traditional problem of political/intellectual emancipation as a problem of imagination. Third, he understands perceived contemporary shortcomings of the modern political imagination to lie the inherent geometry of such imagination, which is to say, he believes that the modern political imagination is immured in a recalcitrant early modern metaphysics which was itself originally predicated on an attempt to discipline time (*doxa*) within categories of space. Consequently, any liberation of the political imagination would be a liberation from what Walker calls a modern 'politics of little boxes'.[38]

Of course, the direct association of 'authenticity' with freedom in this context is a loaded proposition. For what is freedom? And can we reasonably consider all limits as such to be plainly restrictive? No theory of the imagination can overlook the idea that certain limits may well be necessary for the very possibility of any 'creative' action or thought whatever. To this end, even the phenomenological tradition of Husserl and Sartre *et al* which wagers that a 'free' imagination is the very precondition of all human freedom also insists that imaginative consciousness, in reflecting upon itself, must work to acknowledge its own pre-reflective engagement with everyday lived experience. Phenomenology, like other forms of inquiry, seeks to remind one that there are always limits of a kind. It reminds us that even radical questioning takes its point of departure from a pre-conceptual experience of the life-world — a theme which, as we shall see, lies

at the very heart of Rob Walker's investigation into the limits of the modern political imagination.

1.2 The Principle of Sovereignty

the form is broken

What persists through the many qualifications above is the observation that Walker's call for a (re)imagining of the political is, at the very least, an implicit declaration that there is some deficiency in the *contemporary* play of a *modern* political imagination. There is also the further implicit assumption that this deficiency may be rectified and not simply endured.

The short story of this deficiency, already outlined at the top, is that while 'we' currently confront what appears to be the declining significance of the state in *contemporary* global affairs, the *modern* principle of state sovereignty nonetheless remains the primary principle informing 'our' efforts to organise the world/globe politically. State sovereignty continues to be 'the constitutive *principle* of modern political life'[39] — the very constitutive principle of the political itself — even as the shortcomings of this principle become more and more obvious and the need for something else becomes increasingly desirable.

In adopting this line of argument Walker is recognizably taking up many of the premises of the so-called 'sovereignty problematic' as developed, once again, primarily in the work of the late Michel Foucault.[40] As we have noted, however, what makes Walker's work particularly interesting is that it seeks to address this problematic in the context of the specialized discipline of international relations — that discipline which, perhaps more than any other, is 'explicitly concerned with the politics of boundaries'[41] and which also

happens to be constituted in its own right by the formal legal and political divisions enabled by the principle of sovereignty.

tradition and negation: political theory and international relations

International relations as both a discipline and a practice traditionally begins, it may be said, where a prior domestic and therefore authentic politics of sovereign statehood ends.[42] As such, the very existence of a discipline of international relations may itself be read as a representation of the formal limits of 'authentic' political life. The ramifications of this for attempts to articulate a truly global politics are large. For while international relations is generally taken to be synonymous with 'world politics', Walker's analysis (again, following Martin Wight's lead) deftly demonstrates that the 'established principles of modern politics are founded on the very assumption that a world politics is impossible by definition'.[43] This, it is argued, is because the authentically political has come in the modern era to be defined above all else by its authentic *location* inside the sovereign territorial state.[44] Outside of the state, according to this formulation, is said to be something else. Out 'there' exists the negation of a prior political ideal, something less than authentically political, something traditionally characterized as anarchy, or as a 'world of all against all', a world of contingency, pluralism and violence. The best that can be hoped for, this tradition holds, given this set of circumstances, is the establishment of mere *relations* aimed at the coexistence of formally sovereign political communities.

Writes Walker:

> If thinking about international relations is to be understood as a tradition by negation then it makes little sense to speak of a tradition of international relations theory as such. It is, rather, necessary to come to terms with the

> conception of political community that is being negated. There can be no meaningful reference to a tradition of international relations theory without specifying what one means by a tradition of political theory.[45]

To this end Walker argues that it is specifically 'the formulation of a tradition of international relations as the negation of a tradition about political community within an autonomous bounded space' which 'must be the crucial point of engagement with contemporary theories of international politics ... '.[46]

Crucially, Walker reverses the field and contends that it is, in fact, the *ideal* in IR/political theory which is far more virulent and problematic than is its lesser negation. For it is the *ideal*, he contends, which first makes an appeal to realism possible in the first place. Idealism, then, and not realism (all of its supposed hegemony notwithstanding), becomes the more serious problem for attempts to articulate a more-truly global politics while working within the categories of international relations theory.

Sovereignty, as the constitutive principle of this inside/outside dialectic of theory and negation, is a double-edged sword. While from the outside it serves to fragment the world into competing political autonomies, from the inside it provides an elegant account of political community and temporal progress within the state, and an effective resolution to the problems of political community. Concomitantly, an *internal* domestic political realm of justice, authority, law, and progress has come to be juxtaposed in the modern era against an *external* realm of power, contingency, force, and regress.

The division of the political world into an inside and an outside also accords with an attendant division of labour between distinct disciplines of political thought: the domestic realm as the traditional domain of political theorists; the external realm as the domain of that breed of specialists labouring under the rubric of international relations and/or international law. Because each of these realms and each of these disciplines is predicated on the exclusion or absence of the other, 'an uncritical appropriation of established political

principles' becomes, by definition, precisely that which 'cannot inform an account of world politics'.[47] As Walker has it:

> The early-modern resolution of all spatio-temporal relations expressed by the principle of state sovereignty implies a fundamental distinction between a locus of authentic politics within and a mere space of relations between states. While it is possible to simply ignore this distinction by reducing all social action to some common denominator ... most serious political analysis has been forced to respond to the difficulty of simply translating assumptions established in relation to statist forms of political community into that realm in which such community is assumed to be absent.[48]

If, then, something understood to be a 'genuine' world politics is the objective, the precepts of modern politics are a non-starter; 'we simply cannot get there from here'.[49] But where else to start? We must, presumably, imagine something else. In short, the prospect of a *genuine* world politics demands the very 're-imagining' of 'the' modern understanding of the political itself. Beyond this, Walker's crucial insight is that any such 're-imagining' will require not the issue of yet another political-utopian fantasy, but rather a hard challenge to the very *idealism* which tells 'us' what and where proper political community can be. Idealism! and not realism, Walker insists, is the dominant tradition in political thought, 'for it is the possibility of universality proclaimed by idealism that makes possible the discursive linkage between difference, relativism, anarchy, tragedy and violence' in the first place.[50] Idealism — as universalism — he says, 'to put it bluntly and heretically, can be understood as the problem, not the solution'.[51]

Arguably, then, what is needed is an imagination which is not only capable of breaking with the immobilizing prestige of the supposedly timeless 'reality' of statist politics, but also with the 'fascinating' power of the constitutive —and spatially conceived

— *ideal* of state sovereignty itself. In other words, we are in need of a truly 'authentic' imagination capable of demystifying its own hitherto *imagined* notions of 'authentic' political community.[52] Walker, then, one might say, is an odd idealist. For while he is clearly motivated by an aspiration to make the world a 'better' place, he is also at pains to challenge inherited notions of what it means to make the world a 'better' place.

Expressed in such a way, all of this may sound almost lampoonishly academic. However, as we shall see, Walker makes it clear that a great deal more is at stake in this 'crisis' of political imagination than the simple frustration of attempts by fancy French philosophers and *avant garde* theorists to save the phenomena of some abstract concept of political life in a globalising era. Concomitant with the sense of deficiency and inadequacy of contemporary thinking outlined above, there is also to be found in Walker's work a serious moment of *praxis* and an urgent call for a (re)imagining of the political *at this time*, and a sense that something must be done about the state of the political imagination lest undesirably 'real' flesh and blood consequences continue to be suffered *en masse*.

From a theoretical perspective, Walker contends that

> if it is true that contemporary political life is increasingly characterised by processes of temporal acceleration, then we should expect to experience increasingly disconcerting incongruities between new articulations of power and accounts of political life predicated on the early-modern fiction that temporality can be fixed and tamed within the spatial coordinates of territorial jurisdictions.[53]

Elsewhere he writes: 'it is especially difficult ... to see any clear connection between aspirations for democracy and emerging structures of global power, or what might be called — but only in a very tentative manner — world politics'.[54] On the other hand, it is possible to see an already well-formed and serious disparity between the relations of

power in the globalising world and traditional constellations of representation linked to state sovereignty.

And yet through all of this there remains in Walker's work some ambiguity concerning the suspected shortcomings of the principle of state sovereignty. It is uncertain as to whether sovereignty is to be understood as simply a bad thing, so to speak, or whether it is merely in decline and no longer tenable or effective as a principle of *contemporary* political organisation. The problem may be more complex still. For, while it may be obvious enough that sovereignty is in decline in certain respects, it is nonetheless misguided, Walker asserts, to believe that sovereignty (whether as practice, principle or 'fact') will entirely disappear any time soon. What we seem to be seeing are new patterns of exclusion on a global scale which involve sovereignty in their make-up in different ways. As another scholar, Saskia Sassen, puts it, for example, 'There is still plenty of it (sovereignty) around, but the sites for its concentration have changed over the last two decades—and economic globalisation has certainly been a factor in all this'.[55]

Of course, Walker does not detail whatever visions of hell he may imagine are forthcoming or which he may even presently recognise, and likely he is wise not to. Nevertheless it is easy enough to paint a more material face onto the theoretical 'disparities' to which he alludes. Many contemporary journals, books, talk-shows, newspapers &c. are, for example, rife with talk of 'techno-apartheids', 'economic citizenship' and the massive 'global underclass' which presently is under-represented when represented at all.[56] While the country-sides (or the 'outlands') of the world continue to be denuded of population, ever-increasing numbers of placeless peoples continue to be concentrated into the gigantic urban centres of the world, the holding tanks of humanity. Such crushing concentrations of population and privation, considered in a certain light, are eerily reminiscent of 'camp' conditions, minus the daily extermination rituals, of course. And yet, even here there is sufficient cause for reflection if one is willing to take into account the routine disappearances of 'superfluous' street-kids, the inhumanity of sweat-shops and

sex-shops, and/or, say, UN per annum estimations of child 'fatalities' due to malnutrition, numbers which amount to something akin to a holocaust of child death every year. The camp, it would appear, may be one of the resilient fixtures of modern life.[57]

While world order models and visions of the future (utopian and dystopian) abound, one possible (lived) scenario seems to loom larger than others at the moment. It involves a world where power flows and transforms while political representation remains fixed and immutable. We might wish to call this something like the era of the privileged nomadic: a new world order wherein capital, cosmopolitan elites, products and information traverse the earth at will and with great speed, more or less ignoring sovereign barriers which do not apply to them, while the host of humanity remains fixed within statist and/or urban 'containers', divided and excluded, organized like some planet-earth sized cabinet of curiosities or simply stored as a commodity, a labour pool ... energy reserves. This vision, of course, reads in a particularly 'classist' way. Other possible scenarios to be wary of include the prospect of potentially infinite political splintering and the unmitigated expanse of the rapacious corporatism Nietzsche predicted more than a century ago when he wrote of the 'arena of the future' where 'disintegrated' and 'ossified' societies are replaced by 'systems of individual egoism, fellowships intent on the rapacious exploitation of non-fellows and similar creations of utilitarian vulgarity'.[58] While many today may be caught up in a moment of euphoria, captivated perhaps by the technological wizardry which has made a 'city' of the world,[59] or by the triumph of capitalist liberal democracy which some are willing to believe has made — or will make — a giant family of humankind, the sceptic is likely to murmur that this supposedly heavenly city on earth is likely to have 'its own dark counter-point in hell'.[60]

However, this is but the moment of transition! The deed is not yet entirely done! For Walker's invocation of political imagination is also implicitly suggestive of a moment of real possibility — possibility specifically understood in this case in terms of a structural or historical 'window of opportunity' for action/change framed largely in terms of

discourses of (post)modernity. In short, there is a sense that the present era of transformations and accelerations — including the much ballyhooed 'decline of the state'[61] — is an especially (trans)formative period, a historically unique time, a time of great danger but also a time of tremendous opportunity. It is a time to act.

True to the phenomenological tradition, Walker's invocation of the imagination also implies a sense of intentionality.[62] It adheres to a fundamental belief in the possibility to effect change. In fact, there is a sense of efficacy in the very act of invocation itself! Perhaps incantation alone is enough to entice the muse from on high!

To recapitulate: in claiming that the question of the political imagination is crucial *now*, there is the insistence that there is now a real possibility, even a necessity, of recasting at least to some extent the political order of things — a possibility Walker wishes to table without necessarily evoking either eschatology or a subject of change or history or imagination, *per se*, an exceedingly difficult position to take, as we shall see in the chapters that follow.

Again, however, the negative corollary of Walker's emphasis on the imagination is the suggestion that there is also, at present, a general dearth of 'authentic' (a term used with great trepidation here, but used nonetheless) imagination, a dearth which may tragically prevent 'us' from acting on whatever historical opportunity may be before 'us'.

(un)imagined communities: a few caveats

Deference to the sovereignty problematic aside for the moment, it is admittedly not terribly clear what might be wrong with <u>the</u> imagination, if anything. Nor is it terribly clear what <u>the</u> imagination is, or how it works. Walker refers to his meditations as 'explorations' and for good reason. He offers us only a tour of the horizons of modern political thought and is careful not to promise more than this. So while he does a masterful job of isolating a

problem associated with imagination, the internal mechanics of this problem remain something of a mystery. On the one hand there is a strong sense in his work that certain historical and/or structural forces have something to do with the political imagination's supposed limitations. On the other there is also a strong sense that a kind of ideological blinding — in a more traditional Marxian sense — may be at work as well. However, while it is one thing to suggest that what we presently think or imagine (e.g. sovereignty) is problematic, it is quite another thing to suggest as Walker does that the actual modern imagination is itself 'in trouble'.[63] This is especially true given that it is entirely unclear what 'other' imaginations there have been, are or could possibly be. The way Walker establishes his problematic, sovereignty is not *what* 'we' think, but *how* 'we' think, with *how* 'we' think being just as subject to change over time as is *what* 'we' think.

Likely there will be those who no doubt feel that the very question is moot and that the whole idea of a crisis of imagination is quite beneath the dignity of one who would aspire to call him or herself a political- or social-*scientist* in the first place. Nevertheless, there are those such as Walker who flatly feel that the muse has for some reason abandoned 'us', though he remains ambiguous as to whether the muse is simply gone (missing) or whether it has been exiled (repressed) in some way. Likewise, it is not clear whether an imaginative impasse might be overcome through a rather straight-forward — though more concerted — effort to think *critically*, or whether critical thought is itself somehow complicit in the very production of an imaginative impasse. The road is tricky given that:

> The preoccupation, even obsession, with transcending inherited horizons has itself come to be seen as a characteristic aspect of the traditions that must now be regarded with suspicion.[64]

This does not mean that conventional forms of critique have necessarily lost all relevance. As we shall see in chapter three especially, Walker continues to engage in

conventional critique himself. What it does mean is that it has become 'exceptionally difficult to specify either the political grounds on which such a critique can be made or what its practical implications might be'.[65] In short, Walker believes that 'our' inherited assumptions about political community — assumptions, he says, derived from spatial and temporal assumptions about political community that crystallised in early-modern Europe — are presently in doubt. Consequently, he says, 'it is not at all clear what it might now mean to ground critique in some other kind of political community without invoking some purely abstract conception of humanity as such'.[66]

> Fortunately or unfortunately, and despite influential claims advanced by certain philosophical, ethical and religious traditions, humanity as such is not a meaningful political category. This is, after all, precisely the dilemma that was recognised by all those early-modern theorists who had to come to terms with the collapse of universalistic accounts of political, religious and metaphysical hierarchies.[67]

Humanity (perhaps most ideally rendered in Kantian terms), Walker wants to remind us, is an aspiration towards which citizens of particular political communities may endeavor, but only through the mediation of a system of formally sovereign states. Humanity, in short, remains the desirable but impossible counterpoint to state sovereignty.

And yet, while humanity, for Walker, may not be a meaningful political category, *modernity* does seem to be. In fact, it may be that his own attempt to produce a radical critique has the effect, in the end, of substituting a nebulous, 'aesthetic' category of *modernity* for universal political community or 'the world' as such. For the imagination he puts in question is, if nothing else, a *modern* imagination.

1.3 THE SUBJECT OF POLITICAL IMAGINATION

the modern mirage

None of the above should suggest that Rob Walker has a fully developed theory — or history for that matter — of the imagination. If anything, it should imply the opposite. To begin with, Walker is never very clear about what the imagination (modern or otherwise) is or how it works, though he has sought to re-cast problems inherent in efforts to establish some kind of truly global community/politics in terms of the problems inherent to a modern political imagination. He seeks to attend to a crisis of contemporary global political community by suggesting that such is the inevitable result of a particularistic mode of political thought rooted in the implicit geometry of a modern(ist) metaphysics which, he argues, finds ideal representation in the principle of sovereignty. In a sense, Walker takes one step back in hopes of taking two steps forward. He steps away from the precepts of political theory/international relations proper and into the more nebulous realm of the political imagination which is said to generate such precepts. The move is an interesting one, but one which is not accompanied by any explicit theory of (the) imagination. The terms of discourse are restated, though perhaps in a more complicated (convoluted?) way. But if this shift is not accompanied by an historically grounded and well formulated theory of (the) imagination (political or otherwise) then it does not seem as though it will get us very far. In fact, it poses the threat of infinite regress: how to imagine how to imagine an imagination which is capable of imagining an imagination which will imagine the conditions of possibility for an imagination which may ...

There is an aporia here that Walker needs to contend with and it is this: how do we begin to puzzle about political imagination without first identifying whose or what political imagination 'we' have in mind? Even Machiavelli, who is Walker's major source of inspiration on matters of political imagination, knew in no uncertain terms of which political community — and therefore of which political imagination — he wrote. With Walker, however, community is a problem. He seems to be asking a fundamentally

different question than Machiavelli. Where Machiavelli asks: What does the Prince or the Republic wish to achieve? Walker asks: Who is 'we'? 'We' would appear to be that which Walker wishes to see realised. The very question he asks implies that there is no longer any easy recourse to traditional, that is, modernist articulations of political subjectivity.

And yet, in another respect, Walker already has an answer to his question. He may seek to problematise the very idea of political community, nevertheless he appears to wade into the discourse with a clear concept of 'the world' already in mind. As one analyst has noted, 'Walker's idea of "world politics" ... [does provide] a limit to thought and presupposes an identifiable domain of human experience.' In his analysis of global/world politics, Walker 'reaches out for a container' in which the "transformations, dangers, and opportunities" that pervade the possibility of political community' may be examined and understood.[68] The experiential realities of contemporary spatio-temporal accelerations and displacements that Walker describes are the experiences of a single *modern* global community. The crisis of political imagination he posits is a universal crisis spawned of the near-universal expansion of modern statist conceptions of political community.

The paradox, of course, is that such 'global' community is no community at all., at least it is not anything which might satisfy Walker's criteria — though we cannot be sure exactly what these may be — for 'authentic' global political community. Universal statist community is, rather and ironically, a universally realised condition of human fragmentation, according to Walker. He writes:

> Both the presence and the possibility of something that might usefully be called world politics or human identity flatly contradict the understanding of political identity affirmed by claims to state sovereignty. Yet, paradoxically, it is precisely the possibility, and in some respects the presence of some kind of world politics and common human identity that has continued to produce an account of the world as a spatially demarcated array of political

> identities fated to clash in perpetual contingency or to converge somewhere over the distant horizon at a time that is always deferred. This paradox continues to be the primary condition governing our ability, or inability, to think about struggles for political identity in a world in which it has become exceptionally unclear who this 'we' is.[69]

As Walker establishes his problematic, then, there is only *one* — and it is *modern* — concept of the political. It is a concept which, universally established, divides 'one world' into 'many' irreconcilable worlds. We may reasonably assume, then, that there is also only *one*, accompanying political imagination.

Conversely, as Walker moves to resolve his problematic, he steadfastly refuses to associate the potential intellectual wellspring of any (re)invigorated political imagination with any particularist subjectivity or with any localised articulation of 'authentic' political community. In this way he hopes the door to a 'truly' global politics may be opened and it may be possible to avoid reproducing the one world/many world, inside/outside, identity/non-identity rituals which he feels are so symptomatic of the modern concept of the political. The most serious problem with such dichotomous rituals, he claims, however, is that they are rife with incipient 'monisms'; they produce 'one system, many states; one Europe or Christianity, or modernity and many (European, Christian or modern) peoples, cultures, nations and jurisdictions'.[70]

For the moment, at least, it would seem that the muse remains transcendent in Walker's formulation, free of any locality or particularity. And perhaps it should be this way. Perhaps there is a 'stuff', a magic dust of the imagination which in theory is *free* of any particular subjectivity, which in this case is to say, it is free of any traces of modernist subjectivity. And surely this is the point, to imagine an imagination that does not rely on or assume supposedly modernist notions of subjectivity. But if this is the case, then for the moment we suffer from a kind of catch 22 (in honour of the late Joseph Heller): If the

imagination is to be (re)imagined, then how is it to be done? Or better, who is to do it? Some new imagination, imaginations, or at least imaginative impulses, it would seem, are first required in order for 'us' to come to some (re)imagined understanding of political community and identity, even if 'our' new understanding is to privilege no particular understanding. And yet it would seem that some (re)imagined political subject(ivity) must first serve as the agent for the generation of any such 'new' political imagination. The question is a very familiar one: how it is that a non-specified 'we' may aspire to some universal without simply extrapolating from what is always a righteous local and particular perspective? A better question, of course, may be: Why? Why do 'we' want to? What are 'we' after? How is the Good to be judged in this kind of critical project? What is to be achieved? An end to violence? The mitigation of violence? Universal material egalitarianism? Radical democracy? Such goals seem to harbour an implicit axiology, a universal valuation of individual human life as such. More significantly, all of these goals, with the possible exception of the latter, may be achieved through the beneficence of empire.

But perhaps 'we' are simply after a reinvigoration of life itself! and of culture! — something to be judged in purely aesthetic terms and which may not necessarily be sovereigntist, non-sovereigntist, equalitarian, egalitarian, libertarian or otherwise. It is difficult to say exactly what is at stake in this context. However, at least one impetus appears to be implicit in such thinking. It reads as something like the struggle against empire, against conformity, against monotheism, the struggle of the Dionysian against the Apollonian. One senses, especially in the scarcely veiled reverence for Machiavelli himself, something like an attempt to emulate Renaissance city-republics in their struggles against the imposition of monotheistic empire and the dubious promises of an after-life. There is, to put this another way, an overriding sense detectable throughout Walker's texts that centralisation is as abhorrent to the authentically political as is the mercenary to a healthy republic.

In his attempt to finesse the problems of agent, structure and purpose that he establishes for himself, Walker can be found esoterically invoking here and there, in obvious deference to Machiavelli, the special capacity for judgement which is the mark of the man or the people or the 'species' of virtù.[71] Nevertheless, it remains unclear as to whether such a man or people or species of virtù are to be understood as the goal or the vanguard of this particular critical enterprise? Do we need a people of virtù in order to achieve a life of virtù? And where is the fountainhead of this virtù? In the past, with men such as Machiavelli and Hobbes (sic)? Or in the present with some 'latter-day Machiavelli'?[72]

Alas, perhaps it will once again come to pass that the great Western trope will be relived and a man of virtù (a true man of virtù, free of any traces of slave morality!) will come to inspire an authentic people of virtù and a life of virtù, whatever these may be (although [s]he will likely tell 'us').

Again, however, in his defense, Walker does not try to, nor does he claim to want to produce a theory of the imagination, political or otherwise. Nor does he try to produce any explicit theory of the Good, for that matter. He appears, rather, to merely want to disrupt 'our' inherited understanding of where the Good *can be*. Nevertheless, more is arguably needed of Walker. For if, as is contended here, an interrogation of the *modern* political imagination functions as perhaps the central moment in Walker's work, then it must be acknowledged that, at least for the time being, Walker's analysis of the imagination does not meet with the importance he places on it in the broad context of his theoretical explorations. While there are clear phenomenological/post-structuralist influences at play in his thinking in this context, such influences are never subjected to any sustained scrutiny, even if they are almost always qualified. Furthermore, his ultimate deference to an interpretation of the Machiavellian notion of virtù is simply too esoteric, something definitely reserved for the initiate.

To put this in a slightly different way: although adverse to taking any particular notion of community or even any particular knowledge construct(s) for granted, Walker nevertheless does appear to take the ontological existence of 'the modern political imagination' (complete with its spatialised and sovereigntist metaphysical underpinnings) as a given. This involves taking (1) modernity, (2) the political, and (3) something understood to be imagination, for granted. Once established or assumed, the orthodoxy of a 'modern political imagination' then serves as an orienteering device which enables explorations 'outside'. But there is a tremendous amount of paradox involved here given that the very idea of a specifically *modern* political imagination may itself be imaginary, and that Walker may do as much as anyone else to reify this fiction. Nor is it clear, accepting the 'modernist' hypothesis, 'who' might be capable, which is to say, who has the 'right stuff' (virtù) to undertake such explorations 'beyond' the confines of 'our' perhaps no longer so comfortable, orthodox, modern(ist) home.

