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Martin Wight, Western Values, and the Whig Tradition of International Thought

Ian Hall*

Martin Wight is often regarded as a disengaged historian of international thought who avoided commentary on contemporary events and shunned opportunities to contribute to discussion over policy. This article argues that this interpretation is mistaken. It argues instead that Wight was deeply concerned with the practice of international relations, as well as the theory, and sought repeatedly to find and use different means to influence British foreign policy and world politics more generally. To that end, it concentrates on one particular effort: Wight's attempt to construct a set of Whig or Western values that he believed should guide the conduct of practitioners.

Keywords: Martin Wight; Whiggism; Western values; traditions; international theory

Few past thinkers' reputations have benefited more from the 'historiographical turn' in International Relations (IR) than Martin Wight's.¹ In the early 1990s, his pioneering work on the history of international thought was rescued from the archives and published for a new generation of scholars.² His role in nurturing the early work of a series of leading thinkers at the London School of Economics (LSE) and the University of Sussex, as well as animating the wider 'English school of international relations', is now well understood.³ The ways in which his religious beliefs and his philosophy of history shaped his approach to international theory has been brought to the fore, if not yet fully understood.⁴ As a result, Wight is now widely and rightly acknowledged as the inspirational teacher and erudite scholar that he clearly was.

But what did he teach and what did he argue? The answers to those questions remain unclear. There is little or no consensus in the literature about the content or purpose of Wight's international thought. Early interpreters, including post-war US theorists and a number of his former undergraduate students at the LSE, considered him a Realist or Machiavellian.⁵ Other contemporaries and close colleagues observed Revolutionist tendencies, particularly in the socialism and pacifism he espoused in his twenties and early thirties, prior to joining the LSE, at the age of thirty-six, in 1949.⁶ And then there is the majority (but by no means wholly accepted) view, especially

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within the contemporary English School, which casts Wight as the quintessential Rationalist or Grotian thinker, disengaged from the ebb and flow and everyday controversy of contemporary international relations, advocating scholarly 'detachment' from practical politics and diplomacy.⁷

There is evidence to support each of these interpretations, but this article takes issue with them all, because all of them begin from what it takes to be problematic premises. It argues that Wight's thought has not been well interpreted because his interpreters have applied flawed approaches to the history of the field that cannot provide the fullest picture possible of his political and intellectual agenda. Either they have used Wight's own heuristic tool of the 'three traditions' of Realism, Rationalism, and Revolutionism, or they have taken an overly narrow view, looking only at how he responded to discourses internal to the discipline, and ignoring Wight's many and varied engagements in politics and international relations outside academia. This article argues that it is unhelpful to use Wight's 'three traditions' to explain his beliefs because - as Wight himself recognised⁸ - they are very imperfect, somewhat blunt, instruments for interpreting the international thought of any given individual. It maintains, moreover, that Wight's international thought cannot properly be appreciated without recognising how much of it was a response not to the beliefs of other scholars, but to current affairs and problems of practice. As Michael Howard has put it: 'While agreeing with Kant that bureaucrats should listen to philosophers, [Wight] believed no less that philosophers should listen to bureaucrats.'⁹

This article argues that to interpret Wight's international thought, the inherited traditions that informed it, and its changing content and agendas, we must set aside Wight's three traditions and look beyond purely academic debates. It rejects the idea, which persists in the literature, that Wight was some kind of 'quietist' whose work was marked by a 'transcendental quality' or who believed that the purpose of scholars of international relations was not to 'improve the human condition' but to 'stand as passive spectators deploring the appalling standard of play'.¹⁰ It acknowledges, of course, that some of Wight's later defenders, however well intentioned, may have held such views¹¹, but it argues that Wight was, by contrast, deeply engaged in political action as well as scholarship. To that end, the article argues that one of Wight's best-known essays, 'Western Values in International Relations', was an attempt not just to provide an accurate historical interpretation of key beliefs in Western thinking, but also to begin to build a body of knowledge with the practical purpose of providing a stronger, more politically and ethically robust basis for Western policy in the cold war.¹²

The article has four parts. The first looks more closely at the interpretation of Wight's ideas that dominate the literature and the reasons why we should have doubts about their usefulness. The second explores Wight's engagement with contemporary political and international causes, arguing that he should be seen as an activist academic rather than a disinterested scholar. The third part looks at aspects of Wight's intellectual inheritance, especially the ideas he gleaned from Herbert Butterfield, which he used to build his accounts of 'Western values'. The fourth part argues that Wight's international thought, especially his work on past international theory, is best understood as an attempt to *construct* - not to recover - a 'Whig' tradition of thinking about international relations that could inform and improve Western practice, responding to what he perceived to be a persistent crisis in contemporary world politics.

I. Realist, rationalist, and revolutionist

Attempts to pigeonhole Wight into one of his famous 'Three Traditions' began almost as soon as the lectures were delivered, first at Chicago in the academic year 1956–7, and then at the LSE until 1960–1.¹³ It was no straightforward task. Wight took pains to hide his own theoretical and political preferences: he enjoyed teasing his students and believed, moreover, that they ought to learn to think for themselves rather than becoming disciples.¹⁴ So he contrived and then concluded the lectures with obfuscation, declaring:

I find my own position shifting round the circle. You will have guessed that my prejudices are Rationalist, but I find I have become more Rationalist and less Realist through rethinking this question [of the history of international thought] during the course of giving these lectures. If I said Rationalism was a civilizing factor, Revolutionism a vitalizing factor, and Realism a controlling disciplining factor in international politics, you might think I was playing with words, but I hope I have shown that there is more substance to international theory than that.¹⁵

Many of those who heard the lectures became convinced that Wight was a Realist, and at least three former students subsequently expressed that view in print. Brian Porter, for example, described Wight as 'a Christian pessimist with no belief in progress'.¹⁶ Alan James called Wight a 'mini-Morgenthau' principally concerned with the workings of power politics.¹⁷ John Garnett agreed, arguing that Wight was best thought of as a 'Christian pessimist' who 'expressed a typically Realist view when he rejected all ideas of progress toward a more peaceful and just international order'.¹⁸

These views do not, however, sit well with the recollections of Wight's peers and intellectual collaborators (as opposed to impressions of his pupils), especially those who worked with him at the LSE or engaged with him at meetings of the British Committee on the Theory of International Politics.¹⁹ These scholars also noted the strength of Wight's religious convictions, but suggested that they did not lead him to Realism. One leading light of the British Committee, the strategist (now Sir) Michael Howard, recalled that Wight had been a 'deeply committed Christian pacifist' and implied - rightly, as we shall see - that his religious beliefs prevented him from accommodating himself to Realism.²⁰ Similarly, the Committee's first chairman, the Cambridge Professor of Modern History (later Regius Professor) Herbert Butterfield, also observed his profound concern with the 'ethical aspects of our subject'.²¹ His former head of department at the LSE, who had worked alongside him for more than a decade, Charles Manning, went further, praising Wight in his *Times* obituary for being an 'internationalist'.²² Taken together, these comments might give the impression that Wight was something of a radical, even an idealist, and perhaps a Revolutionist - albeit an unusual one, who rejected the idea of historical progress.

