

of Nations are founded directly upon the nature of things, and particularly upon the nature of man and of political society, while the voluntary Law of Nations supposes a further principle, namely, the nature of the great society of Nations and of the intercourse which they have with one another. The necessary law prescribes what is of absolute necessity for Nations and what tends naturally to their advancement and their common happiness; the voluntary law tolerates what it is impossible to forbid without causing greater evils.

7

The Enlightenment

International politics in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries is usually seen as the high water mark of the “traditional” view of the European states-system. It is in this period, as seen in the previous chapter, that the notion of the “balance of power,” so central to realist thinking, first emerges, self-consciously at least, and it is the writings of scholars such as Vattel (whose *The Law of Nations* was first published in 1758) that establish or cement the meanings of some of the central terms of modern international thought (such as sovereignty).

However, it is also in this period that some of the major challenges to conventional understanding of the states-system also emerged. Most specifically, in the thinking of some of the writers associated with what is usually called the “European Enlightenment,” some of the basic assumptions underlying the emerging states-system were challenged, a challenge which has lasted until our own day and is still continuing.

What is the “Enlightenment”?

At its simplest, the “Enlightenment” is a phrase that represents the collective, overlapping (and not always congruent) views of a group of scholars, writers, activists, and campaigners in eighteenth-century Europe. Especially prominent in France, it had representatives in almost every major European country and, as the eighteenth century went on, it became increasingly important both intellectually and politically. Figures especially associated with it include David Hume and Immanuel Kant, Montesquieu and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Edward Gibbon and Adam Smith, Voltaire and Denis Diderot. The legacy of these thinkers was to have an increasing power in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Just as they effectively created many of the contemporary social sciences – for example, political economy, sociology,

even anthropology – their legacy is a central site of contestation in many contemporary sciences, including Political Science and International Human Relations.

Perhaps the most important aspect of that legacy – and one of the central sites of contest today – was best expressed by Kant in a famous essay, *An Answer to the Question "What is Enlightenment?"*, first published in 1784. "Enlightenment," Kant wrote, "is man's emergence from his self-incurred immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one's own understanding without the guidance of another ... for Enlightenment ... all that is needed is freedom ... freedom to make public use of one's reason in all matters ... if it is asked whether we at present live in an enlightened age the answer is no, but we do live in an age of *Enlightenment*" (Reiss, 1970: 54–5, 58). This conception of Enlightenment echoes down the eighteenth century and is as central for Enlightenment conceptions of international relations as it is for other aspects of their concerns, as we shall see. Emphasizing emergence from "self-incurred immaturity" and the freedom to develop the "public use of reason" inevitably sets the Enlightenment on a collision course with tradition, with established ways of doing things in many different areas of life, though the extent and character of that collision differed from thinker to thinker.

This chapter, therefore, will seek to outline the thinking of some of the major figures of this movement, and specifically it will discuss the ideas of Montesquieu, Hume, Smith, Rousseau, and Kant, the most important luminaries of the eighteenth-century Enlightenment to discuss international relations. However, also included will be an extract from the first expression of an idea – the idea of perpetual peace – that exerted considerable influence on the way in which many Enlightenment thinkers saw international politics, especially Rousseau and Kant. This is the original "project on perpetual peace in Europe" penned by the Abbé de Saint-Pierre (pp. 394–8 below). At first, however, a general discussion of the Enlightenment's central political ideas is offered.

Enlightenment political thought: Montesquieu and his legacy

"The philosophy of Enlightenment," writes Peter Gay, in perhaps the most exhaustive contemporary survey of Enlightenment thought, "insisted on man's essential autonomy: man is responsible to himself, to his own rational interests, to his self-development and *by an inescapable extension*, to the welfare of his fellow man" (Gay, 1970; editor's italics).

Gay is here referring explicitly to the alleged "universalism" of Enlightenment political theory, but the one thing that immediately strikes one about this assertion is simply the fact that the political writings of *philosophes* are remarkable not for their unity but for their apparent diversity: Voltaire (1694–1778) is a relativist and a believer in enlightened autocracy; Rousseau (1712–78) a democratic radical; Beccaria a legal (though humane) absolutist; Hume (1711–76), a Whig constitutionalist. Can we make a unity out of such diverse material? Or is the proclaimed unity a false creature created, as Roy Porter has suggested, by "mingled academic imperialism and tidymindedness"? (Porter and Teich, 1981.)