Despite the existence of an enormous and growing literature on the subject(s), it is still not terribly clear what modernity is, let alone what the modern imagination might be. Even if we do accept the 'modernity' hypothesis in one or other of its forms, the idea of a specifically modern imagination presents a secondary problem. Is it possible, for example, to conceive of a category of imagination which is transcendent from the field of modernity, or transcendent of historical periodization in general? The very category of imagination may not translate trans-historically and it may be entirely misguided to even assume the possibility of non-modern imaginations. For how is it that 'modernity' may come and go and yet a static category of 'imagination' remains? What makes imagination? And what makes imagination modern? Likewise, the very category of the political may not transcend beyond the notions of subjectivity which are said to be associated with it in the 'modern' era. Is it possible to have politics without the polis? To imagine without images? At the moment, Walker's insistence on a '(re)imagining' of the political seems to involve the dissolution of his subject matter.

Walker, for his part, does little to allay concerns in this situation, preferring — or at least opting — to deliver us to the works of others from whom he draws much of his inspiration.[73] He seems in a way not to want to address the question(s) at all, leaving the *subjectivity* of 'the modern imagination' hovering in a cognitive ether somewhere between acknowledged 'fact' and conventional categorical invention (which may come to the same thing in the end). It is as though, in Walker's thinking, 'the modern imagination' were something that may only be apprehended in a side glance, in the periphery of one's vision, as though, like a faint star, it would disappear if one turned to look too squarely at it. Of course, it simply may not be there.

If the (modern) imagination continues to be a crucial concept in Walker's political thought, as seems likely, then it would be reasonable to expect from him (or his students) at some time in the future an analysis of, say, the historical ontology of the *imagination* (modern or otherwise) which would at least be comparable to, say, the rigour of Walker's analysis of the *political*. In brief, Walker's explainer demands more explanation.

r. b. j-ona

Walker fancies himself an explorer in much the same way that he lauds Machiavelli as 'an explorer, an interrogator, someone who poses questions about what politics can be under new historical and structural conditions'.[74] So while Walker's texts tend to be untidy spaces, perhaps he should receive kudos for simply summoning the gumption (or virtù) to explore and test intellectual boundaries while working in the context of a discipline (IR) which is more recognised for inscribing and upholding boundaries than for challenging them. Let us just say then, for the sake of argument, that there is more *praxis* than analysis in Walker's work when it comes to his meditations on the political, modernity, and the imagination.[75] Walker, it might be said, is simply trying to push the envelope of 'our'

collective political imagination by accepting, hypothetically and perhaps intuitively, that there is such a thing in the first place without necessarily moving to define it in any rigourous way. In fact, as should be clear by now, Walker deliberately resists any such overt definitions. He does, however, produce a great many sketches of what he means and does get very specific in places about the nature of the modern political imagination.

The problem is that in order to push the envelope, there must first be an inscription of 'envelope'. Limits must be established before they can be transgressed, over-come, gotten beyond or what have you. This is definitely not to suggest that Walker has, in effect, scripted a problematic for himself. That the principle of sovereignty is central to, perhaps even constitutive of, modern politics or politics in general is not a new idea. The point here, rather, is to draw attention to the central paradox which adheres in any such critical undertaking. Like a growing number of others, Walker professedly wishes to explore the horizons of a modern political imagination which he feels is coextensive with — and therefore curtailed by — the precepts of the *modern* principle of sovereignty. But in searching for such horizons and in seeking to go 'beyond' them, he demonstrates his own 'modernist' implication in them. He reifies, in his own right, both the very horizons he wishes to get 'beyond' (be they those of statist political community or those of his academic discipline) and the principle of sovereignty itself. Jumping from the boat of *modernity*, Walker finds himself in the dark and wet belly of his own inescapable dualism.

Walker's predicament with respect to the 'modern' principle of sovereignty is paralleled and exemplified by his situatedness 'within' the 'dividing' discipline of IR. As a theorist of international relations, Walker has the odd standing of being both an insider and an outsider at the same time. As much as he may seek to 'transcend', criticise, or otherwise draw attention to the intellectual limitations of this highly specialised discipline, it nevertheless cannot be denied that his own work, not to mention his career, thrives in healthy juxtaposition to the projection of a certain disciplinary orthodoxy within IR, one generally associated with the (neo)realist schools of IR. In fact, in his attempts to move

beyond or 'away' from such (perceived) orthodoxy, Walker helps to reify such orthodoxy in the same moment as he works to challenge it. Arguably his claims about the supposed horizons of modern political thought rely on a caricature of neorealism, in particular, and of IR by extension. Similar paradoxes may also be said to adhere in Walker's critique of the principle of sovereignty, in his meta-historical explorations of 'modernity', as well as in his various engagements with the modern orthodoxies of Cartesian/Kantian/Newtonian metaphysics. Further tension of this sort can be registered in his ambivalent stances toward the dictums of those most canonical of all realists, Thomas Hobbes and Niccolò Machiavelli. That Walker is well aware of these ambiguities does little to lessen their complexity. In fact, it would almost seem as though he deliberately fosters them as part of a disruptive strategy. Ambiguity, to this end, seems to be the point.[76] Walker, in this light, would read as one who would build his house half on the shore and half in the sea.[77] In *Inside/Outside* in particular he takes his readers on a tour of debates, histories, subjects, disciplines, concepts, categories &c., all the while seemingly attempting to demonstrate how these *things* are both there and not there. The book then culminates with the claim that it is possible to understand how the claim to resolve (through the principle of sovereignty) all contradictions works: 'It, most of all, is not simply there. Its fixing of unity and diversity, or inside and outside, or space and time is not natural. Nor is it inevitable.'[78] *Inside/Outside*, then, reads like a series of intellectual exercises designed to brings one's attention to the socially constructed nature of 'reality'. It is a series of exercises which teach one that the world is plastic. It is one thing to play with blocks, to arrange them into structures. It is quite another to shape the blocks themselves.

1.4 HISTORY AND POSSIBILITY

a theory of plain possibility

Although Walker lacks an overt theory of the imagination, there is an obvious, if implicit theory at work in his writing, a theory loosely associated with phenomenological teachings on the imagination. Again, the theory, we will argue, is implicit. Walker pens no name for it. For our purposes, we will call it the theory of plain possibility.

By now it should be clear that it is no modest task to try to contribute, in whole or in part, to the task of (re)vitalizing the *modern* and would-be *contemporary*, collective political imagination, whatever it/they may be. For Walker, however, this enterprise begins within his own specific field of expertise, IR, though it is certain that he would rather it did not have to begin there, or anywhere for that matter. In fact, his 'modest' enterprise produces the effect of throwing such disciplinary distinctions — as between, say, international relations and political theory, or between either of these disciplines and philosophy or history — into doubt in the first place. Such beginnings, however, are likely to remain beginnings unless a way is found to have them taken seriously, disciplinary fiefdoms being as difficult to assail as are the territories of any nation. Consequently, in the interest of plain possibility, just getting his *unorthodox* ideas taken seriously is what we might call the first task of Rob Walker. Nor is this an easy task given that he still works and publishes, at least for the time being, within a vaguely cohesive discipline of international relations, a discipline which, he says, continues to define and pride itself in large part on the systematic marginalization of all things deemed too weak to be taken seriously by virtue of their naïve and idealistic misgivings (these as distinct from the Kantian/Hegelian understanding of *idealism* of which Walker is critical). Such 'realist' classification schemes most certainly include for exclusion all airy meditations on the contemporary state/ontology of the political imagination.

However, it is precisely the sovereigntist inside/outside, power/knowledge constructs — typified in the rendering of IR itself into a series of great debates, and in the mutual exclusions of political theory and international relations, domestic and international politics — that Walker attempts to resist.[79] And while many before him, both inside and outside of IR, have sought to analyse the principle of sovereignty as the principle constitutive of such distinctions, there is something altogether special about Walker's obsession with sovereignty. It is as though, for him, sovereignty were *l'infâme*, that very 'vile' thing which, as both concept and *practice,* has most served to impede the modern political imagination. As a guiding *principle* it is at once imaginary itself and the consumer of all new imaginings! It is this principle which has, in effect, swallowed up the political imagination (the authentic imagination!), and which has taken its place, anointing itself in the process as the only possible kind of imagination imaginable from time immemorial! And yet, the gist of Walker's general argument is that this sovereigntist imagination is no imagination at all! It is only a reproductive template, a naked principle, a substitute for thought, a geometric formula designed to square the passions, eradicate metaphor, discipline language and exile poet(ic)s from the republic and/or the body politic, whichever one prefers. *Ecrasons l'infâme!*

While some, then, may wish to associate Walker exclusively with a passing post-modernist or post-positivist moment within the isolated and nascent discipline of IR, Walker is better read as a generalist, one who resists the clean lines and separate spaces of the sovereigntist ideal in academics as well as politics. As a self-proclaimed theorist of contemporary social and political thought he liberally draws on a number of would be 'autonomous' disciplines, including philosophy, the history and philosophy of science, historiography, political economy, geography, anthropology, critical literary theory, sociology of knowledge and macro-sociology. In fact it is not quite right to suggest that he merely draws on a series of autonomous disciplines, for he challenges the very divisions which serve to constitute such supposedly autonomous disciplines in the first place. He

challenges that very principle which predicates knowledge on an absolute act of exclusion. In effect, for Walker, as for Foucault and all of those who confront the sovereignty problematic in this way, sovereignty is a verb; it is an exclusionary *practice*.

history/superhistory

Nevertheless, of all the 'disciplines' drawn upon by Rob Walker, we will take a particular interest here in the most general and omnivorous of them all: History (all knowledge being history of a kind). Accordingly, much of what follows will be an investigation into Walker's particular uses and — in deference to one Friedrich Nietzsche — possible abuses of history and historiography in the development of his imagination problematic, as well as in his efforts to (re)invigorate the contemporary political imagination while working in and around the intellectual fiefdom of IR.

In adopting an historicist approach to the study of international relations as political theory, Walker's work directly challenges much of the ahistorical, (pseudo)social-scientific thought presently dominant within IR. Most specifically, Walker seeks to draw attention to the 'marked disdain', long reflected in theories of international relations, 'for critical reflection on the historically constituted claims of state sovereignty'.[80] To this extent he is perturbed by, and seeks to challenge, both the 'epistemological platitudes' which presently pass for serious scholarship within IR, as well as the uncritical quietude which simply takes the principle of state sovereignty for granted, treating it as the silent and ahistorical condition guaranteeing all other categories.[81]

In this respect, once again Walker follows in a tradition closely associated with the work of Martin Wight, especially with respect to Wight's historical account of the constitution of modern political life in the transformations of the late medieval era.[82] And yet, while Walker makes extensive use of history, it is readily apparent that he has little or no interest in

writing History in the Rankean sense, which is to say, again in deference to Nietzsche, *sovereigntist* history. Walker remains first and foremost a political thinker who attempts to use *effective* history for expressly political purposes. Of the three classes of historian famously identified by Nietzsche — the *monumentalist*, the *antiquarian*, and the *critical* — Walker most closely resembles the latter in his writing/reading of history. This is not to suggest that Nietzsche's categories are in any way exhaustive or even mutually exclusive of one-another or that Walker only exhibits the traits of one these archetypes. We mean here only that Walker appears to clearly recognise the *textuality* or *intertextuality* of history. His texts reflect an understanding that history is *to be written* and not simply uncovered, recovered or revealed. The truth of history being in its writing, he is one, we will suggest, who seeks to write history in the service of life! — as Nietzsche would have it — which is to say, he is unafraid to 'shatter and dissolve something in order to live'.[83] But this is tricky. For example, if present quietudes rely on a certain *forgetfulness* of the past in order to endure, then Walker, per Nietzsche, 'demands the temporary destruction of this forgetfulness'.[84] The past is to be 'considered critically', a 'knife taken to its roots', 'pieties tread under foot' if necessary.[85] If our present 'sovereigntist' imaginative impulses appear dull, then a 'new instinct' must be implanted, a 'second nature' instilled so that this dull 'first nature withers away'.[86]

In conjunction, then, with our insistence in this thesis that Walker presents an implicit theory of possibility and praxis, his work will hereafter be read, at least in part, as counter-history or, better yet, as superhistory: as an attempt, in Nietzsche's words, to '"*a posteriori* " give oneself a past from which one would like to be descended in opposition to the past from which one is descended'.[87] To this extent, the Truth of the 'modernity' hypothesis, and/or of Walker's particular variation thereupon, is practically irrelevant. If change is the goal, then change must be made to appear possible. If this requires an insistence on the uniqueness of the 'modern' condition, or upon a claim that 'we' are fascinated with modern spatial coordinates, or upon the very idea of historical specificity in general, then so be it.

Undoubtedly, such attempts (and the people who make them) are always dangerous, says Nietzsche, 'because it is always so difficult to find a limit in denying the past and because second natures are mostly feebler than the first'.[88] Nevertheless, we may take some solace in an understanding that every first nature was also, 'at some time or other, a second nature and that every victorious second nature becomes a first'.[89]

'[T]o work with the principle of sovereignty,' writes Walker,

> is to engage with deeply entrenched discourses about political life in which the analysis of contemporary structural change is often formulated as if sovereignty must be either permanent or defunct. But this is to work with philosophies of history that are themselves constituted through claims about sovereign identity. These discourses necessarily place firm limits on how we understand contemporary trends and future possibilities. They inscribe implicit limits in time to complement explicit limits in space.[90]

Simply put: sovereign identity either is or isn't. Projections of future political change are thus torn between competing, though complementary, visions of the eternal permanence or the radical transformation of all that is. Politically, our options, when viewed through the principle of sovereignty, amount to a single choice between a (status quo) vision of order (authoritarian if need be) versus an imagined chaos (anarchy). Intellectually this choice is cast as a non-choice between an imagined absolutist foundationalism versus an imagined spectre of relativism, notwithstanding the fact that this choice is certainly more nuanced in contemporary political theory than it was when Hobbes first articulated it. Regardless, as Walker presents the case, us moderns still seem incapable of imagining anything else at present. And yet we must.

However, Walker contends that sovereigntist/modernist philosophies of history can only continue to be affirmed in time through a forgetting of their own conditions of

possibility. They can only continue to hold, in effect, through a forgetting of their own historically constituted character, which is to say they must forget the 'historically constituted character of political life' in general.[91] Walker, as Superhistorian!, must work, then, to quash such forgetfulness while simultaneously introducing at least the outline for a counter-history (or anti-history) which might contribute to (or even give rise to) a (re)invigoration of the contemporary political imagination. What this involves is certainly not the substitution of some fantastic fiction for 'History' as such. On the contrary, the enterprise begins with a recognition (or is it a sovereigntist declaration?) that the very modern ideal of universalist 'History' has itself been constituted through historically specific claims about the possibility of sovereign identity in the first place.

However, what Walker's argument involves in practice is the making of some very specific and controversial historical claims about the nature of *modernity*, itself. Specifically, Walker tries to convince us that modernity is best understood in terms of a heightened sense of spatial awareness as opposed to the conceits of a reigning orthodoxy which generally seeks to define modernity in terms of a heightened awareness of time. Again, Walker hopes to convince us that 'implicit limits in time', those which presently limit our projections for future change, must be seen as having been inscribed to 'complement (prior) explicit limits in space'. A properly critical attitude toward modern political thought, then, he suggests, begins with a kind of gestalt switch in which one moves from an historically specific preoccupation with the puzzles of time to an insight into the implicit geometry of *modern* (political) thought.

2 THE PATHOLOGY OF NONSENSE: THE GEOMETRY OF MODERN HISTORY

> Crumbled and fallen apart, on the whole half mechanically divided into an inside and an outside, sown with concepts as with dragons teeth, engendering concept-dragons, in addition suffering from the sickness of words and without trust in any feeling of our own which has not yet been rubber-stamped with words I may perhaps still have the right to say about myself cogito, ergo sum (I think, therefore I am) but not vivo, ergo cogito (I live, therefore I think).
>
> — Nietzsche[92]

2.1 THE CONCEPT OF THE POLITICAL

the sovereignty of sovereignty

Undaunted, not hoping to produce a complete theory/ontology of the imagination as it relates to political theory — a difficult proposition, although something he does seem to be working eventually towards — Walker does seek to comment on the character of the specifically *modern* political imagination and to provide some diagnosis as to its present inadequacies. Crucially, he seeks to do this without simply being dismissed as some hopeless idealist or airy academic.

To this end, Walker's rhetorical master-stroke (though it is not his alone) comes in his double diagnosis of the principle of sovereignty, 'the crucial constitutive principle of modern political life.'[93] He argues that because sovereignty is, in effect, *sovereign* in modern political theory, it not only limits the number of potentialities for global political organisation in its own right, but it does this while managing to exclude all other potential alternatives to itself. It is 'both constitutive of the system and a problem to be

overcome'.[94] Sovereignty then, as a principle and as a dense political *practice*, is said to impede our ability even to *imagine* alternatives.

'Modern politics,' writes Walker, 'is unthinkable without its accounts of some sovereign authority to distinguish that which is properly political and that which is not'.[95] While the capacity to discriminate is no doubt constitutive of all human endeavors, he says,

> [m]odern politics is *explicitly* constructed as a very precise system of discriminations. It works especially on the basis of constitutive distinctions between insiders and outsiders, rulers and ruled, legitimate and illegitimate.[96]

Here, then, we may see how, by putting some spin on Carl Schmitt's formidable insight into the very nature of the political itself, Walker develops his own analysis of the political beginning with the recognition that any decision on the political must itself be recognised as a political decision. He is then able to postulate that it has become possible, in fact easy, to deem calls to re-imagine the political to be trivial because such concerns are understood to lay outside of a prior circumscription of serious — and therefore authentic — politics.[97]

But if modern politics is recognized as a 'precise system of discriminations', and if the principle of sovereignty — that dividing principle *par excellence* — is recognized as the constitutive principle of the political itself, then who or what is sovereign? Or if, according to Schmitt's formulation, the exception always and everywhere determines the norm, and 'sovereign is he who decides on the exception', then who is it that decides on the exception?[98] Who discriminates? Who decides on the political? Who is sovereign?

The rather discomforting answer to this series of questions is, no one. We look in vain for any such subject. Sovereignty, *sovereigntist thinking* itself, is said to be sovereign. The conventions of sovereignty, it would seem, have a subjectivity all their own. In political theory, Foucault famously tells us, *we have yet to cut off the head of*

the sovereign. '[T]he silent reifications of the principle of state sovereignty,' writes Walker, 'testify to *its* hegemony both over what it means to aspire to some other identity and to resist the identities constructed by hegemonic powers'.[99] It is in 'the conventions of our age,' Walker continues, 'it is in the very discriminations enacted by modern politics (itself?) that an insistence on

> the need to re-imagine what we mean by politics is to be framed either as a meddler in mere abstractions, as the kind of idealist known by the negation of some presupposed materialism, or as a peddler of merely normative prescriptions, as the kind of idealist known by the negation of some presupposed reality.[100]

And yet, Walker argues, it is precisely 'our'/modern assumptions about responsibility and the material or realistic ground from which 'we' are able to make such judgments — judgments about 'the crucial and the trivial', or about the 'real and realistic' versus that which is neither — that are now in considerable doubt.

> It is this doubt, converging from a multitude of different and often mutually antagonistic directions, that, in part, now gives rise to demands that we re-imagine what we mean by politics.[101]

For if sovereignty *is* the constitutive principle of the political in any real or accepted sense, then a contemporary convergence of philosophical critiques centered on the question of identity, as well as an increased contemporary experience of temporality — speed, movement, acceleration — together serve to put the desirability and the workability of this principle into grave doubt. This being the case, Walker declares that it is therefore

necessary to *'attend to the questions to which that principle was merely an historically specific response'*.[102]

a box of sovereignty

'Despite all appearances, sovereignty is not a permanent principle of political order'.[103] The principle of sovereignty, rather, offers an historically specific account of political identity which reflects the spatio-temporal options of another era, options which happen to be unsuitable to the present era of temporal accelerations and spatial compressions. In this manner Walker's diagnosis of the inadequacies of the modern/sovereigntist imagination begins with a conviction that this time is out of joint: 'My concern with the limits of the modern political imagination,' he writes,

> is informed both by a sense of the need for alternative forms of political practice under contemporary conditions and a sense that profound transformations are currently in progress. But it is also informed by a sense that our understanding of these transformations, and of the contours of alternative political practices, remains caught within discursive horizons that express the spatiotemporal configurations of another era.[104]

Simply put, 'we' have, in effect, gotten into the habit of thinking like moderns; and yet given the plethora of claims about the novelty of contemporary life there is ample reason to believe that 'we' no longer live in a world conducive to the axioms of (early)modern political thought. In short, 'our' thinking is outdated; it is unsuited to the times. Walker very specifically wishes to argue that this is because 'we' contemporaries have become absorbed in the universalizing — and largely geometric — theorems of early modernity

which 'we' have come to accept as being somehow eternal: unchanging and unchangeable. 'We' have lost our sense for the historicity of life and have instead taken 'a modernist framing of all spatiotemporal options as an unquestionable given.'[105] If Bachelard famously defines the human being as 'a being *to be imagined*', as a being who 'continually renews himself by means of the imagination,'[106] and further feels that humans have an innate human need for renovation, then Walker, we will claim, argues in a codified way, especially in his cryptic anagram drawn from Bachelard himself, that such critical activity of the imagination has all but ceased in contemporary political life and thought. Accordingly, 'we' have become immured in modern habit and modern convention to the point where, ironically, even our utopian imaginings have come to be but stock illusions! Thus, in a certain sense, the imagination is crippled because it is not free. Or, in keeping with Bachelard's categories, such imagination as 'we' have is not 'authentic' imagination. It has become fascinated with its own 'inauthentic' images. It is ruled by that which goes before it and by that which remains unthought. Crucially, what goes before it, says Walker, *per* Bachelard, is a 'profound metaphysics ... rooted in an implicit geometry which — whether we will or no — confers spatiality upon (our) thought'.[107] Of course, this anagram to *Inside/Outside* may mean nothing, or nothing of the sort. But the wager here, of course, is that it is significant.

The sense derived from all of this is that the contemporary political imagination, according to Walker, is not truly creative, but reproductive, because it takes for granted and adopts as its own the spatio-temporal options of another era. Such options, Walker argues, are grounded in classical Euclidean-Newtonian-Kantian conceptions of absolute space which find ideal representation in the principle of sovereignty, and which are less and less reconcilable with contemporary trajectories. (An attempt to summarize this argument is made below in the passage on 'Gulliver', section 2.2.) What we get from Walker, then, is the sense of a political imagination once free — say with the Renaissance genius of a Niccolò Machiavelli, or even (ironically) with the critical insight of a Thomas Hobbes

struggling to contain the rupture of (early)modern subjectivity within a moment of Galilean-Euclidean calculation — but now contained, boxed in. The muse laying somewhere outside. The box now sovereign; sovereignty the box.

sovereignty and elegance

> Simply put ... the principle of state sovereignty expresses an historically specific articulation of the relationship between universality and particularity in space and time. As such, it both affirms a specific resolution of philosophical and political options that must be acknowledged everywhere and sets clear limits to our capacity to envisage any other possibility. As both resolution and limit, it enters into the practices of states, the categories of those who analyse states and even the aspirations of those who would like to dispense with states. As a practice, it is easily mistaken for their essence. As a category of analysis, it is easily treated as the silent condition guaranteeing all other categories. As source of inspiration, it affirms that the only alternative to it is a return to the same, albeit on a larger — global — scale.[108]

Sovereignty, as this quote suggests, provides a profoundly effective articulation of the 'relationship between universality and particularity in space and time'. Although it now reads as common sense, the resolution is far from simple and represents a density of metaphysical accomplishment which is concealed by the apparent elegance of the principle. As a resolution of philosophical and political options, sovereignty is a thing of beauty. While Walker does not make the point overtly, Walker certainly implies that it is the sheer elegance of the principle which, in large part, accounts for the unblinking modern

fascination with it. According to this rendering, sovereignty is an alluring Siren whose song tempts us with a vision of ultimate order: a world of clean and separate spaces. Something to make Walt Disney proud, but an impossible ideal which carries dire consequences when the desire to realize it is too strong.[109]

Although its history is debated, the principle of sovereignty, in its modern guise, is conventionally understood to have come into prominence as an organising principle in the wake of the collapse of the feudal hierarchies of the Holy Roman Empire.[110] As an adherent to this particular vein of historicism, Walker reads the principle of sovereignty as addressing modern variations on the 'puzzles that had perplexed late medieval theologians, notably those concerning the proper relationship between the finite and the infinite,' puzzles which ultimately translate, he says, into questions concerning 'the relationship between the claims of men in general to those of the citizens of particular places'.[111] The modern states system, he claims, elegantly offers a very precise way of responding to both claims simultaneously by positing a single world and many states: one Europe, or Christianity, or modernity and many (European, Christian or modern) peoples, cultures, nations and jurisdictions. But again, to reiterate an earlier quote: 'like all grand dualisms', Walker writes, 'this one is rife with incipient monisms: the priority of national interests or the priority of international society; explanations of state behaviour or explanations of international structure; the possibility of international order or the inevitability of international conflict' (ibid.).[112]

This primary resolution of the problem of the one and the many, the particular and the universal, citizen and humanity, which the principle of sovereignty allows, ultimately comes to be 'replayed', he argues, in twin discourses about life inside and outside the state. Thus we arrive at those opposing stories about *internal* progress/order/peace/history (i.e. political theory) versus *external* contingency/ anarchy/war/repetition (i.e. international relations).