Alongside these Realist and (semi-) Revolutionist characterisations of Wight's work is the most influential interpretation: Hedley Bull's casting of Wight as Rationalist or 'Grotian'. Bull had been a junior colleague of Wight at the LSE and, despite a very different set of intellectual inheritances²³, for a time in the 1950s Bull was very much under Wight's influence.²⁴ Bull argued that Wight had once been a Realist - and he thought the *Power Politics* (1946) pamphlet the best evidence for that interpretation²⁵ - but that he had moved towards Rationalism during the 1950s. As Wight 'grew older', Bull later posited, 'the Grotian elements in his thinking became stronger'.²⁶ He detected 'difference of emphasis' between Wight's early and later work, as

he put it, with more on 'the elements of conflict and anarchy' in the 1940s and more on 'common interest and common obligation' in the 1950s and 1960s.²⁷

Why did Bull come to believe this? There are two main reasons. First, Bull suggested that Manning may have had an influence on Wight, changing his mind and softening his position, convincing him of the virtues of his concept of 'international society' and all that went with it in Manning's view of the world.²⁸ Second, Bull persuaded himself that Wight came to appreciate that Grotianism did not just represent the dominant Western tradition, but also constituted the best approach - or perhaps the least worst approach - to address the 'complexity' of international politics, largely because it recognised that the problems of international politics were themselves complicated. Kantians, by contrast, considered the problems of foreign policy to have 'simple' solutions and Machiavellians waved away those problems as either 'non-existent' or mere conditions to be dealt with, leaving only the Grotian position as the acceptable one.²⁹

But this interpretation of the Grotian or Rationalist Wight is problematic. As we shall see, there is evidence that Wight changed his views as he grew older, but no evidence that Wight was ever a Realist in any meaningful sense of the term, nor that his beliefs evolved from Realist to Rationalist in the 1950s. Moreover, there is no evidence that Manning had any influence on Wight whatsoever; indeed, Wight's unpublished papers and correspondence show that he remained as sceptical about Manning, his ideas, and his understanding of IR when he left the LSE as when he joined it.³⁰ And there is the issue of what constituted Grotianism for Wight and for Bull. Wight and Bull disagreed quite vehemently on this point. In unpublished comments on Bull's paper on 'The Grotian Conception of International Relations', first delivered to the British Committee in 1962 and subsequently published in *Diplomatic Investigations* in 1966, Wight was deeply critical of the way Bull constructed and presented the tradition.³¹ He attacked Bull's 'cavalier use of evidence' and his understanding of fundamental Grotian tenets, especially concerning war and law.³²

Most worryingly, Bull's interpretation did not relate Wight's theory lectures to his wider thought, nor give that thought - about religion, history, and politics - the weight that it had in Wight's mind. In his interpretations of Wight's thought, Bull referred only in passing to his pacifism and to his religious convictions - both important to Wight himself and to understanding his international thought - and discounted them as unimportant or so impenetrable as to be unworthy of attention.³³ Bull simply had no time for pacifists or religion; indeed, he thought of Wight's Christian faith as little more than an 'amiable eccentricity'.³⁴ This lack of what Butterfield called 'imaginative sympathy'³⁵ led Bull astray when it came to interpreting Wight, but so did other things - above all an imported but problematic narrative about the development of the field of IR that Bull accepted, but which has since been rejected by intellectual historians.³⁶ Bull, like many others of his generation, believed that IR had progressed from idealist internationalism in the inter-war period to Realism in the 1940s and thence to more nuanced thinking. This was the narrative Bull related in his essay on the history of the field in *The Aberystwyth Papers* (1972) and the narrative that underpins his interpretation of Wight's journey from pacifism (idealism) to Realism (*Power Politics*) and then to a kind of Grotian or Rationalist synthesis.³⁷

Bull was wrong, however, to chart the trajectory of Wight's thought in this way and in thinking that Wight's thought had progressed as he supposed the field of IR as a whole had progressed. True, as an undergraduate, Wight had been an internationalist and a supporter of the League of Nations.³⁸ But the unchecked Italian

invasion of Abyssinia rapidly eroded his faith in the League. He became a pacifist not because he was a hopeless or *naïve* utopian, but because the alternatives did not appeal to him. For Wight, internationalism was doomed to failure in the present circumstances, the appeasement of Fascism was unconscionable, and fighting a war to defend a civilisation that was plainly immoral was itself immoral.³⁹ Wight considered his pacifism an outgrowth and a corollary to a certain kind of Realism - the one that he famously described at the end of *Power Politics*, as the 'abandonment ... of foolish expectations'.⁴⁰ But he did not wholly embrace Realism - still less Machiavellianism - at any point. *Power Politics* is not a Realist tract; it does not advocate a Realist policy. It concludes with an appeal to move 'beyond power politics' and to embrace an approach to international relations akin to those of William Gladstone or Franklin Roosevelt, rather than Realism, which Wight identified with Adolf Hitler.⁴¹

As we shall see, Bull was also wrong about Wight's Rationalism or Grotianism - or, to be more precise - about how Wight's views on this approach changed, how he stood in relation to it, and how he came to appreciate its value. Wight's concern with 'common interests and common obligation' was as strong in the 1930s as it was in the 1960s. He did not arrive at Grotianism because he thought Revolutionism too utopian and Realism too stark. Bull himself did, as Robert Ayson and others have shown, but not Wight. His relationship with what Bull called Grotianism - as we shall see - was far more complicated and more closely connected with his personal and intellectual responses to contemporary events.

II. The activist academic

Wight's interpreters have struggled to understand his position partly because he disguised it from some of his students and partly because they have assumed that he was more apolitical or even quietist than he was. Wight's work ought to be understood, this article argues, as a set of responses to perceived challenges or dilemmas in the contemporary world rather than just contributions to intra-academic or scholarly debates. Wight was rarely moved to write because of dry 'disciplinary discourses' about theory or method emanating from other academics. This is obvious in his writings from his footnotes alone: he rarely if ever took issue with a contemporary academic argument or offered a critique of an alternative scholar's theories, partly because he thought most work done in IR was not worth discussing.⁴² Instead, he sought to build up, using whichever tools he could find, and with scant regard for disciplinary boundaries, a perspective of his own that satisfied his own particular concerns and that was bolstered by reference to a wide range of speeches, official papers, press clippings, and classic texts, rather than contemporary academic works. And these concerns were political and external to universities as much as they were scholarly and internal to academia.

Wight was deeply, profoundly, and lastingly affected by the crisis of modern politics that began with the First World War and persisted long after the end of the Second. He moved repeatedly to take public stands on significant issues in contemporary politics and international relations. As a young man, in his twenties, he was appalled by the repression and rapaciousness he perceived in British colonialism, offering a passionate critique of its ends and methods in an early article.⁴³ He was so disturbed by the collapse of the League of Nations as to embrace pacifism publically, becoming active and prominent in the Peace Pledge Union not just for a short period, as many did prior to 1939, but throughout the Second World War.

Indeed, he was one of only a handful of British subjects who tried to register as conscientious objectors during that conflict.⁴⁴ He wrote vividly, but meticulously, as *The Observer* newspaper's correspondent at the United Nations in the period 1945–6 on the negotiations over the Charter, but also about US politics and social issues.⁴⁵ On his return from the United States, understandably but profoundly appalled by the atomic bombings of Japan and by the horrors perpetrated by the Nazis and the Soviets in Central Europe, he was moved to join and play an active role in the Christian ecumenical movement of the late 1940s that was orchestrated by the World Council of Churches (WCC) and which helped lay the groundwork for the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.⁴⁶

And Wight remained actively engaged with current events in the two decades that followed. Much of this engagement involved that traditionally British mode of public protest, letter-writing, but he used other approaches too. In 1946, for example, Wight wrote to the *New Statesman and Nation* to condemn the Indonesian annexation of parts of Sarawak as the 'most repugnant form of imperialism'.⁴⁷ This was far from his only intervention on matters of empire.⁴⁸ In the late 1940s, Wight became involved with a group of activist scholars and clergy campaigning for improved governance in parts of the British Empire, a project which led to (amongst other things) a Penguin Special book entitled *Attitude to Africa* (1951), to which Wight - drawing upon his earlier work on colonial constitutions - contributed.⁴⁹ In the 1950s and 1960s, he extended his interests to other pressing matters. Wight played a major role in the fierce public row that erupted in the wake of Arnold J. Toynbee's Reith Lectures, published as *The World and the West* (1953), helping to refute the accusation levelled at his erstwhile mentor by Douglas Jerrold and others that Toynbee was undermining the West's morale in the cold war.⁵⁰ Elsewhere, he lectured and reviewed on the topics of European unity, decolonisation, and Western policy in the cold war, as well as on religious issues.⁵¹ Throughout the 1950s, he continued to participate in discussions at Chatham House, and helped convene the Liberal Foreign Affairs Group, which counted among its members journalists, diplomats, and politicians, as well as scholars.⁵² These kinds of interactions continued in British Committee meetings in the 1960s, which played host to a number of members of the press and the Foreign Office, including Donald McLachlan of *The Economist* and such senior diplomats as Robert Wade-Gery and Adam Watson.