Diversity was indeed a hallmark of the Enlightenment. However, it also had a unity in aim, though a diversity in method, and in its political aspect this unity in aim follows directly from generally accepted values of the Enlightenment: liberty, tolerance, progress, criticism. Almost all *philosophes* would have agreed that these were the cardinal values. Within this broad agreement on the general aspects of what politics should aim toward, there was, however, one crucial and far-reaching difference both in method and solution which divided the Enlightenment, best seen perhaps as a division between a "mainstream" of Enlightenment political thought – rational, critical, naturalistic, and modelled on the growing power and influence of natural science – and a powerful, though muted, undercurrent, which is far more skeptical about the "scientific" ambitions of the mainstream.

In most respects in this field (as in so many others) the true originator is Charles, Baron de Montesquieu, and especially his *The Spirit of the Laws* (1748), perhaps the master text of the mainstream Enlightenment. "I have not drawn my principles from my prejudices," writes Montesquieu, announcing his project in the preface, "but from the nature of things." As many have pointed out, Montesquieu was by some way the most influential writer of the eighteenth century, for the Enlightenment itself and even outside it (Cassirer, 1951; Hampson, 1968; Gay, 1970). Across Europe, from Scotland to France and Italy – and indeed beyond Europe, in North America – *The Spirit of the Laws* was hugely successful. Beccaria, the great Italian legal theorist, called its author the "immortal Montesquieu"; Alexander Hamilton, a signatory of the US declaration of independence, referred to him as "that great man"; Montesquieu's chief Anglo-Saxon colleague, David Hume, corresponded with him, seeking to translate *The Spirit of the Laws*; and even Catherine the Great, the empress of Russia – not a woman noted for her commitment to the cause of Enlightenment – found it at least politic to claim that she was his devoted follower.

Montesquieu's great treatise is, of course, extraordinarily wide and frustratingly resistant to easy summary. Essentially it seeks to ally reason, humanity, and liberality, putting them together as a form of social relativism uneasily

combined with a radical individualism, which together lead to the conclusion that there is no specific universal solution to everything, rather there are only types of solution. Most important for our concerns, the mainstream Enlightenment's basic approach to international relations is characteristically summed up by a passage from *The Spirit of the Laws*: "The right of nations is by nature founded on the principle that the various nations should do to one another in times of peace the most good possible and in times of war the least ill possible, without harming their true interests" (*The Spirit of the Laws*, 1, 3) (see p. 400 below).

This leads (in practical terms) to some of Montesquieu's most influential ideas about the way individuals should respond to one another and, indeed, how collectivities should conduct their relations – his criticism of slavery, his treatment of war as necessary but distasteful, his hostility to torture and the death penalty, his critique of existing European manners and morals (most effectively displayed in his *Persian Letters* [1721]), and especially his general relativism and contextualism, which emphasises a tolerant, flexible view of cultures and manners different from one's own (a point made much of in recent thought by Tzvetan Todorov [1999]).

Not all of these issues are central to International Relations, of course, even broadly conceived, but they set the tone for how the mainstream Enlightenment tends to see the international realm.

Hume and Smith

Two writers in particular elaborated this side of Enlightenment thinking about international politics, aside from Montesquieu himself: Hume and his friend and fellow Scot Adam Smith. Excerpts from both are included below (see pp. 407–15), and examined in turn.

Hume's political writings are divided into three main kinds. In the first place are the political sections of his major philosophical works, the *Treatise on Human Nature* (1740) and the *Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals* (1751), usually called the "second" *Enquiry*, to distinguish it from the "first" *Enquiry* (the *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding* of 1748). The latter two works were, in fact, heavily revised and rewritten versions of the first, which Hume believed had fallen (as he put it) "dead born from the press," and therefore needed recasting. There is a huge scholarly literature about the similarities and differences between the two works but in large part the political aspects of Hume's thought remain relatively constant in them both, though neither deals directly with questions of international politics. The second type of writing is the essays Hume published on political topics, specifically those

he published in 1752 as the *Political Discourses*. It is worth pointing out that these were Hume's most successful publications up to that point and were widely read among the literate public across Europe; they contained a number of essays on international politics, most famously those on the balance of power and on the balance of trade (see pp. 407–9 below). The third type of writing relevant for Hume's political thought is his mammoth *History of England*, begun the same year, 1752, though not finished until the 1760s, which contains many political asides and astute political judgements. It is also worth pointing out that Hume had practical experience of politics and diplomacy, having served in the 1760s as secretary to the British Ambassador to Paris and later as Under Secretary of State himself.