Taking his cue from Bachelard, Cassirer, and Deleuze among others,[113] Walker, in a novel turn, argues that the modern resolutions of the universal/particular, inside and outside, are first made possible by a 'sharpe distinction in space'.[114] It is, he says, this prior spatial distinction which only thereafter permits a complementary distinction in time. He summarizes this intellectual transition from spatial to temporal categories in very pithy language, declaring that: 'Inside, the spatial consciousness that informed early -modern contract theory gradually gave way to theories of history. The architectonics of *Leviathan* gave way to the dialectics of *Geist*..[115]

Understanding modernity in terms of the onset of a new spatial awareness is the linchpin in Walker's general theory. It is this emphasis which, perhaps more than anything else, sets Walker apart from the host of theorists in the field. According to such an interpretation, modernity and sovereignty, as such, are to be understood 'primarily in spatial terms,'

> notably in relations to the spatial separation of the self-conscious ego from the objective world of nature, the aesthetics of three dimensional perspective, and the demarcations of the territorial state (all established in the early modern period of European history). Contemporary conditions are then understood as a revalorisation of temporality.[116]

There are, however, a host of other contemporary writers on modernity, Fredric Jameson, Jean-François Lyotard, and David Harvey notable among them, who have conversely sought to identify modernity 'in relation to characteristic claims about evolutionary teleology and progressive history', which is to say they choose to define modernity primarily in temporal- as opposed to spatial terms:

> Impressed by the speed and accelerations of the contemporary era, [such authors] speak of a new spatial awareness, characterising postmodernity as a transition from time to space, from temporal continuities to spatial dislocations.[117]

Walker defends his choice, writing:

> ... especially because my explicit focus is on a discipline (IR) that has been constituted as an analysis of relations between states conceived primarily as spatial entities, I treat the primacy of space in the cultural and intellectual experience of the early modern era as crucial, as setting the conditions under which later accounts of temporality — including those given by Marx — could be articulated as a linear and thus measurable progression.[118]

As we have seen, Walker also believes that spatial conceptions are already involved in accounts of temporality that 'promise to take us from here to there, from tradition to modernity, from modernity to postmodernity, from primitive to developed, from darkness into light'.[119] Modern accounts of history and temporality, he maintains,

> have been guided by attempts to capture the passing moment within a spatial order: within, say, the invariant laws of Euclid, the segmented precision of the clock or the sovereign claims of territorial states.[120]

As he repeatedly points out, progress is a story told from the *inside*. The distinction between inside and outside,

> whether made explicitly, as it usually is in the theory of international relations, or tacitly, as it usually is in texts about political theory, continues to inform our understanding of how and where effective and progressive political practice can be advanced.[121]

The good life, reason, justice, democracy, liberty, all these are the aspirations of the *inside*. They may only be hoped for within the secure confines of particular statist communities. The *outside* world, on the other hand, is the flat negation of this prior ideal. International relations 'remains a discourse about barbarism and violence and war,' a place where 'the future can only be deferred' — no hidden hands, no optimistic teleologies, only a temporality without hope of redemption:

> One system and many states; the possibility of universality inside and the violent play of particularities outside; a spatial order in which history can unravel as it should and a spatial disorder in which contingent forces can only clash as they must. As a response to the puzzles of unity and diversity, presence and absence, and space and time, the principle of state sovereignty says all that is to be said, indeed all that can be said about the character and location of modern political life. All contradictions are resolved, and they are resolved with great elegance and style, with an apparent simplicity that masks the density of metaphysical achievement.[122]

Thus, in producing an 'order' in the world which has come to be taken for granted, the principle of sovereignty continues to exercise its wiles, its elegance and charms, stunning us with the 'magic of straight lines'.[123] Or at least it *has* done so until recently.

speed and sovereignty

Having painted an impressionist representation of the mesmerising effect of the principle of sovereignty on the *modern* political imagination, Walker then turns to the increasing amount of evidence which suggests that the grip of sovereignty on the *contemporary* political imagination is slipping. There is now an 'increasingly widespread sense', he claims, that the resolutions of state sovereignty are no longer adequate, that 'the metaphysical achievements of the principle of state sovereignty have less and less political relevance'. '[W]e are no longer so easily fooled,' he says, 'by the objectivity of the ruler, by the Euclidean theorems and Cartesian coordinates that have allowed us to situate and naturalize a comfortable home for power and authority'.[124] 'The clean lines of state sovereignty ... are (now) less impressive than the startling velocity of contemporary accelerations'.[125] The situation is perplexing. Predictably, Walker's lines are not very clean. According to his telling of the story, sovereignty is at once enchanting, having an 'enourmously powerful' grip on the political imagination, but at the same time he also declares that 'we' are 'not so easily fooled' by sovereignty's resolutions any more, whoever 'we' are. Now, this may very well be straight contradiction or waffling. On the other hand, one might suppose that this strange dance of seduction continues because, paradoxically, the principle of state sovereignty remains, really, the only way to 'think about the struggles for political identity that seem so pressing all around us'.[126]

> Whatever avenues are now being opened up in the exploration of contemporary political avenues, whether in the name of nations, humanities, classes, races, cultures, genders or movements, they remain largely constrained by ontological and discursive options expressed most elegantly, and to the modern imagination most persuasively, by claims about the formal sovereignty of territorial states.[127]

The resolutions of state sovereignty may be evidently problematic in contemporary times. Nevertheless, such resolutions continue to provide the stock answers, the only answers in fact, not only to all the questions about who 'we' are, but also to the questions about who 'we' *can be*. This is a 'we' which, according to Walker, shifts rapidly back and forth between an invocation of humanity in general and an admission of the parochial ground from which the claimant to humanity speaks:

> as a nationalist or globalist, we can (and continue to) know *who* we are through knowing where we are. Dislodged from the Great Chain of Being and pitched into the empty spaces of modernity, we claim autonomy and identity as particulars — individuals and nations — ever in search of reconciliation with the universal, or ever resigned to the unhappy condition in which reconciliation is known to be impossible.[128]

Even as modern subjectivities have begun to melt in the kinetic white heat of contemporary accelerations, 'the silent reifications of the principle of sovereignty (still) testify to *its* hegemony both over what it means to aspire to some other identity and to resist the identities constructed by hegemonic powers'.[129]

2.2 THE POLITICS OF MODERNITY

'once upon a time'

Surely this is an impossible situation, the logic of sovereignty providing the only apparent alternative to itself? However, Walker's key insistence is that the situation only appears to

be impossible according to an historically specific rendering of options. The argument sounds very Kuhnsian, though one is hard-pressed to find any reference to Thomas Kuhn in Walker's works. Nevertheless, at points Walker's arguments makes it sound very much as though us moderns, whoever we are, inhabit a kind of modern political paradigm of desire and impossibility. What we need to remember, he keeps reminding us in one way or other, is that 'Once upon a time, the world was not as it is'.[130] Though the principle of sovereignty 'continues to inform our familiar world of common sense and political realism, it was once bizarre and radical, even nonsense'.[131] In short, sovereignty has origins, and not those born of divine commandment or the decree of nature. God did not say: 'Let there be light ... and sovereignty!' If it had a beginning — one associated with the onset of modernity — then it becomes reasonable to expect it to have an end or at least a transformation. For it may be said that 'whatever has a beginning *deserves* to have an undoing'.[132] At the very least, one may be permitted to speculate that modernity will not last forever. Modernity is not heaven. It should therefore be possible, one would assume, or it may at least *become* possible, to eventually frame imaginative political options in ways that differ significantly from those presently offered by a sovereigntist modernity.

Like an epidemiologist attempting to trace the origins of some communicable disease (mad sovereignty disease?), Walker goes back in time to try and trace this pathology of 'nonsense'. He is not the only one to attempt this kind of genealogy; however, perhaps because he is a geographer at heart, his conclusions are atypical to political theory. He concludes that the rendering of political options to a select few by the principle of sovereignty is the historically specific out-growth of a profound *modern* metaphysics rooted in an implicit geometry, a metaphysics which, we redundantly add, is neither natural or permanent. The modern vision of statehood, he claims, rests in specific ontologies worked out from roughly the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. If he is right, then it would appear that changing time(s), now call for deep meditation(s) on the nature of space.

Gulliver

Walker's position is rooted in the basic proposition that, though 'moulded from historical and natural elements', space is nonetheless political and ideological, 'a product literally filled with ideologies'.[133] The history of the development of the most influential (modern) conceptions of space, Walker acknowledges, is a long and complex one. However, he claims that this history is innately tied to the interplay of science and philosophy from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Walker outlines several prominent moments of this interplay in a chapter on the theme of 'Gulliver and the Territorial State' in *Inside/Outside*. One of his very strongest pieces of writing, it also lays out two powerful examples of where classical Euclidean-Newtonian constructions of space, as he calls them, have been absorbed (unconsciously?) into the most influential theories of international relations. The two examples he presents are 1) the hierarchical typology of Inis Claude's classification of approaches to the management of power in international relations; and 2) Kenneth Waltz's more (in)famous levels of analysis schema.[134] Because this short chapter on Gulliver is so important to understanding Walker's work in general, we will attend to it in some detail here.

It has been said that the *Book of Job* reads as a condensed version of *The Bible* within *The Bible*. Likewise and ironically (given its subject matter), it is useful to think of Walker's little chapter on 'The Territorial State and the Theme of Gulliver' as a micro-version of his 'bigger' corpus, within his corpus. Succinctly put, the crucial claim made in this 'little' chapter (a mere 16 pages) — the claim which arguably provides the basis for the host of Walker's work — is that an 'all-pervasive' and 'uncritical' assumption of historically specific (i.e. modern) and essentially spatial categories in the analysis of global politics has resulted in a highly limited array of possible choices for conceptualizing, anticipating, and assimilating change in the global theatre. How we get to this point is, as

mentioned, a long story and Walker only provides us with a sketch. However, the story, through its various permutations, is a reasonably familiar one.

To begin with, one major theme in the development of specifically *modern* conceptions of space is said to involve 'the re-emergence of neo-Pythagorean elements of Platonism, and the consequent stimulation of a mathematical formalisation of space'.[135] Galileo, not surprisingly, is the central historical figure in this context. It is in the work of this most famous of scientific revolutionaries that 'we find a particularly clear articulation of the connection between the formalisation of space and the formalisation of the subject-object dualism that has been so crucial to the constitution of modern philosophical discourse'.[136] With Galileo, then, we have a crucial moment in the development of a uniquely modern subjectivity. It is with him that the 'troubling gap between the finite and the infinite that had so preoccupied the medieval theologians finally turned into a straight line between autonomous individuals and the external world'.[137]

Subsequently, whether through Galileo, Descartes or Kant,

> modern philosophy has been defined very largely as a sequence of attempts to live with or to overcome a metaphysics of distance, a dialectics of here and there, the delineation of presence and absence in the stately measures of eternal geometry.[138]

A second crucial moment for the expression of such 'stately measures of eternal geometry' comes with Isaac Newton and his conceptualisation of an absolute space describable in terms of the axioms and theorems of Euclid — Newton's absolute space being 'neatly coextensive with the postulates of Euclidean geometry'.[139] It is these postulates which thereafter come to be taken up, particularly in the philosophy of Kant, as a guarantee against subjective scepticism. The problem, however, is that we have not been able to count on this 'guarantee' for quite some time given what Walker dubs the

'bankruptcy of the great Newtonian insurance company in the late nineteenth century',[140] something which is perhaps better recognized as the great epistemological crisis of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-centuries. Thus Walker's dismissal of more post-modernist veins of thinking which suggest a moment of crisis, if you will, of more recent historical origins.

The historical production of a 'specifically modern' conceptualisation of space, however, is discerned by Walker in other places as well. It can, he argues, be traced to the development of single-point perspective[141] in late fifteenth-early sixteenth-century Italian painting, as well as in the cartographic revolution which accompanied the expanding commercial interests of Europe around the globe. Gerhard Mercator's sixteenth-century projection, Walker notes, still provides a popular image of the world in terms of the mathematical space of Euclidean geometry. 'It is in precisely this historical-intellectual context,' he concludes, 'that we can see the emergence in post-Renaissance Europe of the linkage between ideas of state sovereignty and a sense of inviolable and sharply delimited space' (129). A major problem with this historicization offered by Walker, however, is that it is not very precise. On the contrary, he offers us only grand brush strokes together with deference to his major influences.

Now, somewhere along the way, according to this story, the (early)modern metaphysical groundwork outlined above is said to have been absorbed into or has otherwise come to ground contemporary understandings of the political. And while again it is not made at all clear how political thought has come to be so immured in classical conceptions of space, for Walker, Hobbes' adaptation of the postulates of Euclidean geometry and Galilean physics to social and political thought in *Leviathan* is paradigmatic. At any rate, however it has come to pass, there is at least some evidence to suggest that '[c]onventional accounts of world politics have implicitly assumed a classical conception of homogenous space'.[142]

Of course, a survey of political and philosophical history is only one way of establishing this connection. Walker, as we have shown above, also demonstrates the 'spatialisations' of modern political thought through his interrogation of an extant IR/political theory dichotomy.[143]

While every *modern* discipline, by definition, was likely rooted in a *modern* metaphysics at some point, Walker implies that an incipient, though highly conservative discipline of international relations is unnaturally bonded to its classical underpinnings, presumably because, as a discipline, it has adopted very little if anything in the way of a critical attitude towards its own metaphysical foundations. One can read this recalcitrance as a measure of the discipline's 'classical' status, its obsolescence, or its parochialism. The inherently classically-spatial character of modern theories of international relations, claims Walker, can be recognized most obviously in the context of the territoriality of states and in traditional, crass geopolitical articulations of military strategy. Walker, however, has gained a measure of notoriety as an international relations theorist because of his recognition that analogous classical-spatial presuppositions can also be found in the very categorisation of theoretical options available for the very analysis of contemporary world politics. Again, the two primary examples he singles out for consideration in this context are Claude's hierarchical classification of power in international relations, and Waltz's so-called levels of analysis schema. Waltz's work is particularly important in that it has provided 'undoubtedly the most important categorisation of theoretical options available for the analysis of contemporary world politics', namely those of man, the state, and the international system.[144]

In his analysis of Waltz's categories Walker first notes that the very notion of 'levels' in this schema is deceptive, for it is not clear just what a 'level' is. Waltz's categories may seem all-inclusive, not to mention elegant and obvious ('for what other categories could there possibly be?', writes Walker), but what are we to make of 'all those categories that this typology manages to ignore so effectively, categories of class, nation,

gender and ethnicity, or categories based on region and locale'?[145] Next, although strictly speaking Waltz's 'taxonomy' applies to the flat modern territorialities of states that are said to have replaced overarching claims to hierarchical authority, there nevertheless continues to be an ambiguous notion of hierarchy evoked by the notion of 'levels' which seems to resonate with, for example, Inis Claude's 'well known hierarchical typology'.[146]

Claude, for his part, distinguished between the concepts of balance of power, collective security and world government, all characterized as 'successive points along a continuum, differing most fundamentally in the degree of centralisation of power which they imply'. Historical/ structural change in this model is conceptualized, accordingly, either in terms of adjustments within one category (most obviously a shift in the equilibrium of the balance of power system), or in terms of a movement from one category to the next, that is, as a movement towards centralised or world government.

Though 'few professional analysts would now admit to taking it very seriously,' says Walker, Claude's theory of change nonetheless maintains a conspicuous presence in IR, especially in the more 'institutionally oriented approaches to the study of international organisation'.[147] There are two major features of Claude's paradigmatic formulation which are especially significant in this respect: 1) Claude's formulations simply assumes 'the traditional distinction between the anarchy of the international system and the sovereignty of the state/civil society'; 2) 'both historical and structural transformations, other than the simple readjustment between competing powers in a quasi-mechanical balance, are conceptualized as a return to the image of the sovereign state, but on a grander scale'. In other words, any movement towards supranationality, or any change that might imply an undermining of the state, 'comes to be interpreted and evaluated in relation to a magnified image of the state'. The 'most significant underlying assumption' of this typology, argues Walker, 'is precisely that of spatial homogeneity, or what ... can be called "the theme of Gulliver"'. For in this typology 'lurks the remains of the classical homogeneous conception of space which is so brilliantly captured in Swift's satire',[148] in

which the fantastic new-world of Lilliput is similar to our human world in everything but its smaller size, while the world of Brobdingnag, likewise, is the same only bigger. This theme, argues Walker, reflects the conception of the microphysical world which was prominent with classical mechanics and its associated Euclidean-Newtonian-Kantian conceptions of space. The modern age, he argues, has also adopted a concomitant 'preformation' theory for its account of the development of a future world order. According to this theory, which was popular in the age of Newtonian science, an embryo is thought to be the same as a fully developed person, except for the smaller size. If we transfer this analogy to the context of globalisation and the political imagination, the vision that comes immediately to mind is that of a statist embryo-cum-global Leviathan: a state apparatus akin in physiognomy to Hobbes' 'body politic' or 'artificial man', but global in size .

The key point Walker makes in all of this, once again, is that an inherent 'spatialization' in modern political thinking ultimately predetermines the nature and direction of political transformation: from smaller to larger and back again. Global politics thus comes to be interpreted as state-politics writ large:

> Structural change has thus been conceptualized either outside time and history, or in terms of a notion of time and history which is essentially spatial, the future being merely a straight line to a macro-version of the present.[149]

Though the two have a certain complimentarity, Waltz's theory is actually quite different from Claude's. To begin with, Waltz's theory is not so much a theory of hierarchy as a theory of stasis. 'In fact,' writes Walker, 'by contrast with Claude's schema, Waltz's version (his three categories) seems to both confirm and resist attempts to think in terms of levels and hierarchies at all'. The apparent hierarchy of his typology —

many individuals, a few states and one states-system — 'is more appropriately grasped on a horizontal rather than a vertical axis'. 'Levels' in Waltz's schema are really 'no more than an apparently vertical or hierarchical rendition of the spatial distinction between the state and the international system', inside and outside. Viewed this way, the middle category of 'state' merely serves to confirm a sharp distinction between a politics of sovereign individuality (persons and states) on the inside and a non-politics of structural anarchy on the outside, something Walker describes as 'the anarchical distribution of forces in space, amenable to structural rearrangement but not to historical transformation'. What persists is once again the insistence on a sharp distinction between a politics within states and the relations between them, even though according to Walker, Waltz, in a moment of contradiction, wishes to employ a 'universalizing account of instrumental rationality' that he believes is applicable in both realms.[150]

The homogenous conception of space has thus come, claims Walker, to have both a 'horizontal' and a 'vertical' dimension (though they are often conflated) in the theory of international relations:

> horizontal in relation to claims about the relationship between political life inside and outside the sovereign state and vertical in the sense that it permits a distinctive account of both supranationality and future possibility.[151]

One major problem with this kind of framework, argues Walker, is that it lends itself to all or nothing conceptions of historical/structural change. The state is either with us forever, or forever about to disappear. The options for change or 'consequences' that seem to follow from viewing the state in essentially spatial terms are a mere four, suggests Walker, who lists them: 1) threats to the territorial integrity of the state immediately imply a decline in the power and autonomy of the state; 2) alternatives to the state are posed in terms of a simple movement towards a more universalist political organisation with more

centralised authority; 3) novelty in the structure of the international system tends to be translated into theses about the radical transformation of the system in the immediate future; 4) the fact that universalist forms of organisation do not materialise as predicted, or that the system does not change either radically or rapidly, is taken to mean that everything remains as it always has been. 'Either Thucydides and Hobbes merely require a few footnotes to bring them up to date, or the globalist millennium is just around the corner'.[152]

Within traditional frameworks for the study of global politics, be they realist or idealist, 'temporal possibilities are fixed within a metaphysics of homogenous space. The horizontal extension of community within and the absence of community without turns into an apparent hierarchy of eternal categories from which there is no escape'.[153] In the paradigmatic case of Kenneth Waltz, 'the static character of [his] structuralist treatment of interstate relations is already prefigured in the spatial metaphysics of his tripartite categories'.[154]

Sisyphus

Early modern conceptions of political identity and community are beginning to lose much of their efficacy and desirability. Mass migrations and diasphoras, global telecommunications networks, high-speed transportation systems, global capital flows, economic integrations, trans-border environmental crises, military strategies that place a premium on response/deployment times and global reach versus strategies that emphasize territorial integrity, 'collective' security, defensive urban architecture, global cities and urban sprawls, quasi-states, over-stuffed prisons, these are but a sampling of the contemporary phenomena that have served in various ways to challenge the modern conception of the nature and location of 'authentic' political community. And yet, while the present fragility or inadequacy of modern forms of political identity may be recognizable

enough, alternative possibilities are notoriously hard to find. Walker insists that this is the case

> because the spatiotemporal resolutions through which early-modern accounts of political community were constituted, and then formalized in the principle of state sovereignty, have become so firmly rooted in modern thought and practice (and imagination!). They are often just as firmly rooted in aspirations for radical critique as they are in the most self-satisfied forms of conservative apologetics.[155]

The real rub in Walker's argument, then, is that 'our' traditional understandings of political community informed by the principle of sovereignty *already* inform our understandings of what it means to imagine something else. 'A very large part of our contemporary political difficulties,' writes Walker,

> ... lies in the extent to which the very possibility of alternatives has already been framed so as to reproduce forms of depoliticisation enabled by concepts/practices that already show us that such alternatives are simultaneously desirable and impossible.[156]

It is 'especially difficult,' he adds, 'to make sense of claims about globalization, and corollary claims about the need to re-imagine the political ... because the modern political imagination is already so extraordinarily adept in telling us what is involved in imagining something new'.[157] The modern political imagination, he contends, 'is radically dualistic in its fundamental account of political identity. On the one hand, it insists that we are all citizens of particular states. On the other, it also insists that we are all part of the same humanity'.[158] The great problem, accordingly, is how to reconcile these two apparently

irreconcilable demands. As a historical projection, this condition translates into the story of a fractured world longing for reconciliation with the universal. And when this reconciliation is not forthcoming, themes of enlightenment give way to themes of despair. A sunny idealism fades to the darker hues of realism. Optimism submits to pessimism. Hopes for a universalising progress are abandoned to a relativistic nihilism. The gravity of the idealism/realism dichotomy, to this extent, is all but inescapable. And while it is 'surely not a good argument for a theory of international politics that we shall be driven to despair if we do not accept it,' writes Martin Wight, this is an argument which 'comes naturally to the children of Hegel (and Kant) when they are faced with defeat'.[159]

But though the Cartesian coordinates that delineate the formal sovereignty of territorial states may be 'cracked', as Walker poetically puts it, just as the Newtonian Insurance Company may be bankrupt, it nonetheless remains exceptionally difficult to renounce the security of Cartesian coordinates because, cracked or not, 'they still provide our most powerful sense of what it means to look over the horizon'.[160] And, again, according to Walker's analysis the options discernible from this line of sight are a familiar few. They fluctuate from a sense of the impending disappearance of the state (either into some 'stateless utopia', or through consolidation of the many into one global Leviathan or world sovereign) to an acquiescence to an essentialist (statist) political life and the concomitant tragic necessities of a timeless *realpolitik*. Worse still, the 'very hope of escape from the dangers of a fragmented world,' he claims, 'has itself made effective critique more or less impossible'.[161] It might be possible, he writes,

> to envisage a straight line trajectory to some global community understood as the state writ large, but the trajectory is more likely to drop sharply into patterns of contingency once the lines of domestic jurisdiction are crossed.[162]

He is a clear pessimist in this respect, but he never refers to himself as any kind of realist. There is a subtle distinction here. While Walker is interested in jump-starting the political imagination in order to reconceptualise the very nature of the political itself, it is, he says, the 'presumed impossibility of even conceiving an alternative to the account of political community that emerged in early-modern Europe that is expressed by the most influential forms of international relations theory under the hyper-elastic label of political realism'.[163] Realists, in this sense, have condemned 'us' to rolling the rock of tragic necessity, in perpetuity, over the endless hill and vale of repetitious history. Walker, on the other hand, believes that we submit to such work only if we first accept an historically specific and contingent framing of available options as natural, inevitable, and unalterable. Nevertheless, if were to insist upon reading Walker as a kind of realist because of his pessimism, then we must read him as an odd kind of realist, one who believes that it is universalist aspiration which, in the first place, 'provides the horizon against which the Sisyphean efforts of statesmen are to be judged'.[164]

2.3 IMAGINATION AND POSSIBILITY

Atlantis

Any re-imagining of what we mean by politics is going to have to involve 'alternative ways of conceptualising and enacting alternatives, other ways of constituting other forms of politics, other ways of understanding what might be similar and what might be different'.[165] '[T]he necessary horizons of the modern political (inauthentic) imagination are both spatially and temporally contingent' (Walker 1993, 6, parentheses added).[166] They may in theory be changed. If one cannot say how at the moment, and Walker does

not say how, one can at least take solace in theoretical possibility. If a thing becomes possible by virt(ù)e of its having been imagined, perhaps the opposite may be true as well. Perhaps a simple openness to possibility is the prerequisite for new imaginings. This seems to be Walker's wager. If so, then his task is clear. He must resist those ideologies which make it very clear what 'we' cannot be because they are so certain of what and where political community is supposed to be.