Wight, in other words, was far from the disengaged, 'ivory tower', even quietist academic Bull and others have portrayed. As Gabriele Wight told Bull when he suggested portraying Wight in those terms in 1974, 'I am sure Martin was not "non-political" and indeed tended to disapprove of educated friends that were'.⁵³ Of course, Wight took his scholarship extremely seriously and read voraciously in the classics of the field - probably too widely, indeed, because it clearly stymied his writing. But his intellectual agenda, as it were, was overwhelmingly set by current events, especially by what he perceived to be the crisis of modern politics.⁵⁴ His core concern throughout the 1940s and 1950s, and into the 1960s, was finding a morally sound and politically robust underpinning for contemporary international relations, and searching for that underpinning in classical political, legal, and historical thought. Which ideas and which institutions, he asked himself, could return world politics to a measure of civility, functionality, and ethical conduct?

Wight was convinced that what had provided this underpinning for much of the past 2,000 years, at least in Europe, and what had prevented the kind of collapse into barbarity witnessed in the middle of the twentieth century, was Christianity.⁵⁵ At its

height, Europe's 'international society', he believed, was infused with Christian concepts, especially that of natural law, and restrained by Christian moral thinking, and indeed, by sanctions imposed by the Church. Wight knew, however, that Christianity could not play that kind of role in contemporary international society, partly because it was expanding to include non-Christian peoples and partly because the West had itself committed 'apostasy' and become 'post-Christian'.⁵⁶ So what else, he asked, might serve in its place?

In his darkest moods, especially in the 1940s, Wight despaired of finding an alternative. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he observed, the doctrine of historical progress seemed to suffice, but liberal faith in that idea had been undone by the two world wars, and Fascist or Communist faith in it had generated horrific consequences.⁵⁷ The only other set of beliefs that had emerged in the modern period was what he called 'nihilism': the doctrine, which he identified with extreme Machiavellians and some Nazis, that 'might is right'.⁵⁸ The choice before us, he observed in his Sussex lectures on *Four Seminal Thinkers*, is clear: 'Do we go back to natural law, resurrect progress, or go forward to nihilism?'⁵⁹

Wight wanted to take the first of these options, and, as William Bain has shown, he spent a great deal of intellectual effort exploring various traditions and understandings of natural law.⁶⁰ He was convinced, as he observed in an unpublished paper, that:

The least evil society would be that with the strongest sense of the existence of a moral order in the universe, which is discernible by human reason, and from which flow binding obligations of morality and justice, irrespective of religious sanctions. One of the most prominent political expressions of a respect for Natural Law would be a tradition of truthfulness and good faith, and the subordination of expediency to principle in public affairs. Esp. [sic] in international relations.⁶¹

But Wight worried that, in a post-Christian world, this alternative was probably untenable. He acknowledged that there had been a brief revival of natural law in the late 1940s, especially evident in the Nuremberg Trials⁶², but he worried that philosophies of natural law without religious underpinnings might be insufficient to remedy the ills of contemporary politics and international relations. But this recognition did not imply an admission of defeat. Wight worked on, aiming to see whether an alternative to Christianity and to natural law might serve to underpin and improve standards of behaviour in post-war international society.

III. The uses of intellectual history

Wight was sceptical about IR when he accepted his Readership at the LSE in 1949 - at least, sceptical about the way it had recently been studied and taught - and he was just as sceptical when he resigned it twelve years later, to take up a Chair in History at the University of Sussex.⁶³ He disliked the social sciences in general, for what might today be considered peculiar reasons: he thought them dehumanising, but also a sign of a neo-pagan return to cyclic views of human destiny once banished by Christian historiography.⁶⁴ His religious beliefs prevented him accepting that history could repeat itself, and thus prevented him from accepting that general 'laws' about social life could ever be determined. Only philosophy, literature, and history were capable of capturing truths about human societies, Wight argued, and only these

disciplines should underpin political thought and practice.⁶⁵ In his mind, the new social sciences were implicated in some way with not merely the secularisation of the West, which he lamented, but also the rise of new and more extreme forms of tyranny to any that had existed in the past.⁶⁶

These beliefs conditioned Wight's approach to IR. He was convinced that world politics required serious study, but unconvinced by the approaches used and the findings generated since first chairs in the discipline were founded in the 1920s. Just after he first arrived at the LSE he proposed that the subject should have two poles: contemporary history and what he called, uncomfortably, but with hints of necessary deference to Manning's preferences, the 'Sociology of the International Community'. He rejected the objections of some professional historians to the study of contemporary history as palpably silly - they argued that it could not be written for lack of available sources, by which they meant official archives; Wight objected by saying - rightly - that medievalists work with far less. Some of the greatest history, he noted, was contemporary history: think of Thucydides, the Earl of Clarendon, or Winston Churchill. But Wight argued that students of the field could not stop at contemporary history: they needed also to explore the relationships between 'powers', focusing on the 'certain kinds of habitual behaviour' which have 'crystallised in diplomacy'.⁶⁷

How might this be done? Wight had been trained as a historian in the early 1930s, and at the University of Oxford, where the History Faculty was notoriously conservative. At the University of Cambridge, at the same time, historians had long been concerned with general and thematic history, and were then experimenting further, with social and economic history, with Marxist and sociological modes of analysis, and with the histories of science and medicine. At Oxford, however, the syllabus remained dominated by the political (primarily constitutional) history of England, studied by exhaustive investigation of mainly short periods. The principal concerns were ideas and institutions: the study of the changing ideas that informed the evolving institutions of English government.

Wight disliked the Oxford curriculum intensely, as he later recalled⁶⁸, but in this way - studying politics through ideas and institutions, understood by the dissection of primary texts - he never fully escaped it. He came to share Toynbee's belief that human societies only made sense to the observer if they were approached as wholes, but struggled to reconcile this belief in 'holism' with his continued insistence that the past must still be studied by the meticulous examination of primary sources.⁶⁹ Understandably, this requirement placed too great a burden on Wight's own shoulders; he found it impossible to meet his own standards of scholarship and his output suffered as a consequence. He was able, however, to transmit some elements of what he had inherited as an Oxford historian to his students. Above all, there was the insistence that politics is best explained in terms of ideas and institutions - specifically, the beliefs of agents and what we now call the 'norms' of behaviour those beliefs generated on the one hand, and the social practices, habits, customs, and rules shaped by those beliefs on the other - and best studied by looking at what politicians, diplomats, lawyers, and other practitioners say about those ideas and institutions. Wight's vision of IR thus combined the study of contemporary history and the institutions of international society - not the formal institutions, like the United Nations, but the informal ones that had arisen over time, like war or diplomacy, for managing the relations of political communities. It entailed the rigorous examination of the

beliefs of decision-makers, the ways in which these beliefs shaped their perceptions of their circumstances, and manner in which these beliefs and perceptions shaped their changing practices.

Wight's contributions to the *Survey of International Affairs, 1939–1946: The World in March 1939* (1952) represented his first attempts to operationalise this approach. His essay on Germany, in particular, is a study of how Hitler's philosophy - characterised as a nihilistic and extreme form of Realism - shaped his diplomacy and strategy.⁷⁰ But it is his essay on 'The Balance of Power' which is the most intriguing from the perspective of Wight's later work on Western values. The chapter takes the form of a three-cornered conversation among the Soviet Union, the Axis Powers, and the Western Powers (Britain, France, and the United States). The conversation opens with statements of their respective philosophies of international relations: the Soviets speaking as what Wight later termed Revolutionists; the Axis as Realists; and the West as Rationalists. As it evolves, the arguments change, and the distinctions begin to blur into one another, but Wight's account of the original positions is important. The West, he argued, represented a tradition of thought that aimed to 'constitutionalize international politics'; their 'endeavour [is] to turn the former anarchy of international relations into a reign of law and order and a reasonable measure of justice'.⁷¹

'The Balance of Power', in other words, foreshadows Wight's account of Rationalism in his international theory lectures of the late 1950s and his account of 'Western Values' in *Diplomatic Investigations*, and provides an insight into his evolving approach to the study of IR. But, on the face of it, Wight's indulgent account of the philosophy of the Western Powers sits ill with his earlier criticisms of British imperialism and his abandonment of the League of Nations, for pacifism, in the mid-1930s. So what explains this apparent change?