Hume follows Montesquieu's lead in being empirical and skeptical in his political thinking. His writings about international relations show a recognition of the realities of the European scene of his own day coupled with a sense (more powerfully developed by Smith) of the growing importance for European politics of economic questions such as trade and a sense also of how this might (though certainly also might not) change the characteristic way that international politics was conducted. He certainly sees Europe as bound by many indissoluble bonds, and in that sense is a thinker closer to the "international society" tradition than he is to realism as conventionally understood, yet his commitment to Enlightenment norms goes deep and he is always on the look-out for the possibilities of advance in "civilized politics," both within and outside the European international society.

Adam Smith, of course, is famous today as the author of *The Wealth of Nations* (1776). He was also unusual amongst Enlightenment thinkers in being, at one time, an academic (he held the chair of Moral Philosophy at Glasgow University). His masterpiece is, indeed, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, but much of what he says in it is prefigured in his essays and lectures of the previous twenty years and in his *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* of 1759. Well versed in the various traditions of political economy which had emerged in the eighteenth century, especially mercantilism – the theory that economics should be based on national interests – which he detested, and the French school called the "physiocrats," on whose ideas he partly drew, Smith's arguments extended the sort of reasoning about international politics we have seen displayed in Montesquieu and Hume to the increasingly important realm of the political economy. The humanity, empiricism, skepticism, and rationality which are the hallmarks of all mainstream Enlightenment political thought culminates for Smith in his vision of an economy which benefits from the freedom of trade – his famous "invisible hand" – but which also requires carefully calibrated statecraft to mitigate the free play of self-interest both within states and between them. The final sections of the book, excerpted here (pp. 410–15 below), demonstrate these qualities especially well.

The counter current: Jean-Jacques Rousseau

To say that there is a "mainstream" to Enlightenment thought is obviously to indicate that there is also a counter current, an opposition to the mainstream. This was, of course, Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78). Rousseau was, perhaps along with Diderot, the most multi-faceted writer of the Enlightenment: composer, playwright, novelist (*La Nouvelle Héloïse*, 1761; *Emile*, 1762), and social thinker (*The Social Contract*, 1762). Yet he was the outcast of the philosophic family. His views were in many ways opposed to theirs, and his temperament and ever-increasing paranoia drove a firm wedge between him and all who were – at one time or another – his friends, for example, Diderot, Voltaire, and Hume, who all ended up estranged from him.

The main difference between Rousseau's political thought and the mainstream Enlightenment is predicated – as might be expected – on his view of humanity and its possibilities. In an essay which won first prize in the celebrated competition organized by the Dijon Academy, the "Discourse on the Arts and Sciences" (usually known as the first discourse), he proclaims the importance of the "science of man" in characteristically rhetorical (but firmly Enlightenment) terms. However, the conclusions Rousseau arrives at about the state of existing society – and the reasons for it – go far beyond anything his fellow *philosophes* had suggested. At the heart of these conclusions is his view that man was – by nature – pre-moral (neither bad nor good, but innocent), and that he was not civilized, but fatally corrupted by existing cultures and society. Rousseau's intense exhortations to virtue as a counter to this corruption only point it up the more, and his insistence many years later that "our spirits have been corrupted to the degree that our arts and sciences have advanced towards perfection" showed that however much he might have cause to qualify that early work, the idea central to it was still in the same place at the end of his career that it was at its beginning. His later works, in particular the three great works of the late 1750s and early 1760s, *La Nouvelle Héloïse*, *The Social Contract*, and *Emile*, all pose this problem again, in their different ways, and offer partial solutions to it.

