English School is naïve about the possibilities for radical change; but increasing divisions between more 'radical' and more 'conservative' proponents have appeared in recent years, not least over the question of whether the society of states should introduce a principle of humanitarian intervention.

We will return to these themes later in this chapter which is organized under four main headings. The first focuses on the idea of order and society in core English School texts. The second considers the English School's analysis of the relative importance of order and justice in the traditional European society of states. This is followed by an assessment of the 'revolt against the West' and the emergence of the universal society of states in which various demands for justice are frequently heard. The fourth section returns to the question of whether the English School remains committed to the notion that only limited progress is possible in international relations and whether its claim to be the *via media* between realism and revolutionism is convincing in the light of current debates and developments in the field.

From power to order: international society

We have seen that the English School is principally concerned with explaining the surprisingly high level of order which exists between independent political communities in the condition of anarchy. Some such as Wight (1977: 43) were fascinated by the small number of international societies which have existed in human history and by their relatively short life-spans, all previous examples having been destroyed by empire after a few centuries. Wight (1977: 35–9) also noted the propensity for internal schism in the form of international revolutions which bring transnational political forces and ideologies rather than separate states into conflict. He posed the interesting question of whether commerce first brought different societies into contact and provided the context within which a society of states would later develop (1977: 33). In his remarks about the three international societies about which a great deal is known (the Ancient Chinese, the Graeco-Roman and the modern society of states) Wight (1977: 33–5) maintained each had emerged in a region with a high level of linguistic and cultural unity. Crucially, independent political communities felt they belonged to the civilized world and were superior to their neighbours. Their sense of their 'cultural differentiation' from allegedly semi-civilized and barbaric peoples facilitated communication between them and made it easier to agree on the rights and duties which bound them together as members of an exclusive society of states.

Writing on the evolution of the modern society of states Wight's protégé, Hedley Bull (1977: 82) observed that in 'the form of the doctrine of natural law, ideas of human justice historically preceded the development of ideas of interstate or international justice and provided perhaps the principal intellectual foundations upon which these latter ideas at first rested'. This seems to echo Wight's position that some sense of cultural unity is needed before an international society can develop but, in the end, this was not Bull's position. He believed that international societies can exist in the absence of linguistic, cultural or religious agreement. To clarify the point, Bull introduced a distinction between an international system and an international society which does not exist in Wight's own work. A 'system of states (or international system)', he argued, 'is formed when two or more states have sufficient contact between them, and have sufficient impact on one another's decisions to cause them to behave – at least in some measure – as parts of a whole' (1977: 9–10). A 'society of states', on the other hand, comes into being 'when a group of states, conscious of certain common interests and common values, form a society in the sense that they conceive themselves to be bound by a common set of rules in their relations with one another, and share in the working of common institutions' (1977: 13). This is an important distinction which highlights the need to give a more precise account of how international societies have evolved.

As we have seen, Bull maintained that order can exist between states which do not feel they belong to a common civilization. John Vincent (1984b: 213) made the same point when he argued that international society is 'functional' or utilitarian rather than 'cultural' or moral in character. A pragmatic need to coexist is enough to produce what Bull (1977: 316) called a 'diplomatic culture' – that is, a system of conventions and institutions which preserves order between states with radically different cultures, ideologies and aspirations. He added that the diplomatic culture will be stronger if anchored in an 'international political culture' – that is, if states have a similar way of life. Illustrating the point, Bull and Watson argued that the modern society of states which is the first truly global one does not rest on an international political culture in the way that the European society of states did in the nineteenth century. However, the basic rules of the international society which originated in Europe have been accepted by a large majority of its former colonies, now equal sovereign members of the first global society of states. No international political culture underpins and supports the diplomatic culture, yet Bull (1977: 316–17) thought that this might change if different elites across the world came to share a 'cosmopolitan culture' of modernity.

Bull's *The Anarchical Society* (1977) provides the most detailed analysis of the foundations of international order. He argues that all

societies – domestic and international – have arrangements for protecting the three 'primary goals' of placing constraints on violence, upholding property rights and ensuring agreements are kept (Bull 1977: 53–5). The fact that these primary goals are common to domestic and international society explains Bull's rejection of 'the domestic analogy' which is the idea that order will come into being only if states surrender their sovereign powers to centralized institutions of the kind that provide order within nation-states (Suganami 1989). As we have seen, English School writers break with realism because they believe that states can enjoy the benefits of society without surrendering their sovereign powers to a higher authority. Bull's approach argues that states are usually committed to limiting the use of force, ensuring respect for property and preserving trust not only in relations between citizens but in their dealings with one another as independent political communities. This shared ground rather than any common culture or way of life is the real foundation of international society.

