

Theories of International Relations, (edited by), Scott Burchill and Andrew Linklater with Richard Devetak, Matthew Paterson and Jacqui True. London: MacMillan Press Ltd. 1996. ISBN: 0-333-66089-7 paperback, 280 pp, £ 18.99.

This is a well-organized book carefully tailored to fit to reflect the changing dynamics and nature in international relations theory. As stated by Scott Burchill in the preface, this book aims to overcome and adequately cover all approaches in international relations through taking sufficient account of contemporary development of the field. Consequently, in addition to the mainstream international relations theories, such as Liberal Internationalism, Realism, Neo-realism, Rationalism and Marxism, the book also designed to give significant and detailed emphasize to the new critical and cultural turn theories such as Critical Theory, Postmodernism, Feminism and Green Politics.

If one considers the fact that studies of international relations is comparatively new discipline open for new theories or paradigms along with the transition of existing theories, accordingly, the book satisfactorily achieves its objective of demonstrating

the strengths and weaknesses of competing theoretical perspectives along with enabling students to analyze international relations with critical lenses.

The book initiated with an introduction chapter written by Scott Burchill. In this well-addressed and good structured chapter there is a detailed discussion about the foundation of the discipline of international relations, theories and disciplines, explanatory constitutive theory, what do theories of international relations differ about and what criteria exist for evaluating, comparing and contrasting theories.

Burchill stated that a single theory itself cannot be completely identify and explain all the key structures and dynamics in international system. Some could be more convincing in explaining certain specific features of international politics. What is in common however each theory is has better explanation for specific topic on certain periods of the history.

It should be from this departure point that the mainstream theories of international relations that dominated the discipline from the very beginning have presented first. Burchill has contributed with liberal internationalism, realism and neo-realism while Andrew Linklater has added rationalism and Marxism.

Recalling from the introduction chapter, Burchill has commented that wide variety of international relations theories make international politics more intelligible and

better understood through explanations of the institutions, events and processes in the contemporary world. Through the theories, international relations joined to a dynamic process of understanding the world and phenomena that each finding serves both as an answer to current questions and as new questions for new studies.

Accordingly, in the context of these assumptions, Richard Devetak's chapters related to Critical Theory and Postmodernism provides rich and complex conceptualization of comparatively recent cultural turn theories of international relations. Especially his analysis regarding to Postmodernism provides distinctively illuminating account for this not detailed investigated paradigm. By explaining the methods and textual strategies such as genealogy, de-construction and double reading, Devetak sheds lights on 'unknowns' of postmodernism. Furthermore, arguably, he organizes a very useful account on theorizing states of violence and perfectly categorizing the origins of state power analysis. Thus if an international relations student interested with how the mainstream theories of international relations encounter with formidable challenges, these two chapters is very worth to read.

Two last chapters of the book refer to the generally neglected texts in international relations: Feminism by Jacqui True and Green Politics by Matthew Paterson. Nevertheless it should be keeping in mind that the boundaries of international

relations expanding every passing day and international relations textbooks could no longer ignore these two theories. On satisfying these needs, particularly, Green Politics chapter with its focus on green anarchist societies and distinction of environmentalist from green politics constitutes very interesting account on the development of this study.

Only criticisms related to this book could be devoted to certain repetitions in some chapters along with preference of complexity instead of simplicity in some discussions. Nevertheless, these critics do not hide the quality and applicability of the book.

To sum up, as Burchill explicitly and perfectly puts it, as human knowledge expands, established theories impoverished by the scholars who find anomalies within them and eventually, all theories open for new interpretations and further refinement. Departing from this point of view, accordingly, all international relations students should read this useful book for both learning challenging the prevailing orthodoxies of the discipline.

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