However, Rousseau was not a simple opponent of civilization as such. He was, after all, very insistent that mere destruction of institutions would only serve to kill possible avenues of remedy, while leaving the vice and corruption extant. The view of man on which this was based was, therefore, not a simple case of primitivism, for all that Rousseau has often been pilloried as having recourse to the idea of the "noble savage." Rousseau's account of man, culled from *The Social Contract* and *Emile*, is an imaginative reconstruction of man's "nature, duties, and end." It is not an "historical" recreation of man's nature, for it is partly through the process of history itself that man's

nature has become corrupted, but it uses that history to provide insight and illumination. In a powerful image, Rousseau describes just what an onslaught man's true nature faces: "Man's nature [he wrote in *Emile*] is like a young tree which has, by mischance, been born in the middle of a large highway ... how important it is to separate the new tree from the great highway, to protect it from the crushing force of social conventions."

In *Emile*, Rousseau seeks to isolate the "young tree," to "build a wall around the root." *The Social Contract* is the second half of that solution: to erect a society which can then allow the wall to be dismantled. Both halves of this solution are, Rousseau believes, necessary because of the interdependence he perceives between corrupt man and corrupt society. An uncorrupted man in present society would soon – and inevitably – become corrupt; equally, corrupt men would soon destroy a society based on the principles of *The Social Contract*. Thus, both moral men and a moral society are necessary and this means, of course, that both are, in their present state, corrupt. This is the centerpiece of the real point at issue between Rousseau and the mainstream Enlightenment. Those of the *philosophes* who reflected on it certainly believed that there were serious things wrong with their society. Yet there is a crucial difference between these critical attitudes and Rousseau's. For him, when man passes from the state of nature to civil society, Rousseau argues, justice is substituted for instinct and thus morality enters man's nature. It is this prospect which brings forth man's greatest opportunity but also (and at the same time) his greatest danger. It is this danger that Rousseau's account in *Emile* and *The Social Contract* are designed to counter. In *Emile* the Stoic tag "live according to nature" is wedded to human educational development, and in *The Social Contract* it is used to help set up a state that will permit the truly "educated" man to live a moral life. This transition is the centerpiece of Rousseau's moral theory and the arena of his greatest clash with the other *philosophes*. His political theory, somewhat relativistic like theirs as far as forms of government were concerned, was in one vital respect different. For Rousseau, the citizen must be "ruler and ruled," "law giver and subject" and the means of achieving this was, in perhaps Rousseau's most famous phrase, submission to the "general will." The "general will" has its source in Rousseau's view of alienation. For alienation to be avoided, the social structure must be such that all individuals rule themselves at the same time as they rule others for "the natural man exists entirely for himself. He is the numerical, the whole, he enters into relations only with himself or with men like him." The citizen is only the numerator of "a fraction whose value depends on the denominator, his value depends the whole," as he puts it in *The Social Contract*. The conversion of "natural men" into (non-corrupt) "citizens" is what the "general will" is designed to accomplish.

How then, does this analysis map onto the questions we are concerned with in this book? Rousseau's thinking about international politics flows naturally and directly from his political thought more generally. Indeed, he had sketched out in Venice in 1743 an outline for a complete and comprehensive treatment of all forms of politics, domestic and international, to be called the *Institutions Politiques*. Even though this was never written, his political works are all of a piece. Just as he believed that human societies in general were corrupt for the reasons just outlined, the corruption was naturally much greater when you look at the society of such societies, that is, *international* society. His account of the origin of this society (given predominantly in his 1755/6 essay, *The State of War* [see pp. 416–25 below] parallels his account in the better-known works of the late 1750s and early 1760s, though it is perhaps (if possible) darker still. In a famous phrase, he bemoans "unfortunate nations groaning under yokes of Iron, the human race crushed by a handful of oppressors, a starving crowd overwhelmed with pain and hunger, whose blood and tears the rich drink in peace and everywhere the strong armed against the weak with the formidable power of the law" (*The State of War*).

How optimistic was he that such a situation could be overcome? The general answer (see, for example, Hoffmann and Fidler, 1991) is that Rousseau is not optimistic and, indeed, if one examines works like his *Abstract and Judgement of Saint-Pierre's Project for Perpetual Peace* (1761) (see pp. 425–7) it is hard to see Rousseau as an optimist. Unlike his colleagues in the mainstream Enlightenment and in apparent opposition to the views discussed above, he seems to see international politics as an (admittedly complex) version of a Hobbesian war of all against all (see, for example, Waltz, 1959; Hinsley, 1963). Some have thus suggested that Rousseau might be seen as a realist, though certainly one interested in constitutional and more widely republican questions, hence Michael Doyle's suggestion that he be seen as the fountainhead of a "constitutional" realism (Doyle, 1997: 137–60; for another prominent treatment of Rousseau as a "realist" see Waltz, 1959, ch. 6).