As a young man, Wight engaged with a number of different traditions of thought about politics and international relations. At Oxford, as a supporter of the League, he had been an internationalist, of sorts. His earliest writings have socialist inflections, however, and imply unhappiness with liberalism. It is clear that Wight was never reconciled to conservatism or to the Conservative Party, although he did come to admire Churchill.⁷² In the post-war years, Wight's socialism fell away, and he changed his mind about liberalism: indeed, he became convinced that liberalism - even big 'L' Liberalism - is the only political tradition worth upholding, even if the Liberal Party was not the force in British politics that it once was. In 1950, Wight observed that the Liberals were the only party with the '[s]ense of moral rectitude, and credulity about the future' that he shared.⁷³ He was not naïve, however, about the prospects for liberalism or the Liberal Party, nor did he lean towards the idealistic or even the utopian representatives of that tradition. Instead, as we shall see, his preferred post-war position was 'Whiggish', following, in important ways, the lead of Butterfield.⁷⁴

Butterfield first encountered Wight when the latter was still an undergraduate and the former external examiner for the Oxford History Faculty. Wight read Butterfield's work in the 1930s, but it was not until the latter gave his famous lectures on *Christianity and History* in 1948–9, first at Cambridge and then as a series of radio broadcasts⁷⁵, that Wight got in touch with Butterfield and began a conversation that was to last until Wight's untimely death in 1972. Wight initially wrote to Butterfield to quibble about aspects of his lectures; they soon recognised a set of common interests.⁷⁶ In short, Butterfield supplied an answer to Wight's question of what set of

ideas should inform the institutions that underpin contemporary international relations, although he did so obliquely.

Butterfield had made his reputation with a coruscating short book, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (1931), which lamented the tendency of Whig and liberal historians to let their moral values intrude into their historiography and to relate the past as a kind of drama of good versus evil, in which the good eventually and inexorably prevailed.⁷⁷ This, he argued, was the worst kind of history. He advocated an alternative: an approach to the past that was fair to all sides, and which simply related what happened, rather than attributing praise to the virtuous victors and heaping opprobrium on the guilty losers.⁷⁸ During the war years, however, Butterfield had a partial change of heart.⁷⁹ Whig history was still bad history, he decided, but it often underpinned good politics. In *The Englishman and his History* (1944)⁸⁰, Butterfield set out this new argument, asserting that while the Whig historians had misrepresented the past, they had shaped good political thinking and practice which had served to build, advance, and sustain English liberal democracy. Whig political thinking had helped to inoculate 'Englishmen' from the kinds of authoritarian political ideas that had taken hold in Germany and elsewhere, despite the greater sophistication of continental political philosophies. Liberty, compromise, law, and constitutionalism were Whig ideas, above all, and by upholding them with tenacity, the Whigs had saved the English and might save the rest of Europe.

This was fine as far as it went, but what Butterfield meant by Whiggism was a little vague. He got carried away in *The Englishman and his History*, arguing that the 'Whigs of the past . . . evolved an attitude to the historical process, a way of co-operating with the forces of history, an alliance with Providence', which allowed them, supposedly, to balance tradition and progress and mend the 'tears and rents that have been made in the fabric of our history' by doctrinal strife or social unrest.⁸¹ How did the Whigs do this? Butterfield suggested that they possessed a 'certain kind of political mechanics', a 'subtler form of wisdom' and a 'right feeling for events'.⁸² The Whigs had, in other words, a 'gift for compromise' and "'politic" management of affairs'.⁸³ The best exponents of these traits, Butterfield argued, were the so-called 'trimmers' who emerged during the Restoration, 'not fanatics for despotism or for liberty, but exponents of what might be called a non-doctrinaire system of politics'.⁸⁴ He acknowledged - conveniently, perhaps - that '[s]uch a non-doctrinaire view of politics will always (from its very character) be deficient in its literary expression, and therefore at a discount amongst academic students of practical affairs'.⁸⁵ But nevertheless he thought it the highest political wisdom.

This was only one of the two sets of ideas that Butterfield put forward in the 1940s and 1950s which helped to shape Wight's post-war thinking. The other was the idea that the modern Whiggish liberalism Butterfield preferred was really just a secularised, political expression of Christian ethics. This argument runs throughout *Christianity and History* (1949) and *History and Human Relations* (1951)⁸⁶, but is expressed most clearly in *Liberty in the Modern World* (1952).⁸⁷ There Butterfield argued that modern liberalism was the product, in essence, of the tempering of the medieval Christian worldview first by the Reformation, then by the rise of science, and finally by the emergence of English Non-Conformism.⁸⁸

Butterfield put these arguments for a number of reasons. Above all, of course, he was convinced they were true. But they also fitted with his conviction - rooted in his sense of humour, as much as anything else - that irony was central to history, and what could be more ironic than the idea that notionally secular, rationalist liberalism

sprang from the Christian religious tradition? And they also served a consolatory role, permitting Butterfield to say to fellow believers something like: 'Despair not, for the most important elements of your faith live on, even in an aggressively secular age.' This message, Butterfield wrote to Wight, met his felt need for 'something to help young men in their attitude to ordinary current events - the young men appearing to be so bankrupt these days, & so apt to droop into fatalism'.⁸⁹ To that end, in *Christianity and History* and other post-war works, Butterfield set out to demonstrate that modern liberalism - at least in its more Whiggish forms - was Christian, if Protestant and mostly non-conformist, in origin.

IV. Wight, Whiggism, and the West

Butterfield's views appealed to Wight, even if he was never fully convinced by them. He was less persuaded of the possibility of a 'Christian politics' than Butterfield. Christianity, Wight noted in a late unpublished paper, 'is not a political religion, and teaches no political theory'.⁹⁰ He was more deeply worried than Butterfield about the consequences, both political and spiritual, of what he thought of as the 'apostasy' of the West.⁹¹ But Wight was consoled by the idea that a chastened form of modern liberalism (at least in its most Whiggish aspects) might embody some aspects of Christian ethics and some residues of natural-law thinking, in particular, that might provide a basis for a 'least worst' approach to politics and international relations. And the events of the post-war years suggested to Wight that this kind of thinking was under threat and might well be lost, if an act of recovery - or even invention - was not undertaken.

The core problems of modern international relations, Wight observed to a correspondent in 1946, around the time that *Power Politics* was published, were 'whether governments will accept public law or not' and how states might be persuaded to see beyond their 'parochial "vital" interests' to co-operate, avoid, and mitigate conflict, and establish a measure of order and justice in international relations.⁹² As the post-war years wore on, Wight worried, the prospects for these changes grew ever more distant. He lambasted the United Nations, which he called a 'fake', and the Charter, which he thought undermined the very idea of the rule of law by creating a multi-headed sovereign - the Security Council - that was above that had '[n]o legal limits on its power'.⁹³ He was convinced that Soviet diplomacy, derived from Communist premises, was another obstacle to improvement. In an unpublished paper for the British Committee, his views on that topic were made clear:

Even where there is no definite intention of spreading a creed or a system of institutions by force, the classification of a large part of mankind as the children of the devil, a present danger to the forces of the true faith, yet destined soon to perish catastrophically by the will of God or inflexible laws of 'history', must condition every act of foreign policy of a government consisting of men who hold such a view of the world.⁹⁴

But Wight also became concerned, especially in the 1950s, about the effects of decolonisation and the behaviour of anti-colonial forces in world politics.

Wight's work on colonial constitutions, as well as involvement in *Attitude to Africa*, implied a mature and essentially Millian view that European colonialism was an inherited evil, but one that brought duties that should properly be acquitted, with a view to the eventual independence of subject peoples.⁹⁵ This chimed with

mainstream Liberal and Labour opinion in Britain from the end of the war to the Suez Crisis of 1956. Wight was far from an imperial chauvinist, but his sympathies for self-determination did not preclude concern about the anti-colonial movement and its influence in international relations. In *Attitude to Africa*, he and co-authors warned that anti-colonial nationalism was a product of 'social disintegration' brought about by the effects of imperialism on traditional societies - and many anti-colonial nationalists were unrepresentative, 'opportunistic', and potentially dangerous.⁹⁶ Colonial authorities, they argued, might well have to 'protect the majority of Africans from exploitation by a power-hungry minority which has not yet acquired standards of political restraint and public responsibility'.⁹⁷

In his LSE lectures on international institutions, Wight expanded on this theme, exploring the effects of the rise of anti-colonialism not in European colonies, but in contemporary diplomacy. From 1953 onwards, he noted, what he called a 'Bandung UN' had emerged, 'a kind of Holy Alliance in reverse', promoting revolution instead of suppressing it.⁹⁸ The 'Bandung Powers', Wight went on, had become 'a Mazzinian revolutionary league' promoting his 'doctrine of nationalism'.⁹⁹ Wight worried about this development for two reasons. First, he disliked nationalism, nation-states, and all that went with them, especially the techniques of power politics. Second, he feared that this new nationalist revolutionism, coming as it did after the Communist one and the Nazi-realist counter-revolution, would sweep away the last vestiges of European international society.