In one sense, Walker's approach to the invigoration of the imagination may not be so novel or unique, though it may seem so to many in the archaic and isolated world of IR, or when viewed from within disciplinary contexts which too adamantly insist on a clean distinction between art and science. Put simply, wrestling with a sometimes obsequious muse is *de rigueur* in the arts.[167] Conversely, the artist has always been anathema to the Republic! Alternatively, a similarly 'inverted' notion of creativity may be grasped through an understanding of the 'beginner's mind' of Zen philosophy. Many of Walker's aphorisms, for example, particularly those which relate to the that which is there and not there, new and not new, may not be so puzzling to the adept of Zen philosophy.[168]

There is also an important tie-in here — which Walker hints at, but does not develop — to the thinking of Sartre and Husserl in particular, and to their association of imagination with intentionality and possibility. With these philosopers, imagination is that faculty which separates *human* thought from any form of artificial intelligence.[169] It distinguishes the human from the computing machine, animal life, even the gods. It separates pods from people; the conscious from the unconscious; the living from the dead; the Dionysians from robot Apollonians; aesthetic life! from mere existence. It may even be that it separates the politically qualified life from 'bare life'.[170] But does Walker ever actually say any of this? No. What the above involves, in fact, is a lot of speculation fueled by clues (tacit and explicit) that one finds scattered here and there in Walker's work. It is actually quite difficult to know how Walker theorizes about imaginative processes, if indeed he does so in any systematic way at all. It is, we suggest, a serious problem that

Walker places so much emphasis on the foibles of contemporary political imagination without developing any rigorous theory about how imagination works. Free of any explicit instructions as to how to interpret his ruminations on the political imagination, this thesis proposes its own interpretation based on the clues which Walker offers.

Our first observation is that Walker's discourse on the problems of political imagination reads very much like a traditional Enlightenment discourse on emancipation which revolves abstractly around the idea of freeing the *imagination* from its intellectual bondage and thereby returning it to its more creative and thus 'authentic' state. We will suggest that Walker's rhetoric works like a velvet hammer. On the one hand it is an invocation to be free, presumably for the sake of being free. On the other hand it warns us that 'we' may be in great peril given our inability to adapt, imaginatively, to the times.

We have also suggested that Walker's works, especially *Inside/Outside*, function according to an implicit imaginative praxis and an implicit theory of the imagination. The metaphor invoked to make this point was that of an explorer. The icon emulated in this respect, we have suggested, is Machiavelli himself. One basic premise of this 'implicit' theory of imagination, we have tried to suggest, is that here is a symbiotic relationship between imagination and possibility. To imagine the 'new' is to generate new possibilities, while to create a consciousness open to possibility is to offer a warm space for the cultivation of an imagination capable of imagining the new. To this end, forgetting may be more important that remembering. Un-learning may be more important than learning; un-history more important than History.[171]

Herein lies the crucial importance of Machiavelli in Walker's work, particularly Machiavelli's expressed and specific concern with the founding of *new* states. Machiavelli, Walker argues, is a hugely significant figure because he, above others, finally found a way to discuss politics in the wake of collapsing feudal orders. Machiavelli, then, is to be emulated, but not as he usually is in the production of maxims for the supposedly timeless practice of power politics. On the contrary, he is to be emulated only in his

recognition that politics must respond to time, that is, to the circumstances that present themselves — to the vicissitudes of *Fortuna*! Politics, in this sense, demands not rote maxims, but judgement! Not a tired adherence to the architectonic forms of a bygone era, but an understanding of the fundamentally plastic nature of social and political life. Politics, above all we are told, demands *virtù*! And the person or people of *virtù* must be capable of seducing the goddess *Fortuna* without being themselves seduced.

Here also is the key to Walker's reading of Thomas Hobbes. For Walker, Hobbes is an *innovator*. Yes, as inventor! and not the old cold apologist for the sad necessity of *realpolitik*. To read Hobbes as a timeless conservative is to miss the point. The important Hobbes is he who re-imagined the political in the early- to mid-seventeenth century, he who responded effectively to a general crisis of political identity in his time, he who said look, if we are going to take seriously this idea of three dimensional man, then this is what must happen: in effect we must invent an artificial god, a Leviathan. Of course, it cannot be denied that even he may have hoped that his solution would be timeless, but there is plenty of contemporary evidence to suggest that it may not be. The historical conditions which underscored Hobbes' resolution of the universal and the particular, Walker and others claim, are now passing. To this extent 'we' must be willing to let go of any fallacious hope that Hobbes' solution is timeless and that as such it requires only a few more modifications to suit present conditions. One witnesses no movement within the discipline of Physics to continually try to save *ad infinitum* the phenomena of Galilean-Newtonian mechanics. What hope can there be in forever trying to save the phenomena of a politics which is grounded in the very same, crumbled metaphysical foundations? This, we contend, is the gist of Walker's reading of Hobbes.

If there is a teleological moment at all discernible in Walker's work, it would not appear to be an ascending one associated with some idealism, but an entropic one inherited from Hobbes and Machiavelli, and from Polybius before them. And the only political maxim worth remembering in light of such inheritance is the one that tells us that times

change and things change. Again, in this moment, Walker reads as a deep sceptic who believes that if we cannot contend with the wiles of *Fortuna*, then she will happily destroy 'us'. The catch, however, is that contemporary changes, according to Walker, demand from moderns a reconsideration of the ways in which we think about (or don't think about) space.

If all that is solid melts into air, then the technologies of modern life, and of the twentieth century in particular, have produced and continue to add to a thaw that threatens to flood the entire socio-political landscape and drown all save those select few who may have, perchance, managed to secure their private technological arks. The seams on the seeping membranes of the 'sovereign' state appear ready to burst. If nothing else, they are leaking badly. Or, to use Walker's favoured water/liquid analogy: the rising waters of the river *Fortuna* are now severely testing the dykes of *lo stato*. And although no one of us can see the future, it nevertheless appears politically irresponsible to wager that these dykes will hold.

Build a bigger dyke?

Is there any dyke big enough?

This is definitely not to suggest that the state or that theories of the state are about to be washed away in their entirety. Walker insists that such hopeful/doomed, either/or, absence/presence thinking is seriously misleading and only maintains the very dualistic foundations that continuously reduce the imaginative options before us to the same select few. Spaces, he predicts, are not about to disappear, largely because of the 'sheer difficulty of imagining a politics beyond the horizons of the sovereign space'.[172] What it does suggest, however, and what so many seem to recognise, is that statist articulations of political community, as with sovereigntist ideals of modern identity in general, are presently facing ever more severe challenges to the cohesion they have long aspired to, a cohesion which, Walker believes, is beginning to appear ever-more idealistic and hopeful in present times as it has become increasingly unclear as to where or with whom political

community lies. This is the problem. Traditional categories persist, to be sure, particularly that of the state. But these categories, Walker claims, have become more gestures than anything else. In this light it is clear to see how the many moves towards ultra-nationalism we are presently witnessing are just so many acts of desperation in response to a particular kind of political disorientation. They are desperate attempts to sand-bag the river. Some, of course, have more sand-bags than others.

Percival

So what is to be done, if anything? What, exactly, has happened to the political imagination? The answer of course is that nothing, really, has happened, and that this is precisely the problem. If we are to believe Walker, then the 'modern' political imagination continues to be ruled by the 'spatio-temporal solutions of another era'.[173] While the times appear to be changing, the imagination seems to be immutable. Hence,

> the distinctive silence of prevailing political traditions when confronted with claims about the need for some more cosmopolitan response to the collective experiences of a global economy, a planetary ecology or a technology specially designed for species suicide.[174]

At present, a genuine world politics remains impossible by definition.[175] We simply cannot get 'there' from 'here', we are told. To begin by assuming the spatial resolutions of sovereignty is to guarantee at best a Sisyphean labour of futility and at worst a global political calamity, an endless repeat of the twentieth century or worse. And yet it would seem that this is all anyone, at present, is able to do. So how then to extricate the collective political imagination from the bonds of historical inheritance? How to lay

asunder the box of absolute space? How to deliver the imagination from the 'blackmail' of the early modern era? How to (re)entice those daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne to come again among we mortals?

Assuming Walker has the problem right, we might begin by admitting to these fickle beauties that 'we' actually need them. But we must also create a warm space for them wherein they will feel at home. It has been argued that this is what Walker attempts to do through his 'perverted' and superhistorical reworkings of the meta-narratives of political and philosophical history.[176] He tries to show what may be possible through 1) a writing of what *was* possible; and 2) through a guiding of the eye and ear away from the 'epistemological platitudes' which proclaim the sovereign *aeterna veritas* of political life on this planet. If we may once more here borrow Nietzsche's coinage, Walker is an aging Percival, a knight at Foucault's table, a virt(ù)ous serpent slayer out to behead an historical 'concept dragon'.[177] Of course, as with all such creatures of myth, there is no saying who invented them. It may even be that they only exist in the mind of he who tilts at them.

3 CRITICAL REFLECTIONS

> In the end modern man drags an immense amount of indigestible knowledge stones around with him which on occasion rattle around in his belly, as the fairy tale has it. This rattling betrays the most distinctive property of this modern man: the remarkable opposition of an inside to which no outside and an outside to which no inside corresponds, an opposition unknown to ancient peoples. Knowledge, taken in excess without hunger, even contrary to need, no longer acts as a transforming motive impelling to action and remains hidden in a certain chaotic inner world which that modern man, with curious pride, calls his unique 'inwardness'.
>
> — Nietzsche[178]

3.1 THINKING WITH AND AGAINST ROB WALKER

subject? what subject?

Being largely exploratory, lacking an explicit and coherent theory of (the) imagination, and being resistant to conceptions of modern subjectivity, Walker's text(s), especially *Inside/Outside,* end up generating a troubling degree of confusion. This is in part because the subject of 'our' supposed contemporary imaginative impasse is never made terribly clear, and in part because all kinds of other confusing subjectivities proliferate in Walker's text. One is never quite sure, for example, whether Walker's crisis of imagination is 'our' crisis of imagination, or whether 'our' crisis of imagination is his, or whether ours is everyone's or the world's or modernity's or some part of the world's (geographically, demographically, culturally, or anthropologically speaking). When one invokes the political imagination, just who is invoking it and just whose or *what* imagination are 'we'

talking about? One can also find at various moments in Walker's work some sense that 'the' imagination in question might specifically be that of IR theorists (whether neorealists or critical theorists), or of political theorists, or other intellectuals more generally. Because there is to be found in Walker's text no obvious or consistent subject to be associated with the political imagination as such, nor any effort on Walker's part to even describe in any exacting way what he might mean by 'the political imagination', or by an unqualified imagination more generally, there persists a certain spectral air about his use of the concept (imagination as Geist). This problem would seem to be a troubling side-effect of associating a particular kind of imagination with an understanding of political modernity conceived partly in historical and partly in aesthetic terms.

Nevertheless, the fact that such an undertaking is confusing and that Walker at times appears to be just as confused as anyone else does not necessarily or immediately invalidate the exercise. For it is to be remembered that it is the principle of sovereignty itself which demands, in the first instance, an aesthetic of clean and unadulterated lines. It is the principle of sovereignty which is designed to cut through the chthonian murk of life, political life in particular, in order to delineate a world of clean and separate places containing smooth subjectivities. It is the principle of sovereignty that posits pure forms under the bemired veil of appearances. Thus, if we forego the ever-more-dubious promises of such supposedly sovereign knowledge, the very idea of knowledge and the very question of what it means to know — about an imagination or anything else — take on a terribly puzzling nature and, perhaps more importantly, a specifically political character.[179]

Still, however much we may wish to speak of perspectivism or of the mutiplicity imaginative impulses, Walker does present us with the idea of some grand political-imaginative impasse associated with the broad and intractable metaphysical foundations of modern thought. As he frames his argument, it is not a multitude of political imaginations

which are in trouble, but a single meta- and modern political imagination — informed by the principle of sovereignty— which is in trouble.

In short, Walker presents the *modern* principle of sovereignty as a single discernible and historical subject of knowledge, one which is characterised in large part by 'its' unsuitability to the radical transformations of *contemporary* (as opposed to *modern*) political and intellectual life. In presenting his argument, he must draw lines; he must attempt to distinguish the modern from that which is not modern. These lines may be crooked; they may be fuzzy; they may be faint; they may merely be implied in places, dotted in others, but they are still there, if only in theory. And yet, according to Walker's own estimations, it is the very act of drawing such lines which is paradigmatic of what it is to be modern.

Walker thus finds himself in a position wherein, in order to avoid certain and irresolvable paradox, he must somehow seek to identify the principle of sovereignty, as well as an entire modern political and intellectual edifice which is said to be predicated upon this principle, in a way which resists the predicates of sovereign subjectivity itself. He is faced with a dilemma wherein the more precise his characterisation of the principle of sovereignty becomes, the stronger his argument for the historical specificity of a so-called modernist political culture becomes, but also the more 'sovereigntist' his thinking becomes and thus his attempts to generate an authentically critical thought merely end up demonstrating a deep and dogged implication in so-called sovereigntist thinking. The idea of being inside or outside the sovereign state gives way to the idea of being 'inside' or 'outside' of *modernity*. 'Escape' remains a desirable impossibility, the 'very hope of escape [making] effective critique more or less impossible'.[180] Conversely, the more nebulous his characterisation of the principle of sovereignty and the culture of modernity becomes, the weaker his argument for the historical specificity and historical dominance of this principle and this culture becomes. The contemporary problem of political community begins to look no different than the age old problem of establishing political community in

light of, or in spite of, intractable human difference. All the traditional problems of community versus Empire remain. Size is really the only possible issue. Globalism, then, is in this light not a new kind of experience, but an age-old condition amplified in contemporary times. For what is so special about the (modern) principle of sovereignty and the modern concept of the political? How, for example, does it differ from what came before it and from what might possibly come after it? Such questions demand a clearly delineated definition of modernity, one less nebulous than that offered by Walker's sketches, which are essentially minimalist versions of Marxist/Weberian historiography. They demand, in effect, the identification of something to be over-come, modified, gotten beyond, left behind or what have you. Without this, escape once again becomes impossible in that there is nothing, so to speak, to escape *from*. 'We' are left to bore holes in hard boards, to persevere in a perpetually tragic, though not necessarily *modern*, condition.[181] Deliverance is forever deferred to some entirely other world. If political life is depicted as having been the same, in essence, since ancient times, then there is little reason to expect or to hope that this condition will change any time soon.

In attempting to navigate this dilemma, and whether it be as the result of waffling or as the result of a simple willingness to embrace paradox, Walker comes to present modernity as something which is both new and not new; there and not there; contemporary and past.

after the globe; before the world; in the contemporary; at the end of the modern

As Walker has it, we live in or between two worlds. We live 'after the globe and before the world'. But according to his analysis it would seem that 'we' also live <u>in</u> the *contemporary* and at the end of the *modern*, or somewhere in-between. If the globe is

taken to be that 'identifiable domain of human experience' as discussed in the previous chapter (see 'Sovereignty and Elegance'), if the globe is a 'container' in which the transformations, dangers, and opportunities that pervade the possibility of political community may be examined,[182] then 'the world' is this yet-to-be realised, authentic global political community. There is at present, at least in certain parts and communities of the earth, a definite sense of 'global' identity which is associated with the aptly dubbed experiences of 'globalisation'. This sense of 'the global' in question is perhaps best represented by contemporary images of a lonely blue-green planet adrift in an abyss of space, but it is equally sensed in the expanse of statist and supra-national institutions and/or the expanse of global capitalism and its cultural products. The world, on the other hand, remains little more than a promise and an aspiration.

However, as Walker presents the puzzle, in addition to this distinction between 'the globe' and 'the world' there also are two distinct aspects to living 'after the globe'. Ontologically speaking, 'the globe' has two parts. These parts are perhaps best expressed in terms of an experiential reality and a conceptual reality. Walker's problematic, which is initially established (inherited) as the impossible puzzle of moving from a 'here' (the global), to an idealized 'there' (the world), comes to be recast by him as the problem of how to reconcile an hereditary conceptual reality (the *modern* concept of the political) with what appears to be an incompatible *contemporary* experiential reality ('globalisation').

According to this recasting of the puzzle, there is said to be on the one hand a *contemporary* 'global' experience, call it a sense of structural transformation associated with experiences of acceleration and spatial compression or even spatial dissolution. On the other hand, 'the global' is also understood to be coextensive with *modernity* and with the global expanse of a *modern(ist)* conception of the political and the imposition of a *modern* political imagination which ironically is defined in part by its apparent unsuitability to *contemporary* times. To the extent, then, that 'the globe' remains incapable of responding imaginatively and 'effectively' to *contemporary* transformations, 'the globe'

remains mulishly *modern*, inflicted by a nostalgia for a simpler time when 'here' was here and 'there' was there.[183] However, such nostalgia, on this reading, is little more than a denial of the problem.

Thus Walker has what appears to be a clear idea of who 'we' are *at present*; however, it is his conviction that this understanding is quickly becoming ever-more untenable, thus explaining his concern for contemporary and future problems of political identity. But this does not mean that a kind of global dementia is about to set in. 'We' are not about to enter some absurd condition of 'identity-lessness'. There will be (are) new forms of identity. The question is one of how such forms are valued. In other words, 'old' forms of political identity can only be considered undesirable in a 'new' world in light of an idealised sense of what identity should involve. In Walker's case, this ideal involves a nebulous 'political' quotient. There will always be forms of identity, post-modern, post-historical or otherwise. Many 'post-statist' forms of imagined communities have already begun to materialize, be they supra-national, trans-national, multi-national, or cyber-communities. The concern for critically minded thinkers such as Walker seems to be that many or most of these 'new' forms of identity are fundamentally 'depoliticised'. However, what this could mean in absence of any defining notion of 'the political' is a mystery.

At any rate, as Walker lays out his problematic, there is the presupposition of a fairly uniform, communicable, and more or less universal *contemporary* experiential 'reality'. His framing of the problem presupposes the long-accomplished imposition (or acceptance) and continuing dominance, again more or less universally, of a metaphysics (and a culture) which is said to have originated in certain parts of a small Eurasian peninsula sometime in the fifteenth century AD, this though elements of this metaphysics are also said to extend back in 'Western' history to at least the time of Socrates and Plato.

To be more specific, Walker's overriding assumption is that <u>the</u> imaginative impasse of which he speaks is coextensive with the limits of *modern* statist political

thought and with the global expansion of such thought, a process which in his text seems to be indistinguishable from an extension of the 'homogenising spaces of modernity' as such.[184] Given that the modern statist political order presently is, for all intents and purposes, universal, it may stand to reason that a 'modern' political imaginative impasse may be more or less universal as well.[185] To put this yet another way, Walker holds that the global spread of the 'culture of modernity' — whether imposed from above or simply 'exported' to the rest of the world from some originating place/time — serves to explain the broad context in which the practices of a culturally specific political formation, together with its inherent paradoxes, have come to be acceptable almost universally.[186] Finally and paradoxically it is the 'successful' and near-universal expanse of this 'culture of modernity' which has produced the conditions for a crisis of global political identity and community in contemporary times (169).[187]

six general problems with Walker's analysis

1) Defining the 'culture of modernity', of course, is a major problem, all the more so because Walker makes the specific claim, most expressly in *Inside/Outside*, that this 'culture', from a political perspective, is underscored first and foremost by an (early modern) metaphysics predicated on an attempt to contain temporality within spatial coordinates, Hobbes' *Leviathan* being the quintessential example of how this is said to work. In 'After the Globe', however, Walker appears to back off the specificity of this claim somewhat. In an explanatory note on the 'specifically modern political imagination' he writes:

> Contemporary debates about modernity are shaped less by the concerns of historical specificity than by various characterizations of an 'era' or a

> 'culture' characterized by the turn from religious faith to a secular conception of rationality and by the articulation of an ideal of an autonomous subject or individuality. The story of the interplay of reason and subjectivity is central to most of our standard accounts of the Renaissance, Scientific Revolution, Reformation, Enlightenment, and so on, and became the primary site of what emerged as the canonical tradition of modern philosophy from Descartes onwards, especially as this canon was encapsulated and reformulated in the writings of Immanuel Kant.[188]

There is a huge literature on the subject of modernity, of course, and Walker directs our attention to a great deal of it. While we will not list the host of it here — for it is vast though not obviously editorial — we will once again note the 'five sources' which Walker claims have 'decisively shaped' his reading of the philosophical framing of debates about modernity. These are, he concedes: Ernst Cassier, *Individual and Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (1927), and Cassier's 'subsequent journeys around the multiple universes of neo-Kantianism'; Gaston Bachelard, *Le Nouvel Esprit scientifiques* (1934), and Bachelard's 'subsequent shift to the languages of aesthetics, especially in *The Poetics of Space* (1957)'; Michel Foucault's early texts, especially *The Order of Things*, and Foucault's 'subsequent resistance to the structuralist force of these texts'; the 'massive literature on the history of science from Galileo to Newton, especially as this literature has sometimes struggled to escape the stranglehold of neo-Kantianism'; and the 're-readings of various canonical philosophers developed by Gilles Deleuze', especially in *Kant's Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties* (1963), *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (1962); *Bergsonism* (1966); and *Difference and Repetition* (1968).

The problem with coming to terms with Walker's use of modernity as an analytical category is that, for him, modernity is both a historical condition, but also a less-historically specific *problem*. As a *problem* concerned with religious faith and/or with

rationality and subjectivity, modernity has clear antecedents dating back at least to the pre-Socratics. Moreover, as Walker well understands, the *problem* of modernity, understood in this way, shows no signs of relenting any time soon. Defining modernity in terms of sovereignty is also problematic for similar reasons because the supposedly *modern* concept of sovereignty also has specific conceptual antecedents — for example, in the Latin terms *majestas*, and *imperium*[189] Conceptualising modernity as a problem weakens the claims about historical specificity which Walker uses to form the back-bone of his critique of contemporary political imagination. Walker appears to want it both ways: modernity as a contested *category*, a *problem* with historical antecedents; but also modernity as an historically specific condition. Modernity, for Walker, is continuous and discontinuous.

2)A second and perhaps greater problem is explaining exactly how this specific culture came to be universal, and is it universal? The history of European expansion is all but ignored by Walker, the universal *superimposition* of the 'culture of modernity' all but accepted as given.

3)A third serious problem is that while Walker takes the *de facto* existence of a global statist political system (as the core realisation of the 'culture of modernity') as the very basis for his problematic, he is not adverse to criticising neorealists, for example, for their 'epistemological platitudes' and for their simple-minded assertions that we need only look 'at' the world to see it 'as it is', namely as a global expanse of autonomous, or would-be autonomous territorial communities. Thus, while Walker argues that the modern world consists of flat and irreconcilable spaces that, according to the sense of 'crisis' he invokes, seem real enough, he assails realists and neorealists alike for not recognising that sovereign autonomy is no more than a construct, and as such no more than a semi-realised ideal. Modernity is both new and not new; sovereignty — sovereign divisions — both real and not real.

4) A fourth serious problem is that it is not so evident that the simple fact of the present dominance of statist politics on this planet should necessarily be interpreted as

evidence of an *inability* to imagine 'other' forms of political order. Thus, it is very interesting that Walker should frame his general problematic in terms of the general crisis of political imagination as opposed to a question of political will. There is, it would seem, in the very manner in which he has framed his inquiry, the tacit assumption that 'people' (whoever 'we' are, but let us just say, for the sake of argument, *modern* people) actually *want* to rework the 'modern' concept of the political in hopes of achieving something 'better'.[190] Walker, in short, assumes that there exists some wide-spread and genuine desire or need for change but that we 'moderns' are simply stuck when it comes to (re)imagining how this might be accomplished. In this way he is able to finesse a question of political will, and what might otherwise be a simple theory of false consciousness, to produce a question of structural-historical impasse. Thus, he at least temporarily avoids casting the problematic as one of false consciousness and thus temporarily avoids the 'stock' reproduction of an 'us'/'them', inside/outside, progressive/conservative, enlightened/unenlightened dichotomy. In the short run, then, he dodges the question. He refuses the sovereigntist imposition and rejects the cynical Schmittian presupposition that politics (and political theory), by definition, always and everywhere involves a conscious fundamental distinction between friend and enemy, the included and the excluded.[191]

5) A fifth problem is that Walker suggests no 'way out' of our supposed structural impasse, save that of holding out for the very possibility of a 'way out'.

6) Finally, while Walker wishes to re-imagine the political, it at least appears paradoxical to insist upon the possibility and the importance of 'the political' free of its constitutive 'fictions'. Walker insists on some understanding of the political free of 'our' inherited notions of what the political is. Trying to articulate some sense of the political beyond the confines of the sovereign state is one thing. Insisting on an understanding of the political free of the *polis*, or the modern subject, or of any other *spatially conceived* notion of political identity is another.

Each of these problems will be considered to greater or lesser degree below.

a sense of constraint

Whether it takes the form of an idealism which aspires to something 'better' or the form of a realism which hopes to avoid something 'worse' — which is to say, a realism which recognises a pressing and pragmatic need for political change in the face of contemporary transformations — Walker is comfortable in asserting that there is a palpable and 'fairly widespread' sense that modern political life and thought are 'severely constrained' within inherited intellectual horizons.

> This sense of constraint is felt in popular scepticism towards established political ideologies. It characterises influential currents of contemporary social and political theory. It finds a particularly interesting and important articulation in modern theories of international relations.[192]

There is contemporaneously, then, he would have us believe, a 'widespread' — though how widespread we do not know — 'sense' of the 'severe constraint of inherited intellectual horizons', but not the *ability*, at present, to think beyond these constraints. He consciously frames his discourse, then, in terms of possibility as opposed to, say, terms of political will. He presumes that there is a real and broadly espoused desire for change as opposed to a real and perhaps broader desire for the same.