This is clearly an arguable point, and we do not have time or space to argue it here. However, we suggest it might be better to argue that for Rousseau the *questions* of international political ethics and those of domestic political ethics are effectively identical for they spring from the same source: the character of human being within contemporary societies, which is a state of alienation. The *answer* in each case, however, is obviously different and it amounts to assuming that change in international relations is dependent on change of a certain sort in domestic politics which is itself dependent on a spiritual change in human beings, which is – as Rousseau certainly came to believe towards the end of his life – very unlikely.

On this reading, Rousseau is not so much a "realist" – constitutional, or otherwise – as an "anti-realist." He agrees with realism, for example, that

war is a permanent feature of the contemporary international system as it is currently configured, and he agrees again – this time with the mainstream Enlightenment – that war is horrible and irrational. However, he recognizes too (as, say, Montesquieu and Hume do not) how *seductive* it is and how interwoven with our sense of identity, belonging, and membership. Few have written more powerfully about the follies of war than Rousseau, but he fears also that it has too great a hold over them for human beings to break, certainly unless they are educated as Emile was, and enveloped by a society like that envisaged in *The Social Contract*. Which, of course, they are not.

Thus Rousseau's pessimism about international politics, though real enough, is derived from very different sources than usual "realist" claims. Whereas realists would normally claim that the "natural" way to live is in conflict, that the international system magnifies this, and that thus conflict is an inevitable and inescapable feature of international politics, for Rousseau it is precisely because we have moved *away* from nature into civilization that this situation has arisen.

However, at least in the 1750s and 1760s Rousseau considered a number of mechanisms whereby conflict and hostility could be reduced. In his *Constitutional Project for Corsica* of 1765, and more especially in his *Considerations on the Government of Poland* (1772), he investigated the possibility of progressive institutional reform leading to a situation where (for example) civic sentiment could create insuperable obstacles for a would-be conqueror. Yet this possibility is also, in Rousseau's mind, tied to the sort of educational reform – though of a less radical kind – he championed in *Emile*. It is, perhaps, his growing doubts about the feasibility of this scheme in its entirety which might account for his growing pessimism about any of these possibilities towards the end of his life (for a discussion see Shklar, 1969).

Thus, Rousseau's international thought can be said to hover uneasily between a number of stools. Neither fully realist, nor confident after the manner of the mainstream Enlightenment that reform was on the march, it expresses in a very powerful way the tensions and ambiguities that thinking hard about the parlous state of international relations and what we might do to improve it, often leads to.

The synthesis? Kant

Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) is probably the most influential writer of the Enlightenment in the literature of political theory and international political theory today. Born in Königsberg, the son of a poor saddlemaker, Kant struggled for most of his early life and middle age as a poorly paid *privatdozent*, or

private lecturer, at the university in Königsberg. It was not until he was fifty-seven that he published the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the book that established his philosophical reputation, but after this he published a range of works that reshaped the philosophical agenda of his day and remain hugely important in our own.

Like Rousseau, whom he greatly admired, Kant's thought on the topics that concern us here is impossible to understand without first looking at the general structure of his philosophy as a whole. Given that the literature on this is vast, however, we will attempt only the merest summary here (for good general discussions see Reiss, 1970, introduction; Williams, 1983; Beiner and Booth, 1993; Doyle, 1997).

First, we need to go back to the very beginning of critical philosophy – the philosophical edifice that Kant started to create with the publication of the *Critique of Pure Reason* in 1781 – and remind ourselves that even the “first Critique,” as it is usually called, predominantly concerned as it is with the problems of speculative reason, has a practical purpose:

So far ... as our Critique limits speculative reason it is indeed negative; but since it thereby removes an obstacle which stands in the way of the employment of practical reason ... it has ... a positive and very important use immediately we are convinced that there is an absolutely necessary practical employment of pure reason – the moral – in which it inevitably goes beyond the limits of sensibility. (Kant, 1982: Bxxv, pp. 26–7)

Kant's whole moral philosophy rests on the distinction between the material world and the moral world (to use his own terminology, respectively between the *phenomenal* and *noumenal* worlds) for which the *Critique of Pure Reason* was intended to lay the most important conceptual foundations. For Kant, moral principles must be inviolable from empirical attack: “A law, if it is to hold morally (i.e., as a ground of obligation), must imply absolute necessity ... the ground of obligation ... must [therefore] not be sought in the nature of man or in the circumstances in which he is placed but sought a priori solely in the concepts of pure reason” (Beck, 1965: 5–6).