Wight trod a fine line in the 1950s and 1960s. On the one hand, he showed himself more than comprehending of the evils perpetrated by Europeans in the past two centuries, in Europe and outside. He engaged in the vigorous controversy that followed Toynbee's Reith Lectures, *The World and the West*, in 1952-3, defending his former mentor against his conservative, imperialist critics, like Douglas Jerrold, who were offended by Toynbee's core claim that the West was the 'arch-aggressor of modern times'.¹⁰⁰ But at the same time, Wight was concerned about the way in which anti-colonial forces and post-colonial leaders conducted politics and diplomacy. In 'The Power Struggle within the United Nations' (1956), Wight provided a frank and unflattering account. Adopting E.H. Carr's language of the 'haves' and 'have-nots', he drew parallels between the Axis 'have-nots' of the 1930s and the developing-world 'have-nots' of the 1950s: the 'Afro-Asian bloc or the Bandung powers'.¹⁰¹ Their regimes might differ from those of the Axis powers, but their 'state of mind' or 'motive, in which resentment, a sense of inferiority, and self-pity are prime ingredients' were similar.¹⁰² These Bandung powers had hijacked the UN, Wight complained, and taken over the General Assembly, using it as an instrument for 'collective intervention' into the internal affairs of Western states and for anti-colonial 'propaganda' which obscured 'real atrocities' occurring elsewhere in the world.¹⁰³

This might be fine, if these new states were paragons of virtue. But as Wight complained in his review of a volume of Anthony Eden's memoirs, they were not. The anti-colonial and post-colonial states were nationalists and, for Wight, nationalism was the greatest threat to civilised political and diplomatic behaviour:

There is a kind of crisis of international society more fundamental than threats to the balance of power: it is when the principle of international obligation itself deliquesces. Such a crisis has been endemic in international politics since 1776, with the slow fermenting of the doctrine that the only valid claim to membership of the society of nations is to have established a State expressing the popular will, and the slow exploration of the

corruptions that the popular will is liable to . . . National self-determination has a gallant ring of freedom and fulfilment, but its methods are assassination and arms-running, insurrection against established governments, confiscation of foreign property, repudiation of agreements, dissolution of moral ties.¹⁰⁴

How, Wight asked, are we to maintain 'the rule of law and civilized international intercourse' in a world where 'Western sentiment tends to regard any revolutionary nationalist government as progressive and virtuous' despite their actual behaviour?¹⁰⁵

Wight's search for 'international theory' in the 1950s must be set against the backdrop of these assessments of contemporary international relations and these recurring questions. The 'three traditions' lectures were attempts to make sense of the various doctrines advanced by intellectuals, but mainly by politicians and diplomats, in the modern period, but they were way-stations en route to Wight's published essays of the 1960s. And those essays were intended to promote a position rather than merely to describe one.

Of these works, 'Western Values in International Relations' is most clearly an attempt to recover and to invent a set of ideas capable of retrenching and reinvigorating a set of practices in international society Wight thought under threat. Originally delivered to the British Committee under the title of 'The Whig Tradition in International Theory and Western Values', it is a response to the deliquescence of international obligation Wight considered so damaging to international society. It draws heavily on Butterfield for inspiration, not merely for the original title, but the overarching argument, which might have been lifted directed from *Liberty in the Modern World*: 'The history of Western Civilization is . . . seen as primarily the development and organization of liberty, especially in the form of the tradition of constitutional government which descends from Aristotle through Aquinas to Locke and the Founding Fathers of the United States.'¹⁰⁶ In international relations, its counterpart was what Wight called the 'Whig or "constitutional" tradition in diplomacy', which had an 'explicit connection with the political philosophy of constitutional government'.¹⁰⁷

Constitutionalism, Whiggism, and aspects of liberalism, together with what Wight had earlier called Rationalism or Grotianism, were thus all rolled into one - and designated as expressions of 'Western values'. Wight was too smart not to recognise that the West also harboured some other values and other traditions - he hints at this, but does not spell it out, in the first few paragraphs of the essay.¹⁰⁸ But - importantly - Wight agreed with those who say that 'Western values are the highest common factor of the range of beliefs by which Western men [sic] live' and that 'the common ground in the West is the freedom to differ, the critical spirit, the tradition of questioning what is traditional; and that this liberal scepticism is both less dangerous to mankind than Communist dogma, and has greater intrinsic vitality'.¹⁰⁹ These are values which Wight thought were 'persistent and recurrent' - and thus he felt justified in bundling them together under one heading.

In international relations, these 'Whig' or 'Western' values underpinned most that Wight thought valuable: the diplomatic system; limitations on war; the growth of international law; and, crucially, that 'endeavour' of Western states to 'turn the former anarchy of international relations into a reign of law and order and a reasonable measure of justice' in the League and then the UN.¹¹⁰ It also represented an attachment to the idea and the practice of finding the *via media* between opposing

poles.¹¹¹ Wight's exponents of Western values, in other words, are akin to Butterfield's 'trimmers'. Indeed, Wight cites George Savile, First Marquess of Halifax (1633–95), a leading trimmer, key architect of the Restoration, and hero of Butterfield's *Englishman and his History*, as a source of 'Western values' concerning the *via media* and the balance of power.¹¹² Alongside Halifax, in his particular pantheon, Wight placed Hugo Grotius, Gladstone (a special favourite), and (oddly) Otto von Bismarck.

It is not coincidental that the *via media* led to Wight's preferred vision of international order, one in which 'international society actually exercises restraints upon its members', where an 'international social consciousness' or 'world-wide community sentiment' shapes the behaviour of diplomats and politicians.¹¹³ This was a society with an unwritten constitution, with a 'core of common standards and common custom', an 'even distribution of power' between members, the protection of basic rights to self-defence and coercion, and an animating belief that self-defence and coercion are most legitimate when carried out collectively.¹¹⁴ This constitution upholds order and permits a modicum of justice. It even allows intervention, which in 'Western values', Wight thinks, is treated as an 'occasional necessity in international relations, because of the permanent instability of the balance of power and the permanent inequality in the moral development of its members'. It might be an 'unfortunate necessity', of course, but one nonetheless, measured by a 'moral scale' that holds that 'to maintain the balance of power is a better reason for intervening than to uphold civilized standards, but to uphold civilized standards is a better reason than to maintain existing governments.' This moral scale points to the natural law that informs 'Western values': 'Intervention ... may present itself as an exercise ... of the duty of fellow-feeling and co-operation.'¹¹⁵

In this way, the *via media* in international morality, as Wight would have it, points back to natural law. The 'natural law ethic', he acknowledges, is under threat by Realism and by other doctrines, but 'it survives' in contemporary debate on international relations 'in an awareness of the moral significance and the moral concept of all political action' in most, if not all, international theory.¹¹⁶ But Wight pushes further, arguing that the whole concept of 'political morality' is the product of natural law. 'The characteristic fruit of the natural law ethic in modern politics', he writes, 'is not so much the dramatic moral veto on political action ... as the discovery of an alternative positive policy that avoids the occasion of the veto - an *alternative* policy, because it embodies the notion of a middle course, of a permissible accommodation between moral necessity and practical demands.'¹¹⁷

Although expressed in somewhat pained, arch, and high-scholarly language, Wight's 'Western Values' essay is best viewed not as a dispassionate attempt at setting out of the core ideas of a supposedly historical tradition, but rather a politically engaged attempt to reinterpret an intellectual inheritance for betterment of the contemporary world. Wight attempted to order and systematise, of course, but also to re-package and re-present core values which he thought to be threatened, even under siege.