First off, there is a certain quasi-populist sentiment in this appeal to some 'widespread sense of constraint' located both in, out, and across institutional settings, though it is not immediately evident where or how Walker generates his insight in this respect. But more importantly, the positing of the existence of such populist sentiment (again, how popular we do not know) does not seem to meld very well with another of

Walker's crucial assertions, namely, his claim that it is very easy in contemporary times to marginalise calls for a (re)imagining of the political by branding such calls as the mere trifling of utopian dreamers — as something other than the serious address of those 'somehow more tangible political problems' of daily politics. Again, let us once again return to the opening words of *After the Globe* where, immediately after invoking the problem of political imagination, Walker writes:

> I want to explore how it has become so easy for any claim about the need to re-imagine what we mean by politics to be construed as a callous disregard for the politics of the moment, and to become caught within powerful rhetorics distinguishing the crucial from the trivial, the urgent policy from the distant abstraction.[193]

But why, we must ask, if a sense of severe intellectual/political constraint is so 'widespread', is it so difficult to even *table* a claim about the need to re-imagine what 'we' mean by politics, let alone actually re-imagine the political? It would appear that on this count Walker wishes to have his cake and eat it too. If this 'sense of constraint' is so widespread, then *who*, exactly, is dismissing all the contemporary invocations to 're-imagine', and from where do *they* garner their authority in the face of 'widespread' popular and intellectual resistance? Moreover, who cares if these mysterious authorities dismiss the many invocations to 're-imagine'? Surely the simple act of dismissal cannot prevent the act of (re)imagining itself? The sovereign ban and subsequent attempts to suppress the production and circulation of the works of the eighteenth century *philosophes*, the pamphleteers of Grub Street, even the *sans culottes*, did not bring their radical thinking to an end. It placed no plague on their collective political imaginings. If anything, it fueled the fires of their many imaginings; it generated a sense of oppression and provided a platform for popular revolution.[194] One can understand how the so-called 'sovereignty of sovereignty' might impede one's ability to envision some 'new' kind of

political thought and/or imagination, but it is difficult to believe that the sovereignty of sovereignty presently prevents even the simple *tabling* of 'the need to re-imagine what we mean by politics' given that so many supposedly think that new ways of thinking are needed.

Walker seems to have two different arguments on the go, a compliment to the rest of his double formulations. The first is concerned with hegemony, the second with structural impasse. The two are not necessarily reconcilable. Moreover, the uneasy conflation of the two makes for confusing reading. Such confusion, it will be argued, is compounded — if not generated by — the conflation of two mutually sympathetic, but not entirely compatible theoretical traditions. We will call them, 'moments' of analysis in Walker's work. The first moment, in essence, is one of critical-theoretical inquiry which generally takes the form of: 1) a fairly traditional (Marxian) *ideologiekritik* of modern/western/statist ideology; and 2) a critique of the intellectual hegemony thought to be concomitant with such ideology. This critical theory vein of analysis tends to produce, as we have seen to some extent in chapter one, a sense of the active *repression* of an *authentic* imagination (an imagination understood to be authentic to the extent that it is free — free to destroy the old, real or imagined, and produce the new). Widespread reluctance to even pursue change, then, even among those who may intuit that something might be rotten in the state of modern political imagination, can thus be understood in light of such repression. According to this reading, 'we' stand on the cusp of a 'postmodern' (i.e. structural/historical) turn, but 'we' are stuck, frozen, fixed like votive idols, gape-mouthed, afraid to move, struck with a fear, not of God, but of Hobbes and his rhetoric and of those who espouse and promulgate it. We are struck with the superstitious fear of a life forever threatening to turn nasty (or at least nastier), brutish (or more brutish), and short (or shorter) were 'we' to stray from the 'secure', if not entirely comfortable confines of the fortress of sovereign logic. 'Reason' in this case is galvanised with fear, but also with forgetting. Sovereignty is a jealous god! There can be no alternative to it. It stands alone

in the pantheon, having vanquished all other pretenders. Or, if we are to believe Hobbes — and we do — the singular alternative (the war of all against all) is not even worthy of small consideration. Thus we forget that there ever was an alternative, or alternatives. In fact, according to the Hobbesian formula, the possibility of alternatives is actually relegated to a non-place prior to human history itself. It is excommunicated to that pre-historical moment where, in a blink of contractarian magic, 'we' surrendered 'our' *natural* autonomy to the sovereign order in order to make the rational move from the state of nature to the state of the civilizing state. Of course, no one remembers this move. Nor is there any record of it. But, such trifling details are of no consequence. All we need remember is that *were* we rational, we most certainly *would have* agreed to such surrender in the primordial moment of contract. A circular logic is hereafter made complete with the anointing of the sovereign (the principle of sovereignty itself) as the final arbiter on all points of reason. The defense of the sovereign order ('ours is but to do or die') comes to define what it is to be rational. It becomes irrational not to endeavour to ensure one's 'security' (through sovereign association and obedience to the sovereign) before all else. Nothing more need be remembered or said. Even if modern statist resolutions of the relation between the one and the many — or between citizenship and humanity — have come to seem increasingly inadequate given the times, as Walker believes they have, it nevertheless still continues to be easy enough 'to imagine worse (nastier, more brutal, shorter) possibilities' (158; parentheses added).[195] Even now, in the wake of the massive statist violences of the twentieth century, and with 'globalisation' seriously undermining the practical capacity of states to establish and sustain their precious sovereignty, to tarry with some idea of a political thought that 'isn't erected around the problem of sovereignty'[196] is automatically to court the irrational and the dangerous. The absurdity of the situation is remarkable.

Critical theory, then, has as its objective the emancipation of the collective political mind and imagination from this Hobbesian 'lie in need', from this mythological non-sense. It seeks to enlighten, to lift the veil of ideology, to explode such 'false consciousness', to

replace myth and rhetoric with knowledge and critique and thereby hopefully alleviate fears and lessen resistance to *true* change. In this way it hopes to open up some space of true possibility for the realization of something 'better'. But to accomplish this, it requires an originary group of enlightened minds. It needs a see-er, or a group of see-ers to lead the way out of this modern theatre of absurdity.

But of course, emancipatory thought itself has long been branded with the stigma of a dangerous and foolhardy utopianism or idealism. Emancipatory thought, apologies notwithstanding, has shown itself adept, especially this century, of producing and disseminating its own blinding ideologies. The very promise of escape has produced one calamity after another. Utopian aspiration, we are saddened to recall, has been deeply implicated in the formation of some of the more loathsome and self-righteous political orders in human history. All rhetoric concerning the 'end of history' and the 'end of ideology' aside, there is no argument persuasive enough to convince one that history is not prone to repeat in this respect.

The general problem with critical-theoretical inquiry, simply stated, is that it tends to generate the very intellectual dualisms and political exclusions (shall we call them spatialisations?) — us/them, enlightened/unenlightened, conscious/unconscious — which Walker, for one, sees as problematic in the first place. He is, of course, aware of such problems and thus his resistance to this particular line of critique is palpable. For he is twice enlightened! Nevertheless, an unadorned critical/emancipatory moment remains discernible in his work. The spectral attendance of Kant, Marx, and Gramsci is always close at hand.

The second major moment of analysis in Walker's work is one which is informed, generally, by a post-structural and/or post-historical mode of inquiry informed most immediately by the writings of Max Weber, Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and, through his influence on each of these writers, Nietzsche. Contrary to the moment of *ideologiekritik* described above, this second moment of analysis actually tries to move

away from the critique of ideology, *per se*. As is the case with Foucault in particular, Walker in this second moment resists the analysis of discourse/ideology as the reflection/obscuring of something supposedly 'deeper' and more 'real'. He moves, instead, toward an inquiry into the very possibility and/or impossibility of imaginative transformations themselves, of thought itself. As this line of analysis unfolds, there is produced less the sense of a *resistance* to possible change and a *repression* of authentic imagination, and more the sense of the sheer difficulty (if not impossibility) of thinking 'Other', of getting 'beyond' one's intellectual inheritance.[197] Here, theorizing about intellectual and institutional hegemonies gives way to theorizing about broad structural/historical/intellectual impasses that transcend and infuse thinking across and through apparent oppositions. In this reading the imprint of 'our' inherited modes of thought — sovereigntist thinking in particular — is so deeply etched as to be seemingly indelible. Here the

> spatiotemporal resolutions through which early-modern accounts of political community were constituted, and then formalised by the principle of state sovereignty, have become so firmly rooted in modern thought and practice (that) [t]hey are often just as firmly rooted in aspirations for radical critique as they are in the most self-satisfied forms of conservative apologetics.[198]

Here, then, there is also a forgetting that forgets that there was ever anything to forget. There are no hegemonic agents, no institutional or social repression, *per se*, and no universal subject to be connected with the 'us' and 'wes' of Walker's text. To the extent that any subject is identified, it is always understood to be localized and particular — just one of the multiplicity of irreconcilable autonomies that define what it is to be *modern*. Here, political life and universal reason are understood to be 'severed irrevocably'.[199] Here it is quite uncertain from which grounds one might declare the absurdity of a given

order. For, despite the existence of a single 'global' arena of human experience, concepts of 'the world' are inevitably grounded in some localized articulation of what it means to talk about 'the world'[200]; and 'humanity' as such, (un)fortunately, 'is not a meaningful political category'.[201] But here also, then, is that uncomfortable sense of nihilism we find in Nietzsche, that moral subjectivism and/or structural determinism which Foucault's critics seem to find lurking in his writings, and that sense of tragedy so often associated with Weber's reading of modernity.

On this reading, there is no *thing*, no one institution, no highest authority, or otherwise, actively *blocking* the imagination, for there can be no such subject transcending the field of power. There is no 'us' and there is no 'them', there is only an imagination itself, a way of thinking, and a (modern) people who are defined by this imagination, who produce and reproduce it, have been subject to it for a long time, and who seemingly cannot think beyond it. There is no dearth of imagination in this respect. On the contrary, there is a plethora of imagination, but it is an imagination immured in dull habit and convention, dominated by an all-consuming sovereigntist logic. This domination occurs even though there may be serious questions — spurred perhaps by intuition (the glint of youth? the trace of instinct?) if nothing else — as to the suitability, desirability, and sustainability of this kind of imagination. There is some faint sense, in other words, that such imagination is not an 'authentic' imagination, though no one seems to be free of it and there is little idea as to what to do about the situation.

Nevertheless, it remains clear that there are specific active agents and institutional forces which sustain and re-produce this culturally and historically specific kind of imagination associated with 'sovereigntist' thinking. What is not clear in Walker's text is whether such agents do so out of interest and complicity in the perpetuation of an unjust *status quo*, or because they simply have not sought to think *critically* enough about their thoughts and actions and have thus acquiesced to the supposedly timeless and cruel realities of political life on this planet. In the first reading, the agents of hegemony are villainous.

In the second, such agents, and the masses, are simply asleep or resigned. In other words, it is not made very clear in Walker's text the extent to which 'the people' are subject to a more calculated intellectual hegemony, versus the extent to which they might be subject to collective (natural? structural? historical?) habits of thought.

3.2 THE IMPO(R)TÆNCE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

in and out of International Relations

The above double reading of Walker's two analytical moments helps to unravel his troubling and confusing ambivalence towards international relations, as both theory and practice. In the context of his criticism of IR, Walker's two discordant moments of analysis conflate fairly easily because, one way or another, international relations theory either A) *presents*; or B) *represents* a solemn impediment to political imagination and therefore to change, and this is really the point. The obstruction of the political imagination — by structure or agent — is the point. It is the crux of Walker's general thesis. Knowing this allows Walker to in part gloss over what is an otherwise troublesome theoretical rift in his analysis with respect to the problem of agency and structure.

Although he strives to appeal to a broader audience, much of Walker's theory work remains tied up in the esoteric puzzles which constitute his formal academic discipline. While this may change in the future, for the moment Walker's fellow theorists in IR remain both his most immediate readership and, collectively, his most immediate subject of investigation and criticism. This is especially true in *Inside/Outside*, a book which is well read as a sociology of knowledge of international relations.

It cannot be over-looked that Walker himself does not study anything that might be misconstrued as actual *relations* between *nations* as such. What he does study is texts.

Most specifically, he studies those texts which claim to say authoritative things about a conceptual world of relations between supposedly sovereign nations — or about the nature of the political world in general. Of course, in his mode as a poststructuralist, Walker does not readily admit any serious distinction between the former (the study of international relations) and the latter (the writing of international relations).[202] On the contrary, with him, as with that small band of post-structuralists/post-modernists in IR with whom he cohorts,[203] critical questions concerning the ontological makeup of both the subject and the discipline of international relations take precedence over 'epistemological platitudes' concerning a supposedly 'real' world of relations between sovereign territorial states, a world which supposedly 'we have only to recognise and acknowledge'. 'Though some may be convinced,' writes Walker, 'that this (empirical observation) must be the essence of a realistic politics, others are more likely to be persuaded about the purely formal and even utopian quality of state sovereignty given the messy picture that can appear through other constructions of the empirical evidence'.[204] Thus, rather sardonically, Walker goes on to suggest that it is political realists who may in fact be the only true *idealists* left in the world because of their continued naïve insistence on the actual possibility of realising an ideal of sovereign autonomy in a disordered world.

At another level, international relations theory and its theorists are not really Walker's truest professed interest and he tries not to take their pronouncements too seriously, at least at face value. He attempts an objective posture wherein the entire enterprise and the entire discipline of IR gets cast as but one 'vehicle' for the telling of a much broader story about modernity and the political at large. He nevertheless cannot sustain this 'outside' (sovereign?), Archemedian perspective for long and eventually becomes enmeshed in the esoteric musings of his 'peers'.

Particularly galling for Walker, presumably because of their feeble-mindedness, are the self-styled and so-called (neo)realists, presently dominant within the discipline, who present themselves as self-appointed apologists for the modern state-centric order and who

have correspondingly sought to reduce all political 'reality' to the logic of some transcendental 'structure' that threatens to maintain the sovereign essentialisms of statist power politics forever.[205] For such theorists, the business of 'global' politics is everywhere and always the business of autonomous nation-states relating to one-another in a *structural* condition of anarchy. For them a state is a state is a state, mere semantic distinctions between the Greek *polis*, Renaissance city-republics, or modern nation-states notwithstanding. Moreover, the essential (competitive) nature of the relationships between such 'autonomous' communities, they argue, has remained more or less the same throughout history and presumably will remain so well into the indefinite future. Change merely brings about more of the same. The likes of Thucydides, Machiavelli and Hobbes can thus be said to speak to the present in fairly transparent ways, offering timeless maxims that may be applied to the timeless and universal problems of power politics.

Such thinking, counters Walker, anachronistically assumes that the hard questions as to who and what 'we' are were answered once and for all in the twin absolutes of a unitary sovereignty and a unitary subject reconcilable, we might add, *only* within the sovereign state.[206] Because it denies history and particularity in this respect, and because it denies or ignores *real* change and therefore the possibility of present and future change, such thinking explains very little. Walker's rather acerbic conclusion is that modernist theories of international relations are not really theories at all, but 'expression(s) of processes they are claimed to explain' (159).[207] In this way he manages to once again 'zoom' back out to a dismissive position from which he does not so much speak <u>to</u> IR 'scholars', as about them. His critique, however, is complicated by his own inclusion/exclusion, in/from the discipline of international relations.

In an odd (dis)association with the discipline, Walker is both IR 'master'[208] and IR 'exile'[209], insider and outsider, guru and critic all at the same time. He is an IR scholar with clearly ambivalent feelings about the actual relevance of his discipline — and/or any of its theorists — to anyone save the relatively small and isolated group of IR theorists

themselves (and perhaps a few statesmen). IR may only be a 'vehicle' for the telling of a bigger story, but it is a vehicle in which only a few ride, and even fewer understand or find interesting. As a discipline, it is fractured and fledgling and largely ignored, even by its Pollyanna-ish big sister in the more serious and time-honoured realm of political theory proper.[210] Moreover, the small amount of critique of international relations theory that does exists tends to be even further 'ghettoized' into the fields of 'peace research' and 'world order studies'.[211] We only need witness the treatment of Walker's own work in this respect.

Walker, however, still has an certain loyalty, if you will, to international relations on the whole. Consequently, as he presents his case, IR is at once irrelevant and crucial, benign and malignant. In one general reading of IR, its theorists are something like laughable inebriates looking for lost keys under the nearest street lamp — scholar-clowns of interest solely because they can only think to look 'where the light is' regardless of where they may have dropped their keys (neorealism). In a different general take, IR is characterised as a very serious 'limit' discipline consisting of those with mettle enough to face up to the contingent and problematic character of political life in the iron cage of modernity. IR, thus read, becomes a kind of heroic discipline which bravely probes the limits of human community and stoically dispatches its tragic reports from the frontiers of modern/Enlightenment/Kantian aspiration. This is the reading Walker associates with a more traditional realism. Realist IR, in this vein, remains the sober rejoinder to the empty idealism of *kitch* Kantians or baby Hegelians both in and out of IR.[212]

Nevertheless, however laughable the Keystone Cop antics of the neorealists may be, they cannot simply be ignored. Actually, given his attempts to 'paint the big picture' (from a mutiplicity of perspectives and from afar) it is a touch humourous that Walker should nevertheless continue to be so seriously irked by, say, the 'resolutely structuralist portrayal' by neorealists 'of an earnestly imagined international anarchy,' one that, as he puts it, has 'attracted the fiercest rage for epistemological order in the name of empirical

social science'.[213] Simply put, if neorealism — and IR by extension given what Walker, for one, suggests is the 'hegemonic influence' of neorealism[214] — is so intellectually impoverished,[215] then one might think that these institutions would be more or less self-refuting. Why is it, we may ask, that the world does not simply observe how inane neorealist reasoning is and forego its 'teachings'? Theories of false consciousness and/or intellectual hegemony loom here. If neorealist IR is so intellectually lampoonish, why get worked up over any of its prognostications?

one IR; many IRs

In yet another twinkling of the irony which is ubiquitous in Walker's work, an IR identity problem turns out to be analogous to the general problem of modern political identity itself. In short, as Walker has it, there is one IR and many IRs. From the outside, there is a single world of IR, while on the inside there are many IRs — a multiplicity of factions contending, as it were, to produce the external face of the discipline. Accordingly, we may recognise Walker in a rather traditional way as embroiled (along with his allies, the key names of which were noted above) in a struggle to occupy the intellectual vanguard of the discipline. What we get, then, is a certain loyalty to the discipline as a whole (or perhaps just a plain inescapable situatedness within it), coupled with an antagonism toward neorealist and *faux* idealist visions of the discipline which are anathema to his particular party line.

Undoubtedly, Walker is to some extent a victim of his positioning. One is not exactly sure how or why he found his way into IR, but there he sits, an inside-outsider and an exiled master. Getting 'in', however (although we might wish to argue that he is only half in), was likely an easier proposition than getting 'out' may prove to be. Nevertheless, in wanting to broaden the horizons of political-theoretical inquiry in general, there can be

no doubt that Walker is both vexed and in large part foiled by what he calls the 'sheer difficulty' of even raising critical questions about political identity 'in the context of a discipline of international relations which still thrives on the most caricatured accounts of what the relationship between sovereignty and subjectivity is supposed to be, and dares to claim a mantle of political realism or of scientific objectivity while doing so'.[216]

Walker is also bothered, as we have seen, by Kenneth Waltz's (in)famous transformation of 'horizontal territorialities' into apparent hierarchies in the so-called '"levels of analysis schema", undoubtedly the key classification of explanatory options encouraged by the discipline'.[217] But for our purposes the question we need to ask here is: Are such classifications as Waltz's the product of the misguided efforts of those who fail to see the inherent 'spatialisations' of their thinking (recall the previous passage on 'Gulliver', section 2.2)? Or are such classifications and caricatures as produced by neorealism the intellectual products of a specific regime of interest and, as such, are they but so much rhetoric seeking to justify the permanent, though tragic necessities of a sovereign statist power politics thought to be conducive to such interest? In this context, neorealists may be little more than *courtiers* peddling sophistries to elite consumers.[218] We can get both readings from Walker's text. In the latter reading, IR (neorealism in particular) works as a kind of active denial of political modernity as such. It amounts to a denial of political change, a denial of political possibility, and a *faux* scientific defense of a statist status quo. In the former reading, the very existence and constitution of a IR/political theory dichotomy, as well as an idealism/realism dichotomy is viewed as being symptomatic of very broad and as yet inescapable modernist structural limitations which are ideally represented in the dividing principle of sovereignty and which serve to constitute the very ideal of the political in the modern era.

Walker's dual-diagnosis is confounding because obstacles to the political imagination cannot simply be considered structural, philosophical or historical; they also are personal, political, and factional. Moreover, no amount of finesse is able to conceal the

existence of a friend/enemy dichotomy in Walker's own work. In the closing paragraph of *Inside/Outside*, for example, Walker asks to be spared 'the interminable self-righteousness of those who know what we cannot be because they are so sure of where we are'. 'I would count this as a considerable achievement,' he concludes.[219] Seemingly taking the high road, Walker appears to believe that the simple recognition of the contemporary 'transparency' of modern 'discursive strategies' should be enough to accomplish the feat of silencing the self-righteous. He looks, from this angle, to be holding out for the triumph of reason and altruism. But his tone is antagonistic and his words are surely sardonic. The inference drawn is that — as both the shortcomings of, and the fascination with, specifically *modernist* political resolutions continue to become 'more and more transparent' — the 'self-righteous' among international relations theorists and political theorists alike might finally begin to see the error of their ways and relent. Who knows, if the situation becomes 'transparent' enough, perhaps even the blind may one day be made to see?

It is clear that Walker has a special enmity for neorealist international relations theory in particular. It is evident that this school of thought is more to him than some curious out-growth of larger structural-historical forces. On the contrary neorealism, and IR by extension, because of neorealism's dominance within the discipline, is also presented as a serious institutional defense/justification of a powerful and presumably malignant statist *status quo*. Neorealist IR, in Walker's rendition, becomes only the most conspicuous institutional defense of a 'serious politics which would be quite amusing were [it] not so massively tragic'.[220] As Walker caricatures them, neorealists are either contemptuous *courtiers* or the simple blind dupes of ideology. Already dumb and incurably blind (or simply turning a blind eye), perhaps it *would* be a considerable achievement were they to suddenly become mute as well. But on the other hand, it does not seem as though 'they' who justify the massively tragic and 'serious politics' of which Walker speaks would necessarily want to re-imagine anything, and not just because they

have failed to see the light now supposedly spilling through the transparencies which are said to be forming in 'our' *modernist* political resolutions. It does not take a scholar to know that many remain quite content with inside/outside articulations of social and political community. At least one might wager that those on the inside or such arrangements tend to be quite comfortable with them. It is uncertain the ground from which Walker can intimate blindness (implied in his metaphors about transparency), or from which he or anyone else can muster contempt. Walker may be too willing to assume that insiders care what happens to outsiders. He certainly never makes it abundantly clear why he or anyone should care. He presents, in effect, no axiology, though he does suggest some utilitarian reasons for concern. Specifically they are a concern about the potential for global environmental calamity, a concern about a technology specifically designed for species suicide, and a concern about the possible magnification of the already extreme violences of the twentieth century. Any strictly ethical concerns Walker may have he keeps well veiled, and this, we assume, is because of the deep distrust he shares with Foucault concerning the 'blackmail of Enlightenment'. But while from his perspective many of the practices, self-images, and theoretical orientations of modern politics may seem hubristic, clearly all do not agree.

black velvet Kant

Neorealism is not the only target of Walker's critical analysis. In attempting to approach — without falling into — the constitutive abyss of debate between idealism and realism in international relations/political theory, Walker finds it equally necessary, if not more necessary, to address the tradition of idealism, especially as this tradition has specifically come to be associated with the name Immanuel Kant. As we have already seen above

(section 1.2), with respect to the prospects for global political community it is idealism — as universalism — which Walker 'bluntly and heretically' understands to be 'the problem, and not the solution'[221] .

A double reading of the two modalities of Walker's critical method also helps to explain his criticism of what he calls 'kitch Kantianism', and his corresponding insistence that we remember that Kant's outline for a perpetual peace and a universal history — all of its humanitarian and world communitarian aspirations notwithstanding — ultimately speaks to a world of fragmented states.

> And the crucial consequence that has to be drawn from the principle of state sovereignty is that a system of states, or international relations, is not synonymous with world politics.[222]

Walker's use of a phrase like 'kitch Kantianism'[223] is pointed. It tacitly suggests that there is a more 'authentic' Kantianism to be realised, a Kantianism which is not 'kitch' and which can presumably be uncovered through a deeper, more critical reading (or even a first reading for that matter!) of Kant himself. According to this 'deeper' understanding, the Kantian *aspiration* 'must be seen as both a possibility condition of but also a severe constraint on the contemporary political imagination'.[224] To read Kant properly, then, or shall we say *critically*, is to be 'driven to consider other options'; it is to realise that the most one may rightly salvage from Kant is an aspiration and a certain critical spirit.

Once again, Walker presents an example of a misconception and/or misreading that he feels needs correction. Neo-Kantianism, as he represents it, appears as just another category of ideological blindness. There is, he contends, an inherent paradox within the bourgeois (Kantian) aspiration for a universal peace and republican democracy which neo-Kantians, on the whole, seem happy to ignore. In this respect he speaks generally to 'that growing interest in a more ethically inspired form of liberalism, one that aspires to some

kind of Kantian republicanism or even a perpetual peace between autonomous political communities'.[225] More specifically he addresses those critical theories of international relations which 'seek to fulfill the promises of modernity rather than call them into question' (ibid.).[226] But he also notes how these attempts 'clearly resonate with a broader tendency within recent social and political thought': Jürgen Habermas' qualified ambition to 'rewrite Enlightenment aspirations for a universal reason'; or Hans Blumenberg's 'celebration of the capacity for self-assertion that he sees as modernity's great achievement'; or Charles Taylor's 'attempt to clarify contemporary moral dilemmas through an historical grasp of the achievement of self-identity'.[227] Crucially, however, what makes such literature interesting in Walker's eyes is not the 'simple affirmation of modernity, of the kind that is all too common in modern social science,' but its 'careful even if sometimes reluctant acknowledgment of the highly problematic status of modernity'. There is a recognition in such literature, he says, of the very fragile nature of the achievements of modernity: autonomy, freedom, rationality.[228] Such literatures are, in effect, indicative of how hard one must work to make modern/enlightenment ideals viable at all, ideals which he believes are becoming less and less tenable in contemporary times. In short, such literatures speak to the very *idealistic*, as opposed to normative, status of modern conceptions of subjectivity.