Kant intended his moral philosophy to be a guide for individual moral action and equally his political philosophy is a guide for political action. “A state,” he says in *The Metaphysics of Morals* (1797),

is a union of an aggregate of men under rightful laws. In so far as these laws are necessary a priori and follow automatically from the concepts of external justice [the word Reiss and Nisbet use is ‘Right,’] in general ... the form of the state will be that of a state in the absolute sense, i.e. as the idea of what a state ought to be according to pure principles of justice. This idea can serve as an internal guide for every actual case where men unite to form a commonwealth. (Reiss, 1970: 138)

In his general political theory Kant distinguishes between a state of nature, which can include societies of sorts, and a state under rightful laws, which is out of the state of nature. What makes the difference is the organization of the three branches of government – sovereign, executive, and judicial – and Kant makes quite clear that the sovereign is, in fact, supreme. It is the sovereign, of course, who passes the laws which establish the framework of civil society. For Kant this means what he calls “Public Law,” for he argues that there are two types of law; natural law (or Private Law) and civil law (or Public Law). This division is predicated upon the distinction he makes between a society within a state of nature and one beyond the state of nature. The transition from state of nature to civil society is made by means of the separation of powers and conceived through the idea of the original contract, a move strongly influenced by his reading of Rousseau.

Now Kant, of course, does not consider this to have been a necessary historical process (though approximations to it may have occurred in the past). It is a conceptual device, but a conceptual device of great practical importance, for in the way he develops it he displays the key for grasping the complexities of his mature political thought, especially his international thought.

It is worth bearing in mind here that Kant's major political works were all written after the principal books of the critical philosophy had been written. Thus, while they were often the products of an elderly, even tiring man, they were also composed when Kant's system was in its maturity. As Reiss comments, however, Kant had been thinking hard about political questions for many years before he published on them (Reiss, 1970: 15). There are notes and scattered fragments in the 1760s, some twenty years before the publication of the first critique. However the first writings explicitly concerned with politics are the essay *What is Enlightenment?* and the *Idea for a Universal History*, both published in 1784. His mature writings on politics and international politics, however, came much later: *Theory and Practice* in 1792 (see pp. 429–32 below), most famously of all *Perpetual Peace* in 1795 (pp. 432–50 below) and finally and most exhaustively the *Metaphysics of Morals* in 1797 (pp. 450–5 below).

The manner in which Kant combines both a normative theory about international ethics and an explanatory theory about the character (and possible future direction) of the international system is central to his international political thought. As we saw at the outset of this chapter, in his essay *An Answer to the Question “What is Enlightenment?”* Kant stated: “All that is needed is freedom ... freedom to make public use of one's reason on all matters” (Reiss, 1970: 55). In a paper published the same year (1784), the *Idea for A Universal History with A Cosmopolitan Purpose*, Kant enlarges upon this theme. He does so tentatively, with no great certainty, regarding the enterprise chiefly

as what a "philosophical mind well acquainted with history" (Reiss, 1970: 53) might derive from its study but, nonetheless, believes that it can "give us some guidance in explaining the thoroughly confused interplay of human affairs" (Reiss, 1970: 52).

Kant develops his thesis by arguing first, that all natural capacities develop in conformity with some end; secondly, that, in man, such capacities as are associated with reason could be developed fully only in the species (not the individual) and thirdly, that nature intended man's happiness to be a product of his own instinct and reason. With these three observations made, Kant argues that the inevitable antagonism within society creates "law-governed social order and thus leads to the greatest problem for the human species ... that of attaining a civil society which can administer justice universally" (Reiss, 1970: 45). This state may never come into being, Kant thinks, but some approximation to it will. The crucial move for Kant is to reverse Rousseau's reasoning and to suggest that the route to this is through the emergence of a more stable and secure international order. A law-governed relationship between states will begin the process, in its turn brought about by the same antagonism that operates in the civil union, "Distress (of wars, etc.) ... force ... states ... to renounce brutish freedom and seek calm and security within a law-governed constitution" (Reiss, 1970: 48). Gradually, as nations become more and more interdependent, war will be seen as prohibitively expensive and internally too damaging to be considered and thus "after many revolutions ... a universal cosmopolitan existence will at last be realised as the matrix within which all the original capacities of the human race may develop ... The history of the human race ... can be regarded as the realisation of a hidden plan of nature to bring out an internally – and for this purpose also externally – perfect constitution as the only possible state within which all natural capacities of mankind can be developed completely" (Reiss, 1970: 51).