V. Conclusion

Martin Wight was far from a disinterested observer of international relations, despite the occasional protestation to the contrary. His work on the history of international thought was not a dispassionate modernist project, aiming to generate a body of

knowledge valued for its own sake. Rather, using the means that he knew best, he sought to shape not just scholarly discussion of international relations, but also its practice. Believing that 'any desirable political condition ... can be furthered by statesmanship' and 'construction', Wight attempted to recover and to invent a set of ideas that might inform those efforts. He was an activist of a particular sort, but one whose grand, excessively ornate, baroque scholarly style made him appear a 'passive spectator', as Michael Nicholson famously called him, sitting on the sidelines and 'deploring the standard of play'.¹¹⁸ In reality, he was one of those - as he once chided Bull at a meeting of the British Committee - who believed that there are 'aspects of international relations which urge the sensitive and intelligent man to strive for their amelioration'.¹¹⁹

Wight might have been *naïve* about the influence histories of ideas might have on post-war diplomacy, but he knew full well that the intense discussion about 'Western values' that occurred from the late 1940s to the early 1960s involved the construction of something new. He was not the only scholar involved in this exercise - Isaiah Berlin, for example, was a leading player in the attempt to carve out an acceptable intellectual inheritance for the West. In Berlin's work as in Wight's, it involved conscious moves to include and exclude: theories of personal liberty were deemed 'Western'; institutionalised oppression, like that practised by the Catholic church in the counter-Reformation, the French during the Revolution, or by German Nazis and Russian Communists, was not. For both men, 'Western values' were expressed by Grotius and Abraham Lincoln, but not Immanuel Kant or Karl Marx. History-writing was, for Wight, a political project. But it also had deeper roots. Even if Wight could not persuade his peers to recognise and repent of their apostasy from Christianity, he could attempt to rescue elements of that tradition - and the 'natural law ethic' - and promote it as a basis for international practice.

Wight's ability to achieve that objective was stymied both by his inability to publish a major work after *Power Politics* and by the religious inflections of his thought, which has alienated later scholars in the field.¹²⁰ But his project did not completely fail. His work has helped sustain scholarly interest in Grotius and the Grotian tradition of international thought.¹²¹ His engagement with normative theory inspired a new generation of thinkers in that area in the 1980s and especially the 1990s.¹²² More recently, it has influenced new explorations in constitutionalism in international society and the means by which it might be furthered.¹²³ In these areas, the 'Whig tradition' lives on - albeit not always fully recognised as such.

Notes

1. E.H. Carr and H.J. Morgenthau stand out as the other exceptions, both having received very extensive attention over the past twenty years. On Carr, see, for example, M. Cox (ed), *E.H. Carr: A Critical Appraisal* (Basingstoke, 2004); C. Jones, *E.H. Carr and International Relations: A Duty to Lie* (Cambridge, 1998); and J. Haslam, *The Vices of Integrity: E.H. Carr, 1892-1982* (London, 2000). On Morgenthau, see C. Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography* (Baton Rouge, 2001); M. Benjamin Mollov, *Power and Transcendence: Hans J. Morgenthau and the Jewish Experience* (Lanham, 2002); M. Neacsu, *Hans J. Morgenthau's Theory of International Relations: Disenchantment and Re-enchantment* (Basingstoke, 2009); W.E. Scheuerman, *Morgenthau* (Cambridge, 2009); and M.C. Williams (ed), *Realism Reconsidered: The Legacy of Hans J. Morgenthau* (New York, 2008).
2. M. Wight, *International Theory: The Three Traditions*, ed. G. Wight and B. Porter (Leicester, 1991).

3. See especially T. Dunne, *Inventing International Society: A History of the English School* (Basingstoke, 1997); A. Linklater and H. Suganami, *The English School of International Relations: A Contemporary Reassessment* (Cambridge, 2006); H. Suganami, 'The Structure of Institutionalism: An Anatomy of British Mainstream International Relations', *International Relations*, vii, no. 5 (1983), 2363–81; H. Suganami, 'British Institutionalists, or the English School, 20 Years On', *International Relations*, xvii, no. 3 (2003), 253–72; B. Vigezzi, *The British Committee on the Theory of International Politics (1954–1985): The Rediscovery of History* (Milan, 2005).
4. I. Hall, *The International Thought of Martin Wight* (New York, 2006); R. Epp, *The Augustinian Moment in International Politics: Niebuhr, Butterfield, Wight and the Reclaiming of a Tradition*, International Politics Research Paper 10 (Aberystwyth, 1991); R. Jackson, 'From Colonialism to Theology: Encounters With Martin Wight's International Thought', *International Affairs*, lxxxiv, no. 2 (2008), 351–64; C.A. Jones, 'Christian Realism and the Foundations of the English School', *International Relations*, xvii, no. 3 (2003), 371–87; E.A. Patterson (ed), *Christianity and Power Politics Today: Christian Realism and Contemporary Political Dilemmas* (New York, 2008); and S.M. Thomas, 'Faith, History and Martin Wight: The Role of Religion in the Historical Sociology of the English School of International Relations', *International Affairs*, lxxvii, no. 4 (2001), 905–29.
5. See, for example, K.W. Thompson, *Masters of International Thought: Major Twentieth-Century Theorists and the World Crisis* (Baton Rouge, 1980), 44–66.
6. See D. MacKinnon, 'Power Politics and Religious Faith' in D. MacKinnon, *Themes in Theology: The Three-Fold Cord* (Edinburgh, 1987), 44–66.
7. On Wight's 'detachment, scepticism, and ability to hold [himself] aloof', see R. Jackson, *Classical and Modern Thought on International Relations* (New York, 2005), 58. Wight's supposed 'detachment' is also referred to - or alluded to - in H. Bull, 'Introduction: Martin Wight and the Study of International Relations' in M. Wight, *Systems of States*, ed. H. Bull (Leicester, 1977), 1–20; H. Bull, 'Martin Wight and the Theory of International Relations' in Wight, *International Theory*, ix–xxiii; R. Jackson, *The Global Covenant: Human Conduct in a World of States* (Oxford, 2003), 83; C. Hill, 'Academic International Relations: The Siren Song of Policy Relevance' in P. Beshoff and C. Hill (eds), *Two Worlds of International Relations: Academics, Practitioners and the Trade in Ideas* (London, 2005), 12; A. Hurrell, 'The Theory and Practice of Global Governance: The Worst of All Possible Worlds', *International Studies Review*, xiii, no. 1 (2011), 145.
8. There is a great deal of evidence to suggest that Wight grew increasingly unhappy with the three traditions towards the end of the 1950s and that he abandoned them in the early 1960s. See Hall, *International Thought of Martin Wight*, 151–5, as well as Wight's comments in M. Wight, *Four Seminal Thinkers in International Theory: Machiavelli, Grotius, Kant, and Mazzini*, ed. G. Wight and B. Porter (Oxford, 2005), 3.
9. M. Howard, 'Foreword' in Wight, *Four Seminal Thinkers*, viii.
10. R.E. Jones, 'The English School of International Relations: A Case For Closure', *Review of International Studies*, vii, no. 1 (1981), 10; M. Nicholson, 'The Enigma of Martin Wight', *Review of International Studies*, vii, no. 1 (1981), 19.
11. I. Hall, *Dilemmas of Decline: British Intellectuals and World Politics, 1945–1975* (Berkeley, 2012), 170–82. The idea that scholars should distance themselves from policy-making and policy-makers is a 'modernist empiricist' one, which emerges in Britain from the 1920s onwards with the professionalisation of academia.
12. M. Wight, 'Western Values in International Relations' in H. Butterfield and M. Wight (eds), *Diplomatic Investigations: Essays on the Theory of International Politics* (London, 1966), 89–131.
13. R. Epp, 'The British Committee on the Theory of International Politics and Its Central Figures' in D. Green and C. Navari (eds), *Guide to the English School of International Studies* (Oxford, 2013), 25.
14. Wight's educational philosophy is evident in his 'European Studies' in D. Daiches (ed), *The Idea of a New University: An Experiment in Sussex* (London, 1965), especially 103–4 and 118–19.
15. Wight, *International Theory*, 268.