Domestic societies and international society are both concerned with the satisfaction of primary goals but the latter is distinctive because it is an 'anarchical society'. Citizens of the modern state are governed by the 'primary rules' of society which set out how they should behave, and also by 'secondary rules' which determine how these basic rules concerning conduct should be created, interpreted and enforced (Bull 1977: 133). In the modern state, central institutions have the right to make primary and secondary rules whereas, in international society, states create primary rules as well as secondary rules pertaining to their creation, interpretation and enforcement. A related point is that international society has a set of primary goals which are uniquely its own (1977: 16–20). The idea that entities must be sovereign to be members of international society is one of its distinctive features, as is the conviction that the society of states is the only legitimate form of global political organization and the belief that states have a duty to respect the sovereignty of all others. These goals may conflict with one another, as Bull observed in his writings on order and justice which will be considered later in this chapter.

Societies of states exist because most political communities want to place constraints on the use of force and bring civility to their external relations. An interesting question is whether some national societies are more likely than others to attach special value to international society and to take care of its institutions which include diplomacy, international law and the practice of balancing the military power of states that may aspire to lay down the law to others. English School writers argue that international society can be multidenominational and include states with different cultures and philosophies of government. A central task of diplomacy in their view is to find some common ground between radically

different and often mutually suspicious states. They are unconvinced by those who believe that the members of the society of states should have identical political ideologies, a point Wight (1991: 41–2) made against liberals such as Kant. However, writers such as Wight have also argued that societies with a strong commitment to constitutional politics and a history of resistance to political absolutism played a vital role in the formation of the European society of states and in the development of international law (Linklater 1993). It is worth considering this theme in the light of neo-realist and liberal discussions of the relationship between the states-system and its constituent parts.

The neo-realist argument of Kenneth Waltz (1979) maintains that the international system compels all states to take part in the struggle for power and security irrespective of regime type and ideological commitment. In opposition to neo-realism, Michael Doyle (1986) has argued that liberal states have a strong predisposition towards peace with each other, though not with non-liberal states to the same extent. The crucial question here is how far the 'inside' affects the 'outside', or how far domestic national preferences are overridden by the need to promote power and security in the condition of anarchy. For members of the English School it is essential to understand how the 'inside' influences the 'outside' and vice versa. Wight's work (1977) on international legitimacy illustrates the point. One part of this essay deals with the move from the dynastic principle of government to the conviction that the state should represent the nation as a whole, and with how the rules governing membership of international society changed in the process. In this context Wight (1977: 153) noted that 'these principles of legitimacy mark the region of approximation *between* international and domestic politics. They are principles that prevail (or are at least proclaimed) *within* a majority of the states that form international society, as well as in the relations between them' (emphases in the original). Exactly the same point can be made about contemporary claims that the legitimate members of international society should respect human rights or be committed to democracy. This is one of the respects in which the English School differs from neo-realism. From the latter standpoint, the relations between states are rather like the relations between firms in a marketplace – all actors are caught up in a world of quasi-physical forces. The English School rejects this systemic approach to international politics which ignores the way in which domestic and international principles of right conduct or reasonable behaviour interact to shape the society of states. This focus on the 'normative' and 'institutional' factors which give international society its own 'logic' ultimately distinguishes the English School from neo-realism (Bull and Watson 1984: 9). This focus makes the English School a natural ally of constructivism, which is discussed in Chapter 8.

Order and justice in international relations

The English School is interested in the processes which transform systems of states into societies of states and in the norms and institutions which prevent the collapse of civility and the re-emergence of unbridled power. It is also concerned with the question of whether societies of states can develop means of promoting justice for individuals and their immediate associations. Bull in particular distinguished between international societies and international systems, but he also identified different types of international society in order to cast light on the relationship between order and justice in world affairs.

In an early essay (1966a), Bull distinguished between the 'solidarist' or 'Grotian' and 'pluralist' conceptions of international society. He maintained that the 'central Grotian assumption is that of the solidarity, or potential solidarity, of the states comprising international society, with respect to the enforcement of the law' (Bull 1966a: 52). Solidarism is apparent in the Grotian conviction that there is a clear distinction between just and unjust wars, and in the assumption 'from which [the] right of humanitarian intervention is derived … that individual human beings are subjects of international law and members of international society in their own right' (1966a: 64). Pluralism, as expounded by the eighteenth-century international lawyer, Vattel, rejects this approach, arguing that 'states do not exhibit solidarity of this kind, but are capable of agreeing only for certain minimum purposes which fall short of that of the enforcement of the law' (1966a: 52). A related argument is that states rather than individuals are the basic members of international society (1966a: 68). Having made this distinction, Bull asked whether there was any evidence that the pluralist international society of the post-Second World War era was becoming more solidarist. His answer in *The Anarchical Society* was that expectations of greater solidarity were seriously 'premature' (Bull 1977: 73).

To understand the reasons for this conclusion it is necessary to turn to Bull's discussion of the conflict between the primary goals of international society (1977: 16–18, Chapter 4). Bull argued that the goal of preserving the sovereignty of each state has often clashed with the goal of preserving the balance of power and maintaining peace. Polish independence was sacrificed on three occasions in the eighteenth century for the sake of international equilibrium. The League of Nations chose not to defend Abyssinia from Italian aggression because Britain and France needed Italy to balance the power of Nazi Germany. In such cases, order took priority over justice which requires that each sovereign state should be treated equally. Contemporary international society contains other examples of the tension between order and justice. Order requires

efforts to prevent further additions to the nuclear club, but justice suggests all states have an equal right to acquire weapons of mass destruction (1977: 227–8).

A related point is that states have different and often conflicting ideas about justice, and that there is a danger they will undermine international society if states try to impose their views on others. Efforts to apply principles of justice to international relations are often highly selective in any event, as was the case with the war crimes tribunals at the end of the Second World War (1977: 89). What some thought was the reasonable response of the civilized world was 'victor's justice' to others. The same point has been made by Milośevič and Saddam Hussein in recent times. The different responses to NATO's action against Serbia in 1999 also illustrate the point. What leaders such as Blair regard as essential if the world is to be rid of murderous regimes is for others nothing other than the promotion of Western norms and interests which results in a new imperialism. Significantly, Bull was keen to stress that Western liberal conceptions of human rights had to recognize their values did not appeal to many non-Western groups. His argument was that the advocates of universal human rights had to appreciate that tensions over the meaning of such rights were unavoidable in a multicultural society of states; they had to try to understand these deep moral and cultural differences rather than conclude that other peoples were less rational and enlightened (1977: 126; see also Bull 1979a).

States may not agree on the meaning of justice but, Bull argued, they can concur about how to maintain order among themselves. Most agree that each state should respect the sovereignty of the others and observe the principle of non-intervention. Each society can then promote its notion of the good life within its own territory, recognized as an equal by all others. But although Bull drew attention to the tension between order and justice, he also argued that international order has moral value since 'it is instrumental to the goal of order in human society as a whole'. 'Order among all mankind', he argued, '[is] of primary value, not order within the society of states' (1977: 22), and 'a world society or community' is a goal which all 'intelligent and sensitive persons' should take seriously (1977: 289). This apparent cosmopolitanism stands uneasily alongside his conviction that there is little evidence that different societies are about to agree on what it would mean to build a world community. But the implication seems to be that states should try to improve international society whenever circumstances allow (see Buzan 2004 for a recent discussion of the relationship between international society and world society in the English School).

Wight's claim that 'rationalism' is the *via media* between realism and revolutionism is worth recalling at this point. Read alongside Bull's

writings on order and justice, this can be taken to mean that the English School believes that the existence of a society of states is evidence that progress has been made in agreeing on some basic principles of coexistence and rudimentary forms of cooperation. The tension between order and justice is a reminder that progress has not advanced very far. Revolutionists or Kantians are accused of failing to recognize the difficulty that states face in progressing together in the same normative direction. It follows that the English School must always be interested in how naked power or a lack of prudent diplomacy can undo the limited progress that has occurred; and it must also be interested in whether there are any signs that states are making progress in creating a more just international society.

The development of English School thinking about human rights is fascinating in this regard. Bull (1977: 83) argued that in the recent history of international society pluralism has triumphed over solidarism. In recent centuries, the solidarist belief in the primacy of individual human rights had survived albeit 'underground'. It might even appear that states had entered into 'a conspiracy of silence … about the rights and duties of their respective citizens' (1977: 83). In addition, most states – and Europe's former colonies since the end of the Second World War – have feared that human rights law might be used as a pretext for interfering in their domestic affairs. Bull was concerned that Western arrogance and complacency about human rights might damage the delicate framework of international society. He also noted that relative silence on the importance of human rights had produced a strong counter-reaction, and that states in the twentieth century had come under increasing pressure to ensure their protection (Bull 1984a).

This is the starting-point of John Vincent's book, *Human Rights and International Relations* (1986), which argued that the right of the individual to be free from starvation is one human right on which all states can agree despite their ideological differences. Vincent argued that global action to end starvation is essential since the absence of the basic means of subsistence should always shock the conscience of humankind. Consensus on this matter would be a significant advance in relations between the Western world, which has traditionally been