Kant's argument in the *Idea for a Universal History* is, be it noted, purely explanatory; it attempts to show how an end manifestly good in the context of Kant's general moral philosophy, can (or even will) be achieved. We might call it Kant's "phenomenal" teleology. Thus, in the different context of rebellion (for example), Kant can agree with, even approve of, the aims for which (say) the French Revolution was launched, and see it as a positive and progressive development without approving of the actual act of revolution.

It is this sense of the likely (if certainly not necessary) movement of history that makes Kant a much greater optimist than Rousseau and it affects his treatment of international relations perhaps more than any other aspect of his work. However, it also makes it as clear as it possibly could be that what we might call the problem of international politics as such is central to the tasks of philosophy as Kant conceived them. As Reiss puts it, for Kant, "Right cannot possibly prevail among men within a state if their freedom is threatened by

the action of other states" (Reiss, 1970: 33). Thus we are obliged (ethically) to work for the establishment of a "cosmopolitan society" and, Kant thinks, there is evidence that history is moving in this general direction. However, such a society neither would nor should take the form of a world state. Kant is convinced that such a state would be far too prone to despotism. Rather, the cosmopolitan society would be a federation of pacific republican states, governed by cosmopolitan law. This aspect of Kant's international theory is that which has had the most impact upon recent international theory, in giving rise to what is usually called the "liberal (or democratic) peace thesis" (see Waltz, 1962; Doyle, 1983, 1997, ch. 8).

Of course, Kant is fully aware that such a development will be hard fought, hardly inevitable, and always fragile. Nonetheless, what distinguishes him from Rousseau, despite his acceptance of the difficulties, is his optimism about the possibilities. In this sense, perhaps more than any other, Kant represents a synthesis between the mainstream and Rousseau's Enlightenments. It is this fact which makes him such a central philosophical voice for contemporary thought and it is as true in international political theory as anywhere else. He is a source of inspiration and ideas for liberals and radicals, at least some traditional supporters of the states-system, and many of those who seek (however gently) to transcend it. Ernst Cassirer once said that Kant's philosophy represented the completion of the Enlightenment at the same time as, in some respects at least, it transcended it (Cassirer, 1951). Nowhere is this truer than in his international theory. It has allowed a wide range of contemporary international theorists to find in Kant a powerful source of inspiration both normatively and empirically. Thus writers such as Carl Freidrich, Fernando Tesón, Andrew Hurrell, and Michael Doyle (see Freidrich, 1962; Doyle, 1983, 1997; Hurrell, 1990; Tesón, 1988 and 1998) deploy readings of Kant that emphasize his constitutional liberalism but also his commitment to the state as a political form (the pacific union is a union of republican *states*), whilst thinkers such as Pierre Laberge and, especially, Onora O'Neill and Andrew Linklater offer us readings of a Kant who, however concerned for republican government, is a statist only secondarily and whose thought, both noumenal and phenomenal, leads towards a universalist cosmopolitanism that would transcend the states-system, at least in anything like its present form (O'Neill, 1989 and 1996 and Linklater, 1990 and 1998).

The core text for Kant's international political thought is, of course, *Perpetual Peace* (1795). In this essay, his commitment to ethics and his "phenomenal teleology" come together to form a powerful argument about how the currently deplorable state of international society – on this he is in complete agreement with Rousseau – might be reformed. It is interesting, in fact, to read Kant and Rousseau's treatment of the Abbé de Saint Pierre's project side by side; it reveals a good deal about the philosophical assumptions

of each (for this reason we not only include excerpts from each of their respective essays here, but also from the Abbé de St Pierre's original *Project for Perpetual Peace* itself). The arguments discussed in the *Idea for a Universal History* are revised and elaborated and Kant presents a remarkably sensitive and powerful account both of the ethics of international politics and of the character of international politics and how each relates to the other. It represents the most sustained attempt he ever made to outline the structure of his universalist, cosmopolitan account of how we should view the character and the possible future of world politics.