16. B. Porter, 'Patterns of Thought and Practice: Martin Wight's "International Theory"' in M. Donelan (ed), *The Reason of States: A Study in International Political Theory* (London, 1978), 69.
17. A. James, 'Michael Nicholson on Martin Wight: A Mind Passing in the Night', *Review of International Studies*, viii, no. 2 (1982), 118.
18. J. Garnett, *Commonsense and the Theory of International Politics* (Basingstoke, 1984), 53.
19. On this committee, see Dunne, *Inventing International Society*; and Vigezzi, *The British Committee on the Theory of International Politics*.
20. Michael Howard, 'Hedley Norman Bull', *Proceedings of the British Academy*, lxxii (1986), 396. See also Howard's Martin Wight Memorial Lecture, 'Ethics and Power in International Politics', reprinted in Michael Howard, *The Causes of Wars* (London, 1983), 49–64.
21. H. Butterfield, *Raison d'état: The Relations between Morality and Government*, Martin Wight Memorial Lecture (Brighton, 1975), 6.
22. C.A.W. Manning, 'Professor Martin Wight', *The Times*, 21 July 1972, 14. Another colleague from the LSE days, Elie Kedourie, didn't go as far as Manning in emphasising internationalism, but he did note the close connections Wight had with one of the doyens of that set of beliefs, Arnold J. Toynbee. See E. Kedourie, 'Religion and Politics: Arnold Toynbee and Martin Wight', *British Journal of International Studies*, v, no. 1 (1979), 6–14.
23. R. Jeffery, 'Australian Realism and International Relations: John Anderson and Hedley Bull on Ethics, Religion and Society', *International Politics*, xlv, no. 1 (2008), 52–71. As Jeffery shows, Anderson's uncompromising brand of empiricism left a lasting impression on Bull and his approach to the social sciences, distancing him - and others trained by Anderson, like Coral Bell - from Wight's philosophical idealism.
24. R. Ayson, *Hedley Bull and the Accommodation of Power* (Basingstoke, 2012), 24–30.
25. M. Wight, *Power Politics*, Royal Institute of International Affairs Looking Forward Pamphlet 8 (London, 1946).
26. Bull, 'Martin Wight and the Theory of International Relations', xv.
27. Bull, 'Introduction: Martin Wight and the Study of International Relations', 10.
28. Bull, 'Martin Wight and the Theory of International Relations', xv. On Manning, see H. Suganami, 'C.A.W. Manning and the Study of International Relations', *Review of International Studies*, xxvii, no. 1 (2001), 91–107; and D. Long, 'C.A.W. Manning and the Discipline of International Relations', *The Round Table*, xcvi, no. 378 (2005), 77–96; as well as C.A.W. Manning, *The Nature of International Society* (London, 1962).
29. Bull, 'Martin Wight and the Theory of International Relations', xiv.
30. On Wight's view of Manning, see Geoffrey Goodwin's comment to Bull that he had an 'intense dislike of the Byzantine subtlety of Manning's philosophical approach which he thought tended to obscure the central points in a mass of clever linguistic analysis' (Goodwin to Bull, 30 May 1974, Wight MS 250).
31. H. Bull, 'The Grotian Conception of International Relations' in Butterfield and Wight (eds), *Diplomatic Investigations*, 51–73.
32. M. Wight, 'Comment on H. Bull's Paper "The Grotian Conception of International Relations"', July 1962 [London, Royal Institute of International Affairs], B[ritish] C[ommittee on the] T[heory of] I[n]ternational P[olitics] Papers, box 1, 1–2. See also H. Butterfield, 'Comments on Hedley Bull's Paper on the Grotian Conception of International Relations', BCTIP Papers, box 2. The tone of Butterfield's response is set by the first sentence: 'Although I am very much an amateur, and very much open to correction, I am not yet convinced that Grotius is not suffering injustice at the hands of Professor Lauterpacht and still more at the hands of Hedley Bull' (1).
33. That Bull had trouble wrestling with both topics is evident from the letters he wrote and received during the process of writing the introduction for *Systems of States*. These are collected in Wight MS 250.
34. Michael Howard, quoted in Ayson, *Hedley Bull and the Accommodation of Power*, 67. On Bull's hostility to Wight's Christian beliefs, see also E.B.F. Midgley, 'Natural Law and the "Anglo-Saxons": Some Reflections in Response to Hedley Bull', *British Journal of International Studies*, v, no. 3 (1979), 260–72.

35. See especially H. Butterfield, *Christianity and History* (London, 1949), 17–18.
36. See D. Long and P. Wilson (eds), *Thinkers of the Twenty Years' Crisis: Inter-War Idealism Reassessed* (Oxford, 1995); P. Wilson, 'The Myth of the "First Great Debate"', *Review of International Studies*, xxiv, no. 5 (1998), 1–16; and B.C. Schmidt (ed), *International Relations and the First Great Debate* (London, 2012). See also N. Guilhot (ed), *The Invention of International Relations Theory: Realism, the Rockefeller Foundation, and the 1954 Conference on Theory* (New York, 2011).
37. See especially Bull, 'Martin Wight and the Theory of International Relations'. For Bull's view of the evolution of IR, see his 'The Theory of International Politics, 1919–1969' in B. Porter (ed), *The Aberystwyth Papers: International Politics 1919–69* (London, 1972), 30–55.
38. Thompson, *Masters of International Thought*, 45.
39. See Hall, *International Thought of Martin Wight*, 29–35.
40. Wight, *Power Politics*, 68.
41. *Ibid.*, 65.
42. On this point, see Hall, *International Thought of Martin Wight*, 1–3. Wight was more frank in his assessments of contemporary work on international relations in unpublished seminar papers and lectures and in published book reviews, of which he wrote many. In 1950, he lamented the fact that IR had not yet produced 'our Tocqueville or our Durkheim, our Lombroso or our Frazer, our Marshall or our Webbs' ('What is International Relations?', LSE Postgraduate Seminar paper, Summer 1950, Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 112), and in 1957, in another unpublished talk, he complained there were 'No great books yet' in IR ('Study of International Relations', Wight MS 112).
43. M. Wight, 'Christian Pacifism', *Theology*, xxxiii, no. 193 (1936), 12–21.
44. Hall, *International Thought of Martin Wight*, 32–3.
45. See the various clippings of his articles in Wight MS 203.
46. Wight was present - and spoke, as did John Foster Dulles, among others - at the first meeting of the WCC in Amsterdam in 1948. Details of his involvement can be found in the papers in Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 10, 11 and 232, as well as from M. Wight, 'The Church, Russia and the West', *Ecumenical Review*, i, no. 1 (1948), 25–45. On the WCC and its role in post-war debates over human rights, see J. Nurser, *For All Peoples and All Nations: The Ecumenical Church and Human Rights* (Washington, D.C., 2005).
47. M. Wight, 'Sarawak', *New Statesman and Nation*, xxxi, 8 June 1946, 413–14. For the wider context, see R. Epp, 'Martin Wight: International Relations as a Realm of Persuasion' in F.A. Beer and R. Hariman (eds), *Post-Realism: The Rhetorical Turn in International Relations* (East Lansing, 1996), 121–42.
48. On this issue, see also T. Dunne, 'Colonial Encounters in International Relations: Reading Wight, Writing Australia', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, li, no. 3 (1997), 309–23.
49. W. Arthur Lewis, C. Legum, M. Scott, and M. Wight, *Attitude to Africa* (Harmondsworth, 1951).
50. I. Hall, 'The "Toynbee Convector": The Rise and Fall of Arnold J. Toynbee's Anti-Imperial Mission to the West', *The European Legacy*, xvii, no. 4 (2012), 455–69. See also A.J. Toynbee, *The World and the West* (New York and London, 1953); as well as D. Jerrold, *The Lie about the West: A Response to Professor Toynbee's Challenge* (London, 1954).
51. See, for example, his review of B. Ward's *Policy for the West* in *The Observer*, 18 February 1951, and the various talks on European issues, dating to the early to mid-1960s, in file 5 in the Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences.
52. Minutes and membership lists are included in Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 228.
53. Gabriele Wight to Bull, (no day) April 1974, Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 250.
54. Hall, *International Thought of Martin Wight*, 65–85.
55. See especially Wight, 'The Church, Russia and the West'.
56. *Ibid.*