Walker's insistence through all of this is that we cannot simply forget, which is what he believes much of this literature tends to do, about the very conditions (i.e. the system sovereign statehood) under which it has even been possible to aspire to some more cosmopolitan ideal of political community at all. He writes:

> Claims about some common identity convey a great deal about our capacity to imagine particular identities, for a common identity is precisely what we do not have, at least in any politically meaningful sense.[229]

The states system aside, we simply cannot overlook the inevitably localised nature of all efforts to articulate what it means to speak of 'the world'.[230] 'How is it possible', Walker asks, 'to engage with aspirations for emancipation knowing that so many of those aspirations have merely affirmed a parochial particularity masquerading as universal?'[231]

Once again we catch Walker sounding very much like a traditional, Weberian realist. However, unlike his criticism of neorealism, Walker's treatment of neo-Kantianism is almost sympathetic. Neo-Kantians in his analysis read as well intentioned, though somewhat forgetful and/or lacking a truly stringent critical fortitude (But who can blame them really for wanting to take the high road? Perhaps they simply lack the mettle required of (s)he who would be truly critical?). Concerns about some more deliberately imposed intellectual hegemony, however, may be just as relevant here as they are in the context of neorealism, though Walker does not drive this idea home with any force. One more cynical than Walker might contend that what ostensibly appear to be well-intentioned aspirations for some universalism — which simply fail to take full stock of their own conditions of possibility — are better characterised as fronts, Trojan horses for the *conscious* advancement of specific interests, as may be the case, for example, with many or perhaps all theories of 'development'.[232]

3.3 PARODIES, FAIRY TALES, LULLABIES

the philosopher king who would not be sovereign

In a culminating and grand act of parody, Walker, in the grandest of all his ambiguities, is one who appears to also be both inside and outside of the 'constraints' of 'established political ideologies'. While he admits, as we shall see just below, that he too is just as subject to the fascinating and elegant charms of the principle of sovereignty as is any other *modern*, he nevertheless appears to have the power to see through both the 'transparent'

seductions of modernist political resolutions as well as through the 'discursive strategies through which we have come to believe in the natural necessity' of these otherwise historically specific resolutions. Thus, whether it be the rhetorical con-game of Hobbes, the neorealist reification of some 'earnestly imagined' *reality*, or the 'kitch Kantianism' of a more ethically inspired liberalism, Walker is there to pierce the veil of delusion with his critical x-ray vision and see past tricky 'appearances'. In so doing, he implicitly presents himself as one of the elect, a philosopher king — though a flawed and demurring one — who nonetheless claims to know that the transfixing shadows we watch on the wall ultimately draw their form from the projections of 'a profound (though historically specific) metaphysics rooted in an implicit geometry'. Were 'we' only willing to journey 'outside' or 'beyond' with him, 'we' would be able to see as much. Such knowledge, while not immediately liberating (because what can we do with it?), professes to be at least potentially liberating. Walker may not be able to articulate some entirely new and more 'authentic' vision of the political, but he does claim a privileged understanding of what will <u>not</u> work, namely, modernist/statist/spatialised political principles. Walker's concession in this instance is that nothing 'new' may reasonably be expected until the superstitious shackles of the principle of sovereignty are thrown off at large. Until such time as that we may continue to expect the collective political imagination to be stifled.

But again, such 'knowledge' seemingly is paradoxical in that it seeks to declare a *real* crisis of the imagination owing to the *illusions* spawned of modern political fictions. In other words, it is predicated on an ability to distinguish *the real* from mere perceptions of the real, an 'authentic' imagination from an 'inauthentic' imagination. Take for example the fairly recent articulation of the sovereignty problematic by Barry Hindess, a scholar whom we may fairly consider to be 'allied', if you will, with Rob Walker. Hindess, like Walker, contends that, while the political corollaries of the sovereignty problematic are undoubtedly fictional, 'Western political thought nevertheless continues to make use of that world: both as a surrogate for the present, and as a model of what ought to, but does not,

exist.'[233] But we are inclined to ask here: Just what are the criteria for determining whether a perceived 'crisis' of the modern political imagination is itself real or illusory? Appeals to ontology are no more likely to make the problems of epistemology go away than will appeals to epistemology make the problems of ontology go away. At some point, Walker *et al* must stake a claim to having a privileged understanding of reality *contra* its appearances, and it is at this moment that their work becomes rather straightforward and traditional *ideologiekritik*, old wine in fancy new bottles. A bigger problem is that it remains entirely unclear what such scholars themselves think 'ought to exist, but does not' and may not if the way we think about politics does not change. They offer no sense of what they hope 'the political' to be in 'the absence of its defining constitutive fiction(s)'.[234] Simple deference to the present reticence of the muse(s) of political theory, in this respect, is less than satisfying.

damned if you do ...

Still, even as straight-forward *ideologiekritik*, Walker's ideas are rather interesting. Certainly, his argument is ingenious enough. He has produced what appears at first blush to be an entirely paradoxical argument in which he manages to equally chastise both those who profess to 'know what we cannot be because they are so sure of where we are',[235] and those whose universal aspirations blithely ignore that humans are citizens of sovereign states before they are anything else. This certainly is a puzzle. On the one hand 'realists' are damned for reifying an ideal of sovereign statehood; on the other, 'idealists' are damned for not taking the fragmented state of the world seriously enough. Out of this confusion, one may be inclined to think that it is an *idealistically* inclined Walker who, in the end, does as much to reify the *principle* of state sovereignty as does anyone else. For anyway one cares to slice it, sovereignty is the problem. This aporia may be yet another example of

the elegance of the principle of sovereignty and of the ubiquity of the sovereignty problematic, or it may be a sign of Walker's elegant intellectual craftsmanship. But the explication of this aporia is only the beginning. Walker, of course, did not invent the problem, but he is deeply implicated in it and his efforts at escape only serve to underscore it. Ironically, then, in a masterful display of rhetorical prowess, his own failures serve as a kind of evidence that he is right.

Very conscious of his implication, Walker engages in self-criticism and admits that in the end his analysis — through its constant returns to three key themes in particular (identity/difference, inside/outside, space/time) — merely 'parodies the binary oppositions that have been so evident in the most familiar texts of the discipline (IR)'. 'Like the reified categories of international relations theory themselves,' he says, the constant reappearance of these three themes

> give(s) some indication of how contemporary political thought and action are governed and disciplined by a specifically modern account of political identity, the account expressed most crucially by the principle of state sovereignty.[236]

But the real meat of Walker's critique, however, is that which was indicated at the end of the previous chapter: Yes, Walker may be implicated. But so are 'we' all.

the Gordian knot

The sovereignty problematic represents what looks to be an irresolvable aporia. But as Alexander realized as he stood before the Gordian knot, certain puzzles only seem irresolvable if we insist on certain parameters.

Just as Alexander 'undid' the Gordian knot by cutting it in half, Walker seeks to 'undo' the principle of sovereignty by cutting it first open, then 'out' of universal history, insisting as he does that the sovereigntist aporia must be recognised as an historically constituted condition and not the natural reflection of some permanent and tragic 'reality'. Or, to put this in plain language: the sovereignty aporia is what inevitably happens when one takes to framing the world — the political world in particular — in implicitly spatial/geometric terms. This is what Walker claims has taken place, beginning in a most acute way in the early-modern era. The obvious addendum here is that 'we' do not have to look at the world in this manner any more than Alexander had to untie the Gordian knot in order to 'undo' it. But are 'we' truly in the unconscious habit of viewing the world in geometric terms? Walker certainly believes 'we' are.

Returning once more to the Bachelard epigram of *Inside/Outside*, it is, claims Walker, a profound modern metaphysics, rooted in an implicit geometry, which has conferred spatiality upon 'modern' thought and which has thereby ultimately produced a meta-discourse of absence and presence, inside and outside, being and non-being in the modern world. 'The most important expression of these understandings,' he submits, 'indeed the crucial modern political articulation of all spatiotemporal relations, is the principle of state sovereignty'.[237]

And yet, however elegant its resolutions may have been in the past, a politics informed by the principle of sovereignty, we are told, holds little promise for the articulation of any kind of meaningful political identity in a 'world of profound temporal accelerations and spatial dislocations',[238] a world where it has become increasingly difficult to determine what or who is 'inside' and what or who is 'outside'. The problem is, the inherent spatiality of modern political thought has placed severe limits on 'our' contemporary ability to (re)imagine the political in the face of grand contemporary transformations. Even attempts at radical critique are suspect because they are rooted in the same 'spatiotemporal resolutions' as are 'the most self-satisfied forms of conservative

apologetics'.[239] Consequently, 'we' are condemned to (re)produce again and again a very limited number of political possibilities for the future, none of which seem particularly promising by Walker's lights (see 'Gulliver', section 2.2). But again it is not certain what Walker, himself, might find more promising.

knowledge stones

But alas there would seem to be an escape clause in all of this! And it is the 'historical specificity' clause. By advancing the idea of historical specificity, we have argued, Walker tries to open up a space for possibility itself. Walker's flanking maneuver, then, is to defer to the idea (if not the reality) of historical specificity. Modern statist political thought, he contends, regardless of how natural it may be made to seem, cannot be considered 'natural'. It is simply one historically specific way of construing the world, the origins of which, he contends, may be fairly accurately traced to specific intellectual developments in early modern Europe.[240] While much of such theorising may appear radical in light of certain 'orthodox' standards within international relations theory, it is these claims about historical specificity which may well be Walker's most contentious by virtue of their being his most substantive.

In responding to the limitations of both neorealism and idealism, then, Walker exercises his own discursive strategy by constantly reminding his readers of the 'historical specificity' of modernist political principles. 'Historically specific', 'historically specific', 'historically specific', Walker repeats the refrain like a mantra *ad nauseam* in his texts. The words, or some variation thereof, we find repeated again and again: Sovereigntist thinking is historically specific![241] There was a *beginning*; there will come an end. Things, once different, will be different again. To become too tightly fixated on a specifically modern conception of subjectivity (sovereign state/sovereign man) ultimately is

to lose 'our' capacity to respond effectively to inevitable historical and/or structural transformations; it is to lose the plastic and healing powers of life; it is to become old and brittle. We have become trapped, he intimates, within the statist castles of *space* 'we' moderns have built to withstand the forces of time and *doxa.* Now we are afraid to move outside into what has over the centuries become the unknown. Such fixation, Walker argues, is decidedly not the stuff of a people or even of what might potentially be a *'species'* of virtù capable of seducing the fickle bitch fortuna.[242] There was, 'we' must be reminded, a time before the spaces of modern subjectivity; there will be a time after modern subjectivity. It only remains to be thought.

Of course, Walker provides only a brief sketch of the intellectual transitions that produced classical/modern conceptions of absolute space, although the story he tells is one which should sound at least reasonably familiar to those with a grounding in the history of political theory, science, or philosophy. To recall, Walker claims that an essentially universal, modern political imagination has come to be, in effect, (pre)conditioned by an inherited, implicit geometry which, he claims, grounds the metaphysical presuppositions of the early modern era in western Europe. He is, however, scarce on the historical details of how this actually comes to pass. He chooses instead to direct us to a super-abundance of literature on the subject of modernity, while noting the 'five most decisive influences' that have come to shape his own particular reading of modernity (see page 79, above). Ultimately, we are to be convinced that 'the crucial modern political articulation of all spatiotemporal relations, is the principle of state sovereignty.'[243] This historical argument is the presuppositional keystone to the rest of Walker's political-theoretical analysis. In short, Walker's political-theoretical analysis relies upon a specialized and contentious vein of historiography. His thesis demands first the acceptance of the general discourse on modernity as valid, something which is not so straight-forward as it may be made to seem. The existence of a massive literature on modernity does suggest that there is some-'thing' there to be written about. However, the same multiplicity of not-so-easily reconcilable

narratives about modernity also reminds us that modernity is only a story which can be told many ways, and/or a category which can be articulated in many ways. Certainly there remain those such as Andre Gundre Frank who are critical of the discourses and categories of modernity altogether.[244]

Second, part and parcel of the modernity problematic, as Walker presents it, are the tricky and intertwined histories of sovereignty, modernist notions of subjectivity, and the specifically modern/Western subject-object dualism. For just how is it, we need to ask, that in 'all appearances' sovereignty has come to appear as both a *modern* and a permanent principle of political order?[245] Sovereignty, subject-object dualism, modern subjectivity, all of these concepts have contestable histories and precursors. Moreover, 'the fixing of temporality with spatial categories', Walker himself points out, 'has been so crucial in the construction of the most influential traditions of Western (and not just *modern*) philosophy and socio-political thought'. He claims that this is the case whether 'moving from the dangers of sophistry to the eternal forms, from the sins of earth to the redemptions of eternity or from the vagaries of individual subjectivity to the certainties of nature'.[246] What then, we ask, is so unique about Hobbes' early-modern attempt to 'fix the configurations of power within the state',[247] or his 'brilliant reconciliation of state and geometrical reason', as Walker describes it elsewhere?[248]

Modernity, we have seen, is a fuzzy category; but it is especially so in Walker's hands. The modern inside/outside problematic which he describes apparently begins with Plato, but also with Augustine, but also with Descartes/Hobbes. It is modern and not modern. The question of a historical break associated with the 'onset' of modernity, then, seems to be more of a question of degree than of kind, in which case perhaps more credence should be given to meta-historical theories which posit that the nature of political community has been essentially the same *in principle* since at least the time of the Greek 'city-states'. According to Walker's own admissions, this idea may not be so anachronistic.

At any rate, historical details in this case can only weigh us down. Besides which, all such 'details' will forever remain fundamentally speculative. Let the dead bury the dead! Walker knows better than to get mired down into the muck and mire and minutiae of historiographical debate. The details and the veracity of these meta-narratives are, at a certain level, practically irrelevant. The general story of modernity has been told by many, in many places, many times before. Even Walker's more specific modifications to the story are adopted from others (in effect, from his 'five influences'). Broad outlines, along with some rhetorical prowess and a dose of conviction, are all that are really necessary for him to make his point. This is because Walker's concern with the past has little or nothing to do with the past and everything to do with the future. His reading/writing of the past, it has been contended here, is conducted solely in the interests of creating a politics of possibility for the future. In short, a re-imagining of the past is precisely that which he hopes will allow for a re-imagining of the future. The fact of the matter is that even if it could be *proved* that political association has remained essentially the same throughout history, a break would need to be established, a line drawn to deny the past, if 'we' were to nourish even the *hope* of something 'better'. A break may simply have to be invented, a limit not *overcome*, but *placed* in order to create an 'enveloping atmosphere' where we may feel and act *unhistorically,*[249] where we may 'counter the continuous displacement of horizon-perspectives, insisting on historical horizons as a means of combating the excesses of history which dull the spirit and the senses, which kill life in the present, and which 'smash [our] image(s) of the future'.[250] An excess of history, Nietzsche claims, attacks the plastic powers of life to the point where life no longer understands how to avail itself of the past as hearty nourishment. 'A certain excess of history is capable of all this', he says. It can produce the *'historical malady'*.[251]

Any proposed *unhistorical* act, of course, as with all renditions of history, will require some willing suspension of disbelief if ever it is to work, though complaints about the spectre of relativism in this regard are sure to be sounded by 'the children of Hegel's

ghost'.[252] But such complaints always begin by assuming the unmoved ground on which they imagine they stand in the first place! They begin with their own willing suspension of disbelief in choosing to forget that their 'first' nature was also once a second nature.

But wait? An *excess* of history is capable of all this?!! What are we saying here? It seems our thesis has reversed itself. Was not Rob Walker to be read as attempting to *introduce* a sense of the historical into the pseudo-scientific and *a*-historical discipline of international relations? Do we have it backwards? Have we gotten turned around somewhere in this maze? Perhaps not.

Ironically, having come to the end of our treatise, it would appear that Walker's insistence on the introduction of a new sense of historicism into IR/political theory is actually better read as an attempt to produce an *antidote* for a certain excess of the historical, an antidote for an *historical malady* wrought by a particular *abuse* of history. This abuse, perpetrated by IR theorists and political theorists alike, is one in which the entirety of human political history has been gathered-up and swallowed whole, in great gluttonous gulps, as a few ultra-condensed, trite, timeless and supposedly universal political maxims (or principles) — 'knowledge stones', as Nietzsche would have it. Thus, presuming that the reading of Walker in this thesis carries any weight, we may believe that it is precisely such knowledge stones, now rattling around in the bellies of 'we' moderns 'as in the fairy tale',[253] which threaten to kill 'us' with indigestion. Or perhaps they may simply drag 'us' down and drown 'us' in the rising waters of the river *Fortuna*.

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to provide a critical exploration of political theorist R. B. J. Walker's meditations on international relations, world politics, and political theory. It begins with the proposition, drawn from Walker, that something is wrong with the state of contemporary political imagination. In so doing, it steps into a stream of discourse which is taken up with the general problem of how to respond politically to the seemingly massive contemporary social and political upheavals that we find roughly associated with the phenomenon of so-called 'globalisation'. The initial gambit of these meditations is that 'globalisation' be viewed as a political *problem* and not as, say, a moment of political triumph or as one more historical step toward the realisation of some universal. First and foremost, then, Walker has been presented in these pages as a political thinker who seeks to write against, as he puts it, 'History read as the gradual realisation of universality in time'.[254] In light of this, we have attempted to read Walker in terms of a broader Nietzschean critique of Hegelian *teleology* (or the 'German Historical spirit', if you will). Specifically there has been a proposal floating through these pages that Walker be considered as one who embodies, or seeks to embody, the spirit of critical historical inquiry as exemplified in Nietzsche's untimely meditation on the *Advantages and Disadvantages of History for Life.*

Recognising a contemporary moment of historical transformation analogous to that experienced in the late-medieval/early-modern era, Walker deals with what he calls the 'urgent' need to re-imagine the very concept of the political. Ours, he says, is a time of great opportunity in this respect, but also a time of great danger. He is both repelled by the political carnage of the twentieth century and sceptical of political prospects for the foreseeable future. He is not one to share in whatever moments of self-congratulation, relief or quietude there may now be. 1989, to this extent, marks a kind of beginning, by Walker's lights, as opposed to any kind of culmination. This date, we may now see more

clearly, has come to resemble as much as anything else a harbinger of even more tumultuous change to come.

The tenets of modern political theory, Walker claims, have always been tenuous at best. Historically, he says, they have only able to sustain their undoubted charms at the cost of massive violence and misery. Today, however, they are 'widely admitted to be in serious trouble',[255] partly because of their abominable track record, but also because we are now living in a world characterised by qualities of speed and acceleration and by their attendant spatio-temporal compressions. The character and location of community, always problematic, have become even more so under present conditions; and 'aspirations for moral status rooted in an uncertain community are obviously tricky'.[256] And yet, while many have viewed this recognizable contemporary condition as being in some way fundamentally *post-modern*, this characterisation is seriously misleading, suggests Walker, because it gives the impression of a fundamental conceptual transformation while harbouring an implicit teleology, whereas he is one who believes that Marx's vision of all that is solid melting into air is as relevant today as it was when Marx first expressed it. Indeed, contemporary transformations, according to Walker, are already anticipated (if you will) in Hobbes' 'recognition' that there is nothing about us but bodies in motion, nothing within us but organic motions. There is, in effect, only motion.[257] Thus, any search for political foundations must realise that the ground is always shifting. Machiavelli too, Walker informs us, recognised a state of flux or *doxa* to be the primary political condition. Modern political theory then, as Walker presents it, reads on the whole as a broad and sustained cultural attempt to discipline time (movement) through the deployment of spatial categories, the paragon of all such attempts being Hobbes' own attempt, particularly in *Leviathan*, to contain the kinetic energy of an emerging modern atomic politics within a sovereign ampoule of Euclidean calculation: the state. This sustained historical effort to discipline time through categories of space has resulted in what Walker calls 'the politics of

little boxes',[258] the constitutive principle of which is the principle of sovereignty. This we have sought to show above in 'The Principle of Sovereignty' (chapter 1, section 2).

Walker contends that, as the constitutive principle of the political, the principle of sovereignty establishes in a very precise way the nature and scope of what may be considered the 'authentically' political. The principle of sovereignty, in short, tells moderns exactly *where* authentic political community can be, namely, within the territorial confines of the sovereign state. What appear to be the ostensibly elegant, 'common sense' resolutions of sovereignty, Walker argues, mask a great density of metaphysical achievement involving the triple resolution of the relationships of unity/diversity, self/other and space/time. These resolutions, he suggests, rest on other resolutions, 'notably of the finite and the infinite within the claims of a self-identical individuality, the modern autonomous subject torn between alienation and self-realisation'.[259] Ultimately, Walker wishes to show how the development of modern political theory is intimately tied to the historical development of modern subjectivity itself and especially to the specifically spatial resolutions that such subjectivity is said to entail.

However, its charms notwithstanding, the resolutions of sovereignty, again always fleeting at best, are profoundly unsuited to contemporary aspirations for an 'authentically' global politics because they make impossible by definition the very idea of a 'world' politics. This is because modern political order is predicated on a fundamental distinction between inside and outside — authentic, domestic politics within; anarchic, contingent relations without. Universal political community, therefore, cannot be realised except as a universal condition of political fragmentation into insides and outsides. What results from this condition, argues Walker, is the sustained play of desire (to be reconciled with the universal) and impossibility (because humanity is not a meaningful political category; it remains, rather, a mere aspiration and as such always a projection of what is local and particular by definition). In effect, the universal cannot be realised because *it has already been realised.* This is because the principle of sovereignty, for all that it is described as a

source of fragmentation, also expresses a unitary account of the system within which sovereign states can exist in the first place.

Walker's scepticism, then, is such that he is convinced that all attempts to move from a 'here' (an experiential 'globalism') to some hoped-for 'there' (essentially some projection of the *civitas maxima* understood largely in Kantian terms) are doomed to fail because such attempts, he says, are forever impeded by the very *ideal* conception of the political that such hope embodies in the first place. Moreover, because the modern political resolutions represented in the principle of sovereignty are first and foremost spatial resolutions rooted in Euclidean-Newtonian-Kantian conceptions of absolute space, the very best that we can hope for within the parameters set by modern politics is an understanding of world politics framed in terms of the state writ large. This we tried to make clear in the summary of Walker's essay on 'Gulliver' in chapter 2, section 2.

Thus the most insidious, the most problematic aspect of the principle of sovereignty, as Walker has it, is that it produces its own account of the only alternatives to itself that we can readily imagine. 'Like heaven,' he writes, 'these alternatives are impossible to reach except as mysterious possibilities beyond life as we know it. This discourse cannot offer a guide to what it might mean to say that state sovereignty is somehow obsolete'.[260] Consequently, if change is the problem, if the 'decline of the state' is the problem, then it makes no sense to work within the philosophical resolutions that state sovereignty has served to naturalize as common sense and legal principle.

One key strategy of this paper has been to read Walker as a theorist of political imagination and not, as he is usually taken to be, a theorist of international relations. Nevertheless, one major *contention* of this paper has been that, however elegant Walker's framing of the 'imagination' problematic happens to be, he himself offers very little in the way of directions 'forward', not that he promises as much. While it is accepted here that Walker's rhetorical shift from the pressing contemporary puzzles of global political order to the specific foibles of the modern political imagination is a fascinating, even promising line

of thought, it is also maintained that this shift is one that, in effect, demands a more explicit and well-developed theory and/or ontology and/or history of the modern imagination in particular, and of the 'idea' of the imagination more generally. Without these, one is not convinced that his line of inquiry, novel though it is, can go very far. Qutie to the contrary, appeals to (re)imagine pose the threat of infinite regress because the 'mechanics' of the imagination in Walker's analysis are so vague.

Nevertheless, this paper has also sought to outline what appears to be an *implicit* theory of the imagination in Walker's work, one roughly associated with a phenomenological tradition which generally associates freedom with imagination. The argument in this case is that Walker, at root, operates according to a theory which is concerned with establishing the conditions of plain possibility, which is to say, he operates according to a theory which is chiefly concerned with creating, through a play of poetics and critique, the conditions necessary for thinking 'other'. With respect to envisioning a 'truly' global politics, this involves two things: First, it involves the disruption of a fundamentally 'spatialised' political *idealism* which from roughly the early modern era has informed the possibility of authentic political community by defining, in effect, *where* authentic community can be (within the territorial boundaries of the sovereign state).

Second, it involves the disruption of a grand and concomitant modernist philosophy of history, which is to say it involves, in effect, a concerted resistance to Hegelian *teleology*, or to what Nietzsche calls 'the doctrines of sovereign becoming'.[261] Stated another way, it involves a resistance to the idea of progress as the realisation of universality in time, a resistance to what Walker calls the 'discourse of eternity'[262] and its resultant cycles of desire and impossibility.

Rob Walker, then, does not explicitly offer any 'alternatives' to 'our' 'modern' understanding of the political or its tragic cycles. On the contrary, he steadfastly insists that modern alternatives are not the point. He implicitly argues (and writes/acts) as though no such alternatives can possibly be forthcoming unless the transfixing or 'fascinating' ideals

of the modern political imagination are somehow vanquished and/or demystified. In terms of praxis, then, Walker's work has been read, at least in part, as a sustained attempt at 'SUPERHISTORY': the effective production of tales which resist the sovereigntist historical imposition and which are designed to produce an understanding, *per* Nietzsche's meditations in *On the Advantages and Disadvantages of History*, of a past 'one would have liked to have descended from'. In the case of Walker, this is a past which affords 'authentic' political possibilities for the future and not merely a perpetual return to the same.

A serious problem, however, is that all of Walker's attempts at poetics, disruption, critique, and exploration reveal his own prior implication in so-called 'sovereigntist' thinking, and we have tried to trace some of these cycles and epicycles (Walker is said to be, for example, in and out of modernity; in and out of ideologies; and in and out of disciplines). Some attempt has also been made in this paper to show how 'sovereigntist' disciplinary boundaries also parallel and reproduce the very sovereignty/imagination problematic which Walker outlines. The production of such academic/intellectual boundaries, it has been suggested, makes it exceedingly difficult to so much as raise critical questions concerning the nature of the political — let alone to call for a (re)imagining of the political — without simply being consigned to one or other 'category' or 'discipline', the result of which is a kind of exclusion achieved through an act of inclusion in a category. The section above on 'The Impo(r)tænce of International Relations' (section 3.2) is particularly relevant in this regard.

Walker, of course, is well aware of his own implications and of his own position(s) *vis-à-vis* certain academic territories — or 'fiefdoms' as we have called them here. Therefore, simply drawing attention to these implications (or ambiguities) offers no critical leverage to one's analysis of his work. On the contrary, it seems likely that it is Walker's own awareness of his implication(s) which drive him in the first instance to consider the 'fascinating' qualities and the workings of 'the' modern political imagination. He has beat us to the punch in this respect: Crucially, his own failures offer evidence of the veracity of

his suspicions concerning the structural conceptual limitations of the modern political imagination. Even critical thought itself — including Walker's own! — we discover, is ultimately implicated in the production of such limits.

Nevertheless, Walker's 'failures', coupled with the almost too elegant demonstration of his own (and everyone else's) entrapment leads to nagging doubts about his critical enterprise. Finally, as Walker begins to 'de-mystify' one veil of illusion after another (Hobbesian con games; the 'earnestly imagined realities' of social-scientific inquiry; 'kitch-Kantianisms' and the like) his critical enterprise begins to look more and more like a rather traditional attempt at *ideologiekritik*. As such, it mimics the traditional Enlightenment critique of religious superstition. Essentially, if we take the state to be the Leviathan, that is to say, if the modern state has become, in effect, the artificial god of modern man (the very need of this god defining man as modern), then the principle of sovereignty which constitutes both the state and the man, complete with all of their attending institutional manifestations and defenses, is, for Walker, *l'infâme!* It is that vile thing from which Walker (the enlightened one) seeks his and our deliverance. On the other hand, and seemingly paradoxically, Walker also sees the authority of this modern god, the Leviathan, as waning in contemporary times, and he recognises a general crisis of political authority/legitimacy analogous to that experienced in the late-medieval era with the collapse of feudal hierarchies. He is sensitive to the problems — as is Machiavelli, as is Nietzsche — of establishing political authority in a 'godless' world.

However, it has been our contention throughout this paper that Walker's more traditional (Enlightenment) critique ultimately flounders when its purveyor finds himself abandoned in his own right by the muse of political imagination and thus unable to stake out any new ground from which to justify his own critique and his own declarations of the 'real' *contra* its appearances. In effect, Walker cannot even locate any ground on which to plant a garden which may be tended to. It is at this point that Walker's analysis appears to shift from being a fairly traditional Marxian critical-theoretical inquiry to being something

more akin to a post-structuralist rumination. In effect, the remainder of the author's work, we will suggest, amounts to a sustained attempt to understand why the muse of political imagination will not come when she is summoned. Walker's situation, then, is similar in this respect to that of the writer who pens volumes on why he/she has developed writer's block. Thus, while Walker reveres Niccolò Machiavelli for his *virtù*, that is, for his ability to contend with *Fortuna* through an act of invention which produces a genuinely new political language in the midst of a tremendously transformation period in Western history, in Walker's own case it is not the goddess *Fortuna* which he himself most immediately hopes to seduce, but those nine daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne, the muses. His appeal to them is as a kind of consolation. Walker, the would be man of *virtù*, is thus reduced in the end to hoping that at least one of these daughters might share with him (or 'us') the secrets for seducing the fickle *Fortuna* herself. Even so, one is not convinced that these nine are any more susceptible to Walker's advances than is the goddess *Fortuna* herself. A study of the imagination, as such, and of the political imagination in particular, might help in this situation. Yet while studies and *exercises* of the imagination are *de rigueur* in 'the arts' and even within the hard sciences to an extent, they are notoriously lacking, it seems, within the realms of political theory. But perhaps this should not be so surprising, given that the artist is anathema to the good republic.

What hope for a (re)imagining of the political there is ultimately rests, for Walker, in the idea of historical and cultural specificity. While it may not be possible to articulate a way 'forward'[263] at present, we can at least take some solace in an understanding that, politically speaking, things have not always been this way throughout the span of recorded history. Even a cursory reading of history, for example, is enough to demonstrate that humans (specifically those of the so-called 'Christian' 'West') have not always conceived of the political in terms of the resolutions of state sovereignty. Recognising as much at least suggests the possibility of other ways of conceiving of the political. A major problem of this approach, however, is that it does not necessarily suggest that something entirely

new is possible. It could suggest, for example, the continued play of a meta-historical cycle of something called *politics* — a way of life predicated on the concept of the *polis* — versus the more universal impositions of Empire. If this were the case, for example, then modernity, from a political standpoint, would not be as distinct a condition as Walker (following Weber and Marx in particular) would have us believe it is. In light of this, it is Walker who begins to look like the idealist in his very insistence on historical possibility and in his very suggestion that something 'better' is possible at all, though, given his reticence, we do not know exactly what Walker means by 'better'. Does 'better', in this immediate context, for example, suggest a move 'beyond' the very aspiration for empire understood as a hoped-for realisation of some universal? Or does 'better' simply speak to the idea of developing better, which is to say, more virt(ù)ous ways of contending politically with contemporary variations on the timeless play of the local (the political) and the global (empire), which is to say, better ways of resolving the particular and the universal given contemporary transitions?

In its most simple guise,Walker's corpus reads as a lengthy spin on Machiavelli's advice in *The Prince* concerning the building of castles. Castles, argued Machiavelli, are both good and bad depending on what the Prince hopes to achieve. Regardless, one must always be careful in taking to castles, Machiavelli warns, lest they become one's prison and not one's salvation. Following this analogy, the sovereign territorial state, once a conceptual castle in which an 'effective' (though at a cost) political community could reign for a time, has become, Walker seems to intimate, a conceptual prison from which we are unable or unwilling to leave, even while the costs of remaining 'within' continue to rise. The big problem with such an analogy, however, is that Walker is entirely unwilling or unable to indicate what one might wish to achieve (in terms of notions of the political and political community) through a more virt(ù)ous play of political imagination, save the dissolution of modernist conceptions of political subjectivity/community which he seems to link to the 'massive tragedies' of modernity,[264] but which are, he also seems to suggest,

dissolving away anyway because of contemporary historical transformations. Conversely, there is no answering the question of what one might hope to achieve in the world, politically speaking, free of some 'new' articulation of what it means to speak of effective political community.

Still, Walker's ambivalence concerning the state and the principle of state sovereignty is astounding, for even though this tandem has for long represented the foundations of a 'serious politics' which 'would be quite amusing were it not so massively tragic',[265] and even though modernist and statist resolutions of the relations between citizenship and humanity seem, to him, increasingly inadequate given the times, it nevertheless remains 'easy enough', he suggests, 'to imagine worse possibilities'.[266] And although he is careful not to say it, it seems clear enough that by 'worse possibilities' he has in mind something akin to a global fascism as the realisation of a kind of fundamentally 'de-politicised' condition — an extreme disparity between constellations of global *power* and constellations of (basically statist) political representation — something which may arguably already exist, to a certain extent, in a *de facto* manner today. Such may be, for example, that condition which has turned an entire 'lost' continent (Africa) into something which has the appearance, in a certain light, of a massive concentration camp.[267]

But to believe with Walker, the double sceptic, in the very possibility of possibility, we must first accept his assertion that modernist notions of political subjectivity are the specific root of a modernist malaise. This involves an acceptance of a concomitant historical periodization that posits specific gaps as against continuities and eschatologies. We must believe in the particularly virulent novelty of supposedly specifically modernist ideals of subjectivity, whatever historical precursors they have notwithstanding. Most specifically we are to believe that such subjectivities find their novel expression in 'new' theoretical understandings of space worked out primarily in the early-modern era of Christian Europe. This is the part of Walker's grand meditation that may, in the end, be hardest to swallow, for it seems to involve the utterance of certain unequivocal 'truths'

about the past that have their foundation in nothing more than certain traditional understandings of what it means to speak of modernity.[268] But even so, there is no consensus among the multiplicity of historical attempts there have been to characterize what it means to speak of the abstract category of modernity. At best, then, Walker seeks to continue a movement which itself seeks to read/write modernity in a specific way as that which is both liberating and alienating. However, how such a reading might translate into some more explicitly political undertaking — free of modernist political fictions — remains a mystery. At present, Walker offers only an implicit theory of resistance with no sense of the value or purpose of such resistance (save, perhaps, a tacit belief in the innate value of individual human life, something which, at any rate, would need to be sustained, if the logic of his analysis is to hold, without recourse to traditonal liberal theories of individualism and authenticity, or to the [roughly Christian] theory of the soul before that). No sense of alternative directions is offered. The pleasure, for the moment, seems to be in the mounting of resistance itself. But even at this, such a formulation appears to involve a kind of subject capable of some resistance.

Postscript

back in the belly

Let us (re)conclude now in a very non-robotic way with a final commentary on the string of 'mythologies' which have been run together in this work. In *homage* to the theme of inside and outside the above treatise has proffered its own parallel theme of 'the belly' — be it as womb, stomach, corpus, hollow or other. There has been, it would seem, a great deal of swallowing going on here, by whales, wolves, oceans, dragons, serpents, authors, readers and all. Moreover, the ambiguity of 'the belly' — as a both purgatory, and a womb of creativity and reflection — has been delightfully suited to our task. As for our most immediate shape-shifting subject of interrogation, Walker himself, we have perhaps too facetiously sought to identify him in this context as that universal 'hero' of 'global' mythology famously described by the late Joseph Campbell. We have portrayed this (anti)hero with a thousand faces as leaping, or falling, whatever the case may be, into the belly of the beast, perhaps with the hope that once 'inside' he will cut his way 'outside', thereby relieving us of both beast and burden in a single stroke (remember our tale of Little Red Riding Hood). But again, to reiterate an earlier passage, getting 'out' may prove to be much more difficult than getting 'in' was found to be. And one cannot help but wonder if, in this instance, Joseph Campbell may be right, for it is he who holds that rescue in such cases may only be sought from without.[269] Playfully accepting, then, Campbell's analogy and proposition, we are left in the end to wonder from whom, or from *where*, Walker might seek his, and subsequently 'our', deliverance?

- fin -

notes

[1]Contemporary accounts of the world as being somehow 'globalized' — or as 'globalizing' — are now common to the point of cliché. However, while 'globalization' is taken by so many — in scholarly, journalistic, and popular circles alike — to be a/the crucial characteristic of contemporary human affairs, the term 'globalization' is fuzzy to the extreme, the supposed nature of this phenomenon being conveyed in a multiplicity of ways and through numerous disciplines: sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, politics, international relations, history, geography, law, and so on. Presently, the point is not to attempt any definition of 'the global'; rather, 'the global' will be considered here as Rob Walker presents it, that is, as a problem, most specifically a political problem, and this in large part *because* of the attendant vagaries and uncertainties of both the term and the phenomenon. A contemporary sense of 'the global' can be draw from a ubiquitous number of contemporary sources: the world wide web; newspapers; advertisements; cultural products, and commodities of almost every kind. The sense of 'our' global condition is also drawn through, for example, concerns about global environmental crises; patterns of mass diasphoras and migrations; the proliferation of global military/security crises, or a tracing of the flows of 'global' capital and information. An interesting introduction to the many literatures in this context is, Zygmunt Bauman, *Globalization* (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), while some of the many and varied literatures which specifically address politics as a problem in relation to claims about 'globalization' include: David Held, *Democracy and the Global Order* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995; M. Horsman and A. Marshall, *After the Nation State* (Harper Collins, 1994); Saskia Sassen, *The Global City* (Princeton University Press, 1991) and *Cities in a World Economy* (Pine Forge Press, 1994); Paul L. Knox and Peter J. Taylor (eds.), *World Cities in a World-System* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); David Harvey, *Justice, Nature, and the Geography of Difference* (Blackwell, 1996); Justin Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society* (London and New York: Verso, 1994); Susan Strange, *The Retreat of the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); also Samuel P. Huntington, *The clash of civilizations and the remaking of world order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1997); Benjamin R. Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld* (New York: Times Books, 1995). These latter two texts, while their scholarly merits and editorial positions might be questionable, deserve mention mostly because of their popularity.

[2]The book is *Inside/Outside: international relations as political theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), hereafter referred to as I/O. The quote is from page 21.

[3]ibid., 159

[4]*Social Science Citation Index*, Jan 99 - Dec 99.

[5]See in particular, Richard Ashley and R. B. J. Walker, 'Speaking the language of exile: Dissidence in International Studies', Special Issue of International Studies Quarterly, 34:3, Sept. 1990); and Lene Hansen, 'R. B. J. Walker and International Relations: deconstructing a discipline', in Iver B. Neumann and Ole Wæver (eds.) *The Future of International Relations: masters in the making* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

[6]Martin Wight, 'Why is there no international theory', in Herbert Butterfield and M. Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations*, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1966).

[7]Steve Smith offers what is perhaps the best recent introduction to the discipline of International Relations in 'The Self-Images of a Discipline: A Genealogy of International Relations Theory,' in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), *International Relations Theory Today*, (University Park, Penn.: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995).

[8]See, Miles Kahler, 'Inventing International Relations: International Relations Theory After 1945', in Michael W. Doyle and John Ikenberry (eds.), *New Thinking in International Relations Theory*, (Boulder, Co.: Westview Press, 1997); also Smith, 'Self-Images'; and Yosif Lapid, 'The Third Debate: on the prospects of international theory in a post-positivist era', *International Studies Quarterly*, 1989, 33(3), 235-54.

[9]I/O, 159.

[10]Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life*, trans. Peter Preuss, (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett, 1980), 58. This particular essay was, of course, originally published as the second of Nietzsche's four *Untimely Meditations* (1874).

[11]I/O, ix.

[12]Particularly relevant is Walker's chapter on 'Ethics, Modernity, and Community', in *Inside/Outside*.

[13]I/O, 20.

[14] Kahler, 'Inventing International Relations', 40-1.

[15]I/O, 20.

[16]ibid., 21.

[17]Wight, 'Why is there no international theory'.

[18]K. J. Holsti, *The Dividing Discipline: Hegemony and Diversity in International Theory* (Boston: Allen & Unwin, 1985).

[19]Smith, 'Self Images'.

[20]The specific reference here is to Waltz's hugely influential, discipline defining, *Theory of International Politics*, (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979). Significant attempts to 'temper' the neorealist synthesis, offered here as examples, are: Alexander Wendt's historical investigations into the 'agent-structure' problem in Wendt, 'The Agent-Structure Problem in International Relations Theory', *International Organization* (1987), 41(3): 335-70; and Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics', *International Organization* (1992), 46 (2): 391-425. See also, John J. Mearsheimer, 'The false promise of international institutions', *International Security* (Summ. 1995), 20; 39-93.

[21]The last time Walker taught a course in *International Politics* — as opposed to, say, *Discourses of World Politics* or *The Global and the Political* — was in 1985. He received tenure in 1986 (Departmental Records, Dept. of Political Science, University of Victoria). For the record, his Ph.D. dissertation was on, 'Dualism, Space, and Political Theory' (Queens University: unpublished, 1977).

[22]See in particular, the sub-section on 'the post-positivist debate' in Smith, 'Self Images', 24-32.

[23]Wight, 'Why is there no international theory', 33.

[24]I/O, 34.

[25]Wight, 'Why is there no international theory?', 32.

[26]See especially, M. Foucault, 'The Discourse on Language', in *The Archaeology of Knowledge (and The Discourse on Language)*, trans. A. M. Sheridan, (London: Tavistock Publications, 1972).

[27]Lene Hansen, 'R. B. J. Walker and International Relations', 317.

[28]Arguably, Walker's best work on social movements and the political is, 'Social Movements/World Politics', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* (1994), 23(3): 237-46. Of course, this article was published after *Inside/Outside*, thus blurring any clean line one might wish to draw between an 'early' Walker and a 'late' Walker.

[29]I/O, x.

[30]ibid., 6, emphasis added.

[31]Rob Walker, *After the Globe/Before the World: Politics in the Wake of Sovereign Subjectivities*, in preparation.

[32]Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations*, trans. Paul Foss, Paul Patton and Philip Beitchman, (New York: Semiotext(e), 1983); Cornelius Castoriadis, 'The Imaginary Institution of Society', in John Fekete (ed.) *The Structural Allegory: reconstructive encounters with the new French thought*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, (London: Verso, 1983). See also Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1996) for a recent attempt to explore themes of imagination and community in the particular context of 'globalisation'.

[33]Richard Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining: From Husserl to Lyotard*, (London: Harper-Collins, 1991), esp. p. 101. See also, K. Kaplan, 'Gaston Bachelard's philosophy of imagination', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1972), 33, pp. 1-24; and Gaston Bachelard, *On Poetic Imagination and Reverie: selections from the works of Gaston Bachelard*, trans. with an introduction by Colette Gaudin, (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1971).

[34]The influence of Bachelard on Walker's thinking is evidenced first and foremost in Walker's choice of epigraph for *Inside/Outside* — a lengthy quote from Bachelard's *Poetics of Space* which Walker also reprises at the end of *Inside/Outside*, p. 180. However, managing to overlook this 'clue' offered by the sometimes reticent Walker, there is also an explicit reference, in *After the Globe,* where Bachelard is listed as one of 'five sources' which have 'decisively shaped' Walker's reading of the philosophical framing of debates about the 'era' or 'culture' of modernity and 'the specifically modern political imagination', 7, n.9. See page 79, below, for a complete listing of these 'five influences'.

[35]From M. Préclaire, *Une Poétique de l'homme* (Montréal: Bellarmin, 1971), p. 38, as quoted in Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining*, p.101.

[36]I/O, 77.

[37]See, for example, the introduction to Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. with an introduction by Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, (New York : Zone Books, 1988).

[38]Walker, 'International Relations and the Concept of the Political,' in Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), *International Relations Theory Today*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1995), 324.

[39]R. B. J. Walker, 'Sovereignty, Identity, Community: Reflections on the Horizons of Contemporary Political Practice', in R. B. J. Walker and S. H. Mendlovitz (eds.), *Contending Sovereignties: Redefining Political Community*, (Boulder, CO and London: Lynne Rienner, 1990), pp. 159-160, Walker's emphasis.

[40]See, for example, Michel Foucault, 'Two Lectures' (198O); 'The Subject and Power' (1982); 'Politics and Reason' (1988); and 'Governmentality' (1991).

[41]I/O, 18.

[42]While Walker's, *Inside/Outside*, has become the definitive guide to this argument, again, most of the credit for this observation belongs to Martin Wight for his essay, 'Why is there no International Theory?'.

[43]I/O, 160.

[44]I/O, 35.

[45]I/O, 37.

[46]ibid., 37.

[47]ibid., 160.

[48]ibid., 20

[49]See Walker's preface to I/O for the specific anecdote — or the 'old joke' as he calls it — about not being able to get 'there' from 'here'.

[50]I/O, 75.

[51]ibid., 77.

[52]The deliberate reference is once again to Gaston Bachelard and his distinction between authentic and inauthentic imagination. Bachelard posited a dynamic critical activity of imagination which he called *iconoclasm*. This function of imagination, he claimed, serves to demystify both the 'prestige of reality', but also the "fascinating" power of imagination itself. 'The dynamic imagination smashes all idols of stasis in favour of continual metamorphosis'. See, Kearney, *op cit.*. Kearney further argues that in making a distinction between 'authentic' and 'inauthentic' imagination, Bachelard thus avoids the 'Sartrean confusion concerning the role of imagination as both freedom and fascination', 101.

[53]I/O, 14.

[54]I/O, 157.

[55]Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control? Sovereignty in an Age of Globalization*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), 30.

[56]Particularly relevant here is Sassen's chapter 'On Economic Citizenship', in ibid., 31-58. See also, Anthony H. Richmond, *Global Apartheid: Refugees, Racism and the New World Order* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994). These ideas can also be gotten at through studies of 'urban' life, or what has come to be dubbed the study of the 'the global city'. See, for example, John Friedmann, 'Where we stand: a decade of world city research,' in Paul L. Knox and Peter J. Taylor (eds.), *World Cities in a World System*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 21-47; Warren Magnusson, *The Search for Political Space*, (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996); David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell, 1996); S. Sassen, op. cit. *The Global City*.

[57]See especially Giorgio Agamben's discussion of 'The Camp as the "*Nomos*" of the Modern,' in his *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). Z. Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989) is also relevant in this context.

[58]Nietzsche, *On the Advantage*, 55.

[59]This is a qualified reference to Marshall McLuhan, the suggestion being that the metaphor of 'city' is much more appropriate to the experiences of globalisation than is that of

'village'. The city as a metaphor is better suited to the stark, closely juxtaposed differences and disparities, as well as the violences of a globalising world. The village, as metaphor, is too small, too homogenous, and too pastoral. See, especially, the chapter on 'Social Movements and the Global City' in op. cit. Warren Magnusson, *The Search for Political Space*.

[60]I/O, 176.

[61]Examples of the literature here are, M. Horsman and A. Marshall, *After the Nation State*; Susan Strange, *The Retreat of the State*; Joseph Camilleri and Jim Falk, *The End of Sovereignty* (Edward Elgar, 1992); and Jean-Marie Guehenno, *The End of the Nation State*, (Minnesota, 1995).

[62]op. cit. Kearney, *Poetics of Imagining*.

[63]Walker, *After the Globe*, 37.

[64]I/O, 15.

[65]ibid., 16.

[66]ibid., 16.

[67]ibid., 16. Barry Hindess, in *Discourses of Power, from Hobbes to Foucault*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), tries to take this 'problem of community' even further, arguing that: 'It is not only the problem of sovereignty that *we* (another fictional community) need to free ourselves from, but also the problem of political community (itself). In effect, this means finding a way to think about politics in the absence of its defining constitutive fiction,' p. 158, emphasis in the original.

[68]Mark Franke, 'Global Limits: Immanuel Kant, International Relations, and the Critique of World Politics,' unpublished dissertation, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1997), 230-31.

[69]I/O, 169.

[70]ibid., 176.

[71]Walker, 'The Subject of Security', in Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams, (eds.), *Critical Security Studies: Concepts and Cases*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 78; 'IR and the Concept of the Political,' 316; and especially "*The Prince* and 'The Pauper'" in I/O.

[72]'The Subject of Security', 78.

[73]While these influences can be distilled from a closer reading of Walker's work, again he lists for us, in 'After the Globe', 7, n.9, the 'five decisive influences on his thinking'. To recall, they are: Ernst Cassirer, Gaston Bachelard, Michel Foucault's early texts (especially *The Order of Things*) and his 'subsequent resistance to the structuralist force of these text'; the massive literature on the history of science from Galileo to Newton, especially as this literature 'has sometimes struggled to escape the stranglehold of neo-Kantianism'; and the re-readings of various canonical philosophers developed by Gilles Deleuze

[74]I/O, 37.

[75]Here we are all but obliged to note, by way of an aside, that Walker's style is notoriously reticent if not deliberately elusive. This is so much the case that at times his work seems to work within its own specialised system of hermeneutics. Evidently Walker has attempted some poetic stylings of his own in this respect and with mixed results. Some may find the experience of reading Walker more frustrating than illuminating. However, in his defense, the problem of language is an inherent one in all attempts to articulate 'the new' in a language which is 'old'. Once again, according to Walker, one of the great strengths of Machiavelli as a theorist was his ability to articulate a new language, for talking about politics in modern world ('see "*The Prince* and 'The Pauper'" in I/O). For an acerbic commentary on *Inside/Outside* which takes issue with Walker's 'tortured prose', see Roy Jones, 'The Responsibility to Educate', *Review of International Studies* (1994), 20, 299-311.

[76]See, William E. Connolly, *Politics and Ambiguity*, (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987).

[77]See, Richard J. White, *Nietzsche and the Problem of Sovereignty*, (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1997); and Connolly, *Political Theory and Modernity*, (Oxford and New York, Basil Blackwell, 1988).

[78]I/O, 179.

[79]Arguably, the best elaboration of this position is to be found in Richard K. Ashley and R. B. J. Walker, 'Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies', *International Studies Quarterly* (1990) 34, 367-416.

[80]I/O, 160.

[81]I/O, 176.

[82]See, *Inside/Outside*, pp. 31-4. See also, M. Wight, *Systems of States*, Hedley Bull (ed.), (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977).

[83]Nietzsche, *On the Advantage*, 21.

[84]ibid., 22.

[85]ibid., 22.

[86]ibid., 22.

[87]ibid., 22.

[88]ibid., 22.

[89]ibid., 22.

[90]I/O, 163-4

[91]ibid., 165.

[92]Nietzsche, *On the Advantages*, 61.

[93]I/O, 166; and Walker, 'Sovereignty, Identity, Community', 159-160.

[94]I/O, 172.

[95]'After the Globe', 2.

[96]ibid., 1-2.

[97]See Carl Schmitt, *The Concept of the Political* (1932), translated with an introduction by George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

[98]Carl Schmitt, *Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998, originally published 1922), p. 7.

[99]Foucault, 'Truth and Power', in Paul Rainbow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1984), 63; Walker, I/O, 179, emphasis in the original.

[100]'After the Globe', 3.

[101]ibid., 3.

[102]I/O, 21, emphasis added.

[103]I/O, 163.

[104]*Inside/Outside*, ix-x.

[105]ibid., 7.

[106]Kearney, 101.

[107]Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, as quoted by Walker in the epigraph to *Inside/Outside*. Underlining added.

[108]I/O, 176.

[109]Although this is perhaps an odd aside, Walt Disney is an interesting example in this context given his historical ability to capture the 'modern' popular imagination in his creation of 'ideal' *Worlds* and *Lands*. See, Croce, Paul J. 'A Clean and Separate Space: Walt Disney in Person and Production,' *Journal of Popular Culture* 25: 91-103 (Winter 1991); Wilson, Alexander. 'Technological Utopias,' *South Atlantic Quarterly* 92:1, (Winter 1993); and King, Margaret. 'Disneyland and Walt Disney World: Traditional Values in Futuristic Form.' *Journal of Popular Culture* 15:1 (Summer 1981). Of note, as well, is the oft commented upon contribution by Disney to what Susan Sontag has

famously dubbed the 'fascist aesthetic'. See, Susan Sontag, *A Susan Sontag Reader*. (Toronto 1982).

[110]The seminal text on the history of sovereignty remains F. H. Hinsley's, *Sovereignty*, 2nd edn. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Walker notes that, in comparison with the amount of literature on the concepts of state and nation, there has been 'relatively little analytical attention' directed toward the principle of state sovereignty (I/O, 164). This fact, he believes, is itself a kind of evidence that the concept/ideal/principle of sovereignty has largely been taken for granted in modern political analysis as the silent guarantee of all other political categories. The situation, however, has begun to change dramatically of late and there is beginning to appear something of a glut of literature on the subject. Of these literatures, specifically historical accounts include Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, 'Sovereignty: Outline of a Conceptual History,' *Alternatives* 16 (1991), 425-446; and Jens Bartelson, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995). Earlier works of note are: Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab, (Massachusetts and London: MIT Press, 1985, original published 1922); Alan James, *Sovereign Statehood*, (London: Allen & Unwin, 1986) and W. J. Stankiewicz, (ed.) *In Defense of Sovereignty*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1969). More contemporary accounts of note are Thomas J. Biersteker and Cynthia Weber, *The Social Construction of State Sovereignty*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); Saskia Sassen, *Losing Control?* ; and Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988). Of course, the recent novelty surrounding the concept of sovereignty has not gone unnoticed by those of a more (neo)realist persuasion. In this context see, for example, Sohail H. Hashmi (ed.) *State Sovereignty: Change and Persistence in International Relations*, (University Park, Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 1997). Some mention should also be made, here, of the vast literature on the history of modern political thought in general. See, for example, Quentin Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, 2 volumes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978); J. G. A. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975); also H. Kantorowicz, *The Kings Two Bodies: A study in Medieval Political Theology* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1957); and Wight's, *Systems of States*.

[111]I/O, 176.

[112]ibid., 176.

[113]As noted, Walker lists Deleuze as one of his chief influences, and we have already touched on Bachelard. Deleuze's preference for geography over the typical privileging of history by philosophy is an important facet of his thinking. He links history, for example, to the sedentary and the functioning of the State, while geography he feels is more nomadic: 'History is always written form the sedentary point of view and in the name of a unitary State apparatus, at least a possible one, even when the topic is nomads. What is lacking is a Nomadology, the opposite of a history.' Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand*

Plateaus. Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Vol. 2, trans. Brian Massumi. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987) as quoted in Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion*, (New York and London: Routledge, 1995). The chapter in this text on 'Architecture from the Outside', is especially salient in the present context. See also, Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1987); and G. Bachelard, *Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas, (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969).

[114]I/O, 177.

[115]ibid., 177.

[116]ibid., 10.

[117]ibid., 10. See, for example, Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1991); Jean-François Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, translated by Geoff Bennington and Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1989, first published 1980).

[118]I/O, 11, parentheses added.

[119]ibid., 4.

[120]ibid., 4-5. See also, Grosz, 'Architecture from the Outside', *Space, Time, and Perversion*, (chpt 8, n.3).

[121]I/O, 13.

[122]ibid., 177.

[123]ibid., 37.

[124]ibid., 178.

[125]ibid., 178.

[126]ibid., 178.

[127]ibid., 162.

[128]ibid., 179, parentheses added).

[129]ibid., 179, emphasis in the original.

[130]ibid., 179.

[131]ibid., 167.

[132]This line is spoken by J. W. von Goethe's *Mephistopheles* in the early scene in Faust's study, as quoted in Nietzsche, *On the Advantage*, 22.

[133]Henri Lefebvre, 'Reflections on the Politics of Space', trans. Michael J. Enders, *Antipode,* 8 May 1976, 31, as quoted by Walker, *Inside/Outside*, 128. See also Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (1974) translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991).

[134]While Claude may have lost notoriety in recent years, Kenneth Waltz and his levels of analysis schema remain absolutely central to any self-identity the discipline of IR maintains. See, Inis Claude, Jr., *Power and International Relations* (New York: Random House, 1962); Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War* (New York: Columbia University Press 1954). For a sense of Waltz's prominence in the discipline see, Robert O. Keohane (ed.), *Neorealism and its Critics*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1986). See also N. G. Onuf's chapter on 'Levels' in his *Republican Legacy in International Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 193-219, where Onuf takes up the question of Waltz's levels of analysis schema and actually bothers to note the number of citations Waltz has received over the decades as compared to others in his field. Alternative takes on the present 'identity' of the discipline, again, include, Iver B. Neumann and Ole Wæver (eds.), op. cit. *The Future of International Relations: Masters in the Making*; and Ken Booth and Steve Smith (eds.), op. cit. *International Relations Today*.

[135]I/O, 128.

[136]ibid., 128.

[137]ibid., 128. The key text for consideration here is Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy* (1926), trans. Mario Domandi, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963). In his introduction to this text, Domandi claims that Cassirer sought to identify a common orientation for the thought of the Renaissance, an orientation which Cassirer eventually identifies as 'the attempt to give a new formulation of the universal and the particular, and of the relation between them.' The achievement of such a formulation, Cassirer argued, represented the first stage in what was to be the ultimate 'triumph' of modern scientific thought, viii.

[138]I/O, 128.

[139]ibid., 129.

[140]ibid., 131.

[141]Michel Foucault's chapter, 'Las Meninas', in his *The Order of Things*, (New York: Vintage, 1994), is particularly insightful and entertaining in this context with its analysis of single point perspective, sovereignty, and the 'classical' representation of classical space.

[142]I/O, 134.

[143]Even Jens Bartelson, who claims to be writing a strict *Genealogy of Sovereignty*, op. cit., begins with a deconstruction of what he takes to be the dichotomy between international relations theory and *macro-sociology* (as opposed to political theory). Only thereafter does he attempt to verify his analysis through genealogy.

[144]I/O, 131.

[145]ibid., 131.

[146]ibid., 132.

[147]ibid., 132.

[148]ibid., 133.

[149]ibid., 134.

[150]ibid., 134.

[151]ibid., 135.

[152]ibid., 136.

[153]ibid., 138.

[154]ibid., 138.

[155]ibid., 17, parentheses added.

[156]'After the Globe', 7.

[157]ibid., 17.

[158]ibid., 18.

[159]Wight, 'Why is there no international theory?', 28.

[160]I/O, 162.

[161]ibid., 18.

[162]ibid., 175.

[163]ibid., 17.

[164]ibid., 32.

[165]'After the Globe', 7.

[166]I/O, 6, parentheses added.

[167]See anything from Konstantin Stanislavski's classic, *An Actor Prepares*, trans. Elizabeth Reynolds Hapgood, (New York, Theatre Arts Books, 1948), to David Bohm and F. David Peat, *Science, Order, and Creativity*, (Bantam, 1987); to books on improvisation such as Keith Johnstone, *Impro*, (New York, Theatre Arts Books, 1979). Johnstone was a promising young playwright at London's Royal Court Theatre in the 1950s who suddenly developed a disastrous case of writer's block. He spent much of his later career specifically exploring the production of imagination. For a general historical survey of creative imagination see, James Engell, *The Creative Imagination: Enlightenment to Romanticism*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981).

[168]See, for example, Shunryu Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*, Trudy Dixon (ed.), (New York & Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1970); D. T. Suzuki, *Zen Buddhism: Selected Writings of D. T. Suzuki*, William Barrett (ed.), originally published 1956, (New York: Image Books, Doubleday, 1996); and Eugen Herrigel, *Zen and the Art of Archery*, originally published 1953, (New York: Vintage, 1973).

[169]Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology : an introduction to phenomenological philosophy*, trans. with an introduction by David Carr, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970) is probably the key text in this context. Eugene H. Falk, *The poetics of Roman Ingarden*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), includes a useful discussion of Husserl in the context of poetry and aesthetics. For introductions to Sartre's writing in this context see, for example, David Detmer, *Freedom as a Value: a critique of the ethical theory of Jean-Paul Sartre*, (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1988), and Thomas W. Busch, *The Power of Consciousness and the Force of Circumstances in Sartre's philosophy*, (Bloomington : Indiana University Press, 1990).

[170]Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life.*

[171]By the word *unhistorical*, Nietzsche denotes 'the art and the strength of being able to *forget* and enclose oneself in a limited *horizon*.' *On the Advantage,* 62, emphasis in original.

[172]I/O, 175.

[173]ibid., x.

[174]ibid., 21.

[175]ibid., 160.

[176]The phrase 'perverted reworkings' is here offered in veneration of Gilles Deleuze, a man who once described his interpretive style as a kind of 'buggery or, what comes to the same thing, immaculate conception', wherein he imagines himself getting onto the back of an author and 'giving him a child, which would be his and which would at the same time be a monster.' See, Deleuze, *Bergsonism*. The quotation is from the introduction, p. ii.

[177]Nietzsche, *On the Advantage*, 60.

[178]ibid., 24.

[179]See Richard Ashley' discussion of the 'the sovereignty of rational man', in his 'Living on Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War' in James DerDerian and Michael Shapiro (eds.), *International/Intertextual Relations: Postmodern Readings of World Politics*, (Lexington, Mass.: Lexington Books, 1989).
[180]I/O, 18.

[181]While it is understood that Weber uses this expression to describe the specific character of modernity, the suggestion here is, obviously, that such a condition may be more timeless than that.

[182]Mark Franke, 'Global Limits: Immanuel Kant, International Relations, and the Critique of World Politics', 230-31.

[183]I/O, 178.

[184]ibid., 175.

[185]Walker appears to be very specific about the historical and geographical subjectivity of the political imagination he has in mind. Moreover, there is the tacit understanding that this specific form of the imagination has been 'exported' or 'imposed' upon the rest of the globe. This is problematic because it fails to take into account modifications to the political imagination that result from its encounter with other worlds and other political systems, i.e. it is possible to argue that the system is already more truly global than Western in its composition: American constitution influenced by indigenous political forms; impact of the New World discoveries on the thinking of Grotius, Hobbes, Pufendorf, et al. Walker's account is strangely Eurocentric, his apologies for this notwithstanding. The only place he addresses this problem or geographical origins directly is in his *World Politics and Western Reason: Universalism, Pluralism, Hegemony* (World Order Models Project: Working Paper No. 19, 1982).

[186]I/O, 72.

[187]ibid., 186.

[188]'After the Globe', 7, n. 9.

[189]Again, Hinsley's *Sovereignty* remains the seminal English language guide to the conceptual history of sovereignty. N. G. Onuf's, *The Republican Legacy in International Thought,* and Jens Bartelson's, *A Genealogy of Sovereignty*, are two recent attempts to cover similar ground. While each of these text does attempt to define a specifically modern concept of sovereignty, each also recognises inherent problems in attempting to do so. Finally, each text differs in its conclusions.

[190]I/O, 159.

[191]Schmitt, *Concept of the Political.*

[192]I/O, 15, note deleted.

[193]'After the Globe', 1. Again, in order to have a broader understanding of this problematic, it is helpful to frame it against the background of Walker's extensive work on social movements and world politics. It is here that Walker first begins to puzzle about the curious ineffectiveness of those various contemporary social movements that have at one time or other aspired to be 'global'. His general conclusion is that such movements are usually ineffective because they are either nearly always subsumed by statist politics or they are simple disregarded as being somehow only 'social' and therefore strangely 'apolitical'. See, 'Social Movements/World Politics'; *Towards a Just World Peace*; *One World/Many Worlds.*

[194]Of course, the easy response here is that the popular-sovereignty movement fostered by the philosophes, especially Rousseau, really amounted to more of the same. It remains sovereigntist in the now famous sense articulated by Michel Foucault in his assertion that for all of the radical democratic revolutions of the past two centuries, we have nonetheless failed to 'cut off the head of the king'. Foucault, 'Truth and Power', 63.

[195]I/O, 158, parentheses added.

[196]Michel Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, Colin Gordon (ed.), (Brighton: Harvester, 1980), p. 121.

[197]Foucault, 'What is Enlightenment?'; Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'," in Kant, *Political Writings*, 2nd edition, Hans Reiss, trans. H. B. Nisbet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp. 221-234.

[198]I/O, 17.

[199]ibid., 156.

[200]The best sustained articulation of this claim is Walker's, 'Violence, modernity, silence: from Max Weber to international relations', in David Campbell and Michael Dillon (eds.), *The Political Subject of Violence*, (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993).

[201]I/O, 16. Compare this position with that professed by Nicholas Greenwood Onuf, for example. Contra Walker's scepticism, Onuf argues that the United Nations Charter, especially Chapter I, may reasonably be viewed as the *de facto*, though 'rudimentary' material constitution of an extant international society; *The Republican Legacy in International Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 183-90. Still it must be noted that inclusion within this international society can only occur through the mediation of states who remain, with few exceptions, the sole agents within this so-called 'society'. Moreover, Onuf writes of 'membership' within this society as though it were possible, quite normative in fact, to be excluded from 'global community'. But where would one be excluded to? Some other globe? Furthermore, he writes that, 'In effect, membership in the United Nations confers and sustains membership in international society' (188), and thereby presumes the two to be, for all intents and purposes, one and the same thing. The hubris associated with such thinking is striking, if not ominous. The inside/outside conception of the political is certainly all too obvious in this case. While many may find this model useful, even appealing, there are many others who would question the claim that a giant statist federation/legal regime, constructed and staffed by urban elites, with limited representation and very thin democratic makeup and which is so obviously hegemonic, qualifies as a truly *global* political order. While granted the legalistic, institutional regime (some might say 'club') associated with the United Nations is undoubtedly a society of a kind, it can hardly be said to be a society coextensive with 'the world' as such. Onuf, however, *contra* Walker, seems little perturbed by this, casually noting that Republicans have always taken a sharply stratified world as inevitable', (Onuf, 276).

But even so, as Walker writes, 'few believe we have moved from a world of statist communities to a global community. The early-modern European account of political life as the establishment of relatively autonomous political communities coexisting in territorial space has yet to be superseded by a coherent account of a common planetary identity or a cosmopolitan human community' (*I/O*, 85). While some, such as Onuf, have attempted empirical descriptions of the legal, economic, political and/or institutional outlines of a *de facto* world community, such attempts are better recognised, Walker suggests, as gestures toward an ideal, 'evocations of the unknown' rather than 'precise scholarly analysis' (*I/O*, 163). Onuf's own attempt, for example, to demonstrate the actual existence of a *de facto* global constitutional society, through a description of its institutional structure, is awkward and imprecise. His unwieldy cataloging of layer upon layer of institution and regime &c. is

nebulous. In this respect there can be no surprise that he does not include — in the spirit of, say, a Talcott Parsons — a diagram or a flowchart with his sketch of the institutions of international society. Any such accompanying diagram (were it manageable) would likely make Tycho Brahe's geocentric model of the solar system look simple and elegant. To be fair, the 'system' Onuf is attempting to describe (if it exists) is surely exceedingly complex. In fact, one might think it dangerous or undesirable to over-simplify the complexity of it, let alone reduce the thing to the abuses of cold geometry. Nonetheless, one wonders to what extent scholars like Onuf are simply writing a particular ideal of constitutional world order into 'existence'. Undoubtedly, they are doing so to a significant degree. And so be it. It may well be that 'somebody' must take charge of definition, as Hobbes insists. However, one may counter this assertion by declaring that it is better if 'many' (the more the better) take charge of definition, and without the need for one definition to supersede all the rest, in which case we have something quite different than the ideal of 'sovereign' definition. Whatever the case, such ostensibly 'empirical' work as one such as Onuf professes to be doing must at least be judged, as Walker has it, in terms of its prior ontological commitments (see, *I/O*, 81-103).

[202]See in particular, Michael J. Shapiro, 'Textualizing Global Politics,' in op. cit., James DerDerian and Michael J. Shapiro (eds.), *International/Intertexual Relations*, 11-22; Ashley and Walker, 'Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies,' *International Studies Quarterly* (1990) 34, 367-416; James DerDerian, *Antidiplomacy: Spies, Terror, Speed, and War*, (Cambridge MA.: Blackwell, 1992); and Michael J. Shapiro and Hayward R. Alker (eds.), *Challenging Boundaries*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[203]As the previous note already suggests, Michael Shapiro, James DerDerian, Richard Ashley, and Hayward Alker appear to be those — specifically IR — theorists who are most guilty by association. Walker, of course, cohorts with many writers who are not IR theorists as such.

[204]I/O, 179.

[205]The standard introduction to neorealism (and perhaps the defining moment) is Robert O. Keohane, *Neorealism and its Critics*, (New York; Columbia UP, 1986).

[206]In fact, as Walker and Richard Ashley convincingly argue, international relations theory depends precisely on a tacit account of domestic subjectivities: Walker, *Inside/Outside* and Ashley, 'Living on Border Lines'.

[207]I/O, 159.

[208]op. cit. Neumann and Wæver, *The Future of International Relations: Masters in the Making*.

[209]op. cit. Ashley and Walker, 'Speaking the Language of Exile'.

[210]op. cit. Holsti, *The Dividing Discipline*; Smith; 'Self-Images of a Discipline'.

[211]I/O, 181-2.

[212]Walker's chapter on 'Realism and Change' in *Inside/Outside* perhaps best explains the distinction he posits between a *realism* — the 'constitutive problem' of which is that of 'change, time and becoming' (p. 110), versus a *neorealism* which clings 'most tightly to the promised certainties of atemporal structuralisms and positivist method' (p. 105).

[213]Walker, 'Violence, modernity, silence', 156.

[214]I/O,

[215]op. cit. Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neorealism'.

[216]'After the Globe', 16.

[217]I/O, 25. See also Kenneth Waltz, *Man, the State, and War*, (New York, Columbia University Press, 1959).

[218]One of the interesting things about Kahler's, 'Inventing International Relations', op. cit., is its suggestion that this 'consumerist' model is a reasonably accurate way to portray the *profession* of IR.

[219]I/O, 183.

[220]Walker, 'International Relations and the Concept of the Political,' in op cit. Ken Booth and Steve Smith, *International Relations Theory Today*, 323.

[221]ibid., 77.

[222]I/O, 157.

[223]ibid., 161.

[224]ibid., 157.

[225]ibid., 19.

[226]ibid., 19. The theorists Walker notes by name in this context are: Andrew Linklater, Robert Cox, Mark Hoffman, and John Mclean. Honourable mention should also be given here to Richard Falk — a fellow of Walker's in W.O.M.P. and on the Committee for a Just World Peace (CJWP) — and to Saul Mendlovitz, former executive secretary and a fellow member, with Walker, on the CJWP. On the latter in particular see, Walker and Saul Mendlovitz (eds.), *Towards a Just World Peace: Perspectives from Social Movements*, (New York: Butterworths, 1987).

[227]ibid., 19. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, trans. Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987; Hans Blumenberg, *The Legitimacy of the Modern Age*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1983); Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1989).

[228]I/O, 19.

[229]ibid., 161.

[230]Walker: 'Weber, modernity, silence'; and 'Subject of Security', in Keith Krause and Michael C. Williams (eds.), *Critical Security Studies*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997).

[231]I/O, 182.

[232]Such 'theories' must be said to date back at least as far as Aristotle's arguments for natural slavery and would therefore also include, for example, the enlisting of said arguments for the 'legal' subjugation of the Amerindians by the Spanish empire. For an introduction into a vast amount of literature see Lewis Hanke, *The First Social Experiments in America*. (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1964), and Hanke, *Aristotle and the American Indians,* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1959). See also, Thomas R. Berger, *A Long and Terrible Shadow: white values, native rights in the Americas*, 1492-1992 (Vancouver: Douglas & McIntyre, 1991).

Other notable theories of development for consideration are those which, generally speaking, stem from Locke's labour theory of value and all such associated 'stadial' theories of development. See, especially, James Tully, 'The Empire of Uniformity', in *Strange Multiplicity*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Ronald Meek, Social Science and the Ignoble Savage, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Anthony Pagden, *Lords of all the World: ideologies of empire in Britain, France and Spain 1400-1800*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); and Michael T. Ryan,

'Assimilating New Worlds in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* (1981), 23, 519-538.

Contemporaneously one must also consider for criticism theories and programs of economic development generally undertaken under the auspicious institutional direction of the World Bank and the IMF — the tragicomedy of wolves guarding sheep. See, for example, Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy*, (London ; New York : Verso, 1991); op. cit. Justine Rosenberg, *The Empire of Civil Society*; and Michel Chossudovsky, *The Globalization of Poverty : impacts of IMF and World Bank reforms*, (Australia: Pluto Press; Halifax, N.S.: Fernwood; London: Zed Books, 1999).

[233]Barry Hindess, *Discourses of Power.*

[234]ibid., 157.

[235]I/O, 183.

[236]I/O, 160.

[237]I/O, 6.

[238]ibid., 22.

[239]I/O, 17.

[240]It must be noted that Richard Ashley produces a similar argument in his 'Geopolitics of Geopolitical Space: Toward a Critical Social Theory of International Politics,' *Alternatives*, Vol. 12 (1987).

[241]This tendency is perhaps most acute in Walker's chapter on 'Sovereignty and the Politics of Forgetting,' in *Inside/Outside*, pp. 159-183.

[242]Such blatantly misogynist language is, of course, Machiavelli's own. See, in particular,, '*The Prince* and the Pauper, in *Inside/Outside*; and 'The Subject of Security', esp. p. 78.

[243]*Inside/Outside*, 6.

[244]See, Andre Gunder Frank and Barry K. Gills (eds.), *The World System: five hundred years or five thousand?* (New York: Routledge, 1996); and Frank, *ReOrient: global economy in the Asian age*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).

[245]I/O, 163.

[246]ibid., 4, parentheses added.

[247]ibid., 62.

[248]ibid., 168.

[249]Nietzsche, *On the Advantage*, 57.

[250]ibid., 57.

[251]ibid., 57.

[252]Walker, 'International Relations and the Concept of the Political', 322.

[253]Little Red Riding Hood, referred to in Nietzsche, *On the Advantage*, 24.

[254]Walker, 'The Concept of the Political', 321.

[255]ibid., 323.

[256]ibid., 323.

[257]E. A. Burtt, *Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Science*, (Garden City, New York: Double Day, 1955, original published 1924), see especially Burtt's discussion of 'Hobbes' Attack on the Cartesian Dualism', pp. 126-129.

[258]Walker, 'The Concept of the Political', 324.

[259]Walker, 'The Concept of the Political', 321.

[260]ibid., 322.

[261]Nietzsche, *On the Advantage*, 55.

[262]Walker, 'The Concept of the Political', 322.

[263]I/O, 21.

[264]ibid., 323.

[265]ibid., 323.

[266]I/O, 158.

[267]The seminal guide in this context is probably Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (London and New York: Harcourt Brace, 1973, original published 1948).

[268]This is how Foucault justifies his (different) periodizations in *The Order of Things*.

[269]While Campbell is a prolific scholar, the key text for consideration here is his famous *Hero with a Thousand Faces*, (2nd ed., original 1949), (Princeton: Princeton University Press, Bollingen, 1973); see especially his chapter on, 'The Belly of the Whale,' (Part I, Chpt. I, section 5), pp. 90-96; and 'Rescue from Without,' (Part I, Chpt. III, section 3), pp. 207-16.

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VITA

Surname: Matthews Given names: Ian, Douglas

Place of Birth: Calgary, Alberta, Canada

Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria	1993 to 2000
University of Calgary	1986 to 1989

Degrees Awarded:

B.A. University of Victoria	1996

Honours and Awards:

Department of Political Science Assistantship, University of Victoria	1997 to 1998
Contemporary Social and Political Thought Assistantship, University of Victoria	1996 to 1997
Alexander Rutherford Award, Alberta	1986

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Author: [redacted]

Ian Douglas Matthews
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