It is obviously important that all of Kant's arguments are read for themselves. However, in closing this chapter on the Enlightenment's contribution to international political theory, a brief summary and recapitulation will perhaps be helpful. In his international thought, Kant starts from the assumption, shared by realists and Rousseau alike, that states exist under international anarchy and that this is a situation that aggravates the likelihood of conflict and war. It is also a situation that supports the existing unjust arrangements within countries as well. Morally, noumenally as we might say, we recognize that it is an obligation to seek to work towards the establishment of a society governed by cosmopolitan law at all levels. Empirically, however, a world state would seem to be the logical corollary of this. Yet it is neither feasible (there are too many problems with establishing it) nor, in fact, especially desirable (the possibility of tyranny or despotism in a world state would be both very high and exceedingly unpleasant). However, Kant thinks that nature and history are working towards a different kind of solution. War will become more and more expensive. It is peoples, not governments who will bear the brunt of this, as they have always borne the brunt of the horrors of war. War, and all that is associated with it, will become decreasingly popular as a result. As peoples push ever more insistently for republican government, a small number of republican (effectively liberal) states will emerge. These will band together to form a "pacific union" to protect each other from the depredations of those sovereigns outside the union. As they do this they will change the manner of conducting international politics between themselves; they will settle disputes without war and on the basis of right (justice). As their success becomes more obvious – and as they become more prosperous – so this will encourage other peoples to establish republican governments and thus the pacific union will grow and the realm of traditional international politics (the balance of power, etc.) will shrink. This will in turn remove many of the obstacles that have stood in the way of domestic and even personal reform and that so haunted Rousseau. Thus, for Kant, as he says in the seventh proposition of the *Idea for a Universal History*, "the problem of establishing a perfect civil constitution is subordinate to the problem of a law-governed external relationship with other states, and cannot be solved unless the latter is also solved" (Reiss, 1970: 47). Kant's

international political theory consists in showing how this might be solved and how, in the process, the noumenal and phenomenal worlds can reinforce each other.

FURTHER READING

The best general interpretation of the Enlightenment as a whole is still Peter Gay (1970). On Montesquieu, Pangle (1973) is excellent, though it should be read alongside Shklar (1987). On Hume, Mossner (1980) is the best introduction to Hume's life and work, though Forbes (1975) is the most detailed treatment of his political thought. The best book-length treatment of Smith's politics is Winch (1978). Shklar (1969) remains the best general study of Rousseau but the introductory essay in Hoffmann and Fidler (1991) is superb on Rousseau's international thought. Williams (1983) is the best single-volume account of Kant's political thought, emphasizing its international and historical aspects. Good treatments of Rousseau and Kant on international relations can also be found in Boucher (1998) and Doyle (1997).

SOURCES

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- David Hume, from *Of the Balance of Power* (1752), in *Hume: Political Essays*, ed. Charles W. Hendel (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1953), pp. 142–4.
- Adam Smith, from *The Wealth of Nations* (1776) (London: Dent, 1910) Book 4, ch. 6, pp. 43–8.
- Jean Jacques Rousseau, *Abstracts and Judgement of Saint-Pierre's Project of Peace*, taken from *A Lasting Peace through the Federation of Europe and the State of War*, trans. C. E. Vaughan. Reprinted with the permission of Constable & Robinson. Copyright © Constable & Co., London 1917. *The State of War*; extracts taken from Forsythe, Keens-Soper and Savigear, *The Theory of International Relations: Selected Texts from Gentili to Treitschke* (London: Unwin Hyman Limited, 1970). Both reprinted in *Rousseau on International Relations*, ed. Stanley Hoffman and David P. Fidler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).
- Immanuel Kant, selections from *Essay on Theory and Practice* (1793), pp. 89–92, *Perpetual Peace* (1795), 93–109, 112–30 (removing all footnotes) and *The Metaphysical Elements of Right* (1797), from Hans Reiss, ed., *Kant's Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 164–5, 168–9, 172–5.