57. See especially M. Wight, 'Progress or Eschatology' (10 May 1951), Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 42.
58. Wight, *International Theory*, 250–1. See also his essays on 'Germany' and 'The Balance Power' in A.J. Toynbee and F.T. Ashton-Gwatkin (eds), *Survey of International Affairs 1939–1946: The World in March 1939* (London, 1952), both of which associate Nazism with nihilism; and for further discussion on Nazism and Realism, see Hall, *International Thought of Martin Wight*, 147–51.
59. Wight, *Four Seminal Thinkers*, 44.
60. W. Bain, 'Rival Traditions of Natural Law: Martin Wight and the Theory of International Society', *International History Review* (forthcoming).
61. M. Wight, 'Christianity in the Conflict between East and West', no date, but probably early 1950s, Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 10, 20.
62. M. Wight, 'Natural Law', 24 February 1960, Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 100, 2.
63. Compare Wight's 'What is International Relations?', paper for the LSE graduate seminar, probably 1950, which observes that IR 'is a symptom of a disease, not a therapy' (Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 112, 7) and his comment to Lord Fulton, made in the midst of negotiations for the Sussex Chair of History in 1960, that 'I have never been convinced - to Manning's grief - that International Relations, in its LSE sense, is a subject that ought to be taught to undergraduates' (Wight to Fulton, 8 Dec. 1960, Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 233 7/9).
64. See especially M. Wight, 'History and Judgment: Butterfield, Niebuhr and the Technical History', *The Frontier: A Christian Commentary on the Common Life*, i, no. 8 (1950), 306; and M. Wight, 'History and the Social Sciences', undated but probably c.1950, Wight MS 12.
65. As Wight wrote to his friend and erstwhile colleague at the LSE, Elie Kedourie, 'the teaching of International Relations ... convinced me that the only subjects which ought to be taught were philosophy, literature and history' (Wight to Kedourie, 21 Nov. 1961, Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 233 3/9).
66. See Hall, *International Thought of Martin Wight*, especially 65–85, on 'The Crisis of Modern Politics'.
67. M. Wight, 'What is International Relations?' (1950), Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 112, 17.
68. M. Wight, 'Devising a History Syllabus', talk given at Reading, 28 Feb. 1963, Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 50.
69. I. Hall, 'Challenge and Response: The Lasting Engagement of Arnold J. Toynbee and Martin Wight', *International Relations*, xvii, no. 3 (2003), 389–404.
70. M. Wight, 'Germany' in Toynbee and Ashton-Gwatkin (eds), *Survey of International Affairs, 1939–1946: The World in March 1939*, 293–365.
71. M. Wight, 'The Balance of Power' in Toynbee and Ashton-Gwatkin (eds), *Survey of International Affairs, 1939–1946: The World in March 1939*, 508, 516.
72. In an unpublished aide memoire, 'How to Vote, 1950', one of the few reasons Wight could find for voting Conservative in that year, apart from arresting nationalisation and restoring the Commons seats once reserved to Oxford and Cambridge, was that it would be '[n]ice to have Churchill back at No. 10'. In the end, however, he decided that the '[p]ermanent loss of self-respect' that would also be involved in voting Tory out-weighed that benefit. M. Wight, 'How to Vote, 1950', Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 62, 4.
73. Ibid.
74. There are a number of works on Butterfield, but the best is M. Bentley, *The Life and Thought of Herbert Butterfield: History, Science and God* (Cambridge, 2011).
75. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*.
76. See Hall, *International Thought of Martin Wight*, 46–7.
77. H. Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (New York, 1965 [1931]).
78. See especially Bentley, *Life and Thought of Herbert Butterfield*, 95–118.
79. Ibid., 233–62.

80. H. Butterfield, *The Englishman and his History* (Cambridge, 1944).
81. *Ibid.*, vi–vii.
82. *Ibid.*, 83–4.
83. *Ibid.*, 85. On the lessons of Whiggism for international relations, see I. Hall, ‘History, Christianity and Diplomacy: Sir Herbert Butterfield and International Relations’, *Review of International Studies*, xxviii, no. 4 (2002), 719–36.
84. Butterfield, *Englishman and his History*, 87.
85. *Ibid.*, 90.
86. Butterfield, *Christianity and History*; H. Butterfield, *History and Human Relations* (London, 1951).
87. H. Butterfield, *Liberty in the Modern World* (Toronto, 1952). Wight reviewed this book in *International Affairs*, xxix, no. 4 (1953), 475–6.
88. For a good summary of Butterfield’s views on this subject, see Kenneth B. McIntyre, *Herbert Butterfield: History, Providence, and Skeptical Politics* (Wilmington, DE, 2011), 99–157.
89. Butterfield to Wight, 14 Aug. 1950, Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 233 1/9.
90. M. Wight, ‘Christian Politics’ (1968), Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 52, 1.
91. Hall, *International Thought of Martin Wight*, 33.
92. Wight to Oldham, 27 June 1946, Wight MS 12.
93. M. Wight, ‘The United Nations’, talk at Royal Naval College, Greenwich, 15 July 1946, Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 226, 1–2. The lecture was not all doom and gloom – happily, Wight noted, this ‘fake’ ‘doesn’t work’.
94. M. Wight, ‘The Communist Theory of International Relations’, October 1962, BCTIP Papers, box 4, 1. See also his account of Soviet thinking in ‘The Balance of Power’, 508–32.
95. See Lewis, Legum, Scott and Wight, *Attitude to Africa*, 51–7.
96. *Ibid.*, 32–3.
97. *Ibid.*, 34.
98. M. Wight, ‘Lecture Notes on UN’, dated (by Gabriele Wight) ‘certainly after 1955’, Wight MS, London, British Library of Political and Economic Sciences, 119, 96.
99. *Ibid.*, 97.
100. Toynbee, *World and the West*, 1–3. See also Hall, ‘The “Toynbee Convector”’.
101. M. Wight, ‘The Power Struggle within the United Nations’, *Proceedings of the Institute of World Affairs*, 33rd session (Los Angeles, 1956), 248.
102. *Ibid.*, 249.
103. *Ibid.*, 256.
104. M. Wight, ‘Brutus in Foreign Policy: The Memoirs of Sir Anthony Eden’, *International Affairs*, xxxvi, no. 3 (1960), 307–8.
105. *Ibid.*, 308.
106. Wight, ‘Western Values’, 89.
107. *Ibid.*, 90, 102.
108. Wight also acknowledged this in his dispute with Jerrold over Toynbee’s *World and the West*. See Hall, ‘The “Toynbee Convector”’.
109. Wight, ‘Western Values’, 89–90.
110. Wight, ‘The Balance of Power’, 516.
111. Wight, ‘Western Values’, 91.
112. *Ibid.*, 91. See also Butterfield, *Englishman and his History*, 88–90.
113. Wight, ‘Western Values’, 97.
114. *Ibid.*, 103.
115. *Ibid.*, 116.
116. *Ibid.*, 124.
117. *Ibid.*, 128.
118. Nicholson, ‘The Enigma of Martin Wight’, 19.
119. M. Wight, ‘Comment on Hedley Bull’s paper ‘The Grotian Conception of International Relations’ (1962), London, Chatham House, British Committee on the Theory of International Politics Papers, box 1.

120. On the latter point, see Epp, 'The British Committee on the Theory of International Politics', 32.
121. R. Jeffery, *Hugo Grotius and International Thought* (New York, 2006), 113–138.
122. See, *inter alia*, C. Brown, *International Relations: New Normative Approaches* (New York, 1992); T. Dunne, 'Colonial Encounters in International Relations: Reading Wight, Writing Australia', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, li, no. 3 (1997), 309–23; A. Linklater, 'Problems of Community in International Relations', *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, xv, no. 2 (1990), 135–53 or N. Rengger, 'A City which Sustains All Things? Communitarianism and International Society', *Millennium: Journal of International Studies*, xxi, no. 3 (1992), 353–69.
123. See Jackson, *Global Covenant*, as well as A.F. Lang, 'Global Constitutionalism as a Middle Ground Ethic' in C. Navari (ed), *Ethical Reasoning in International Affairs: Arguments from the Middle Ground* (Basingstoke, 2013), 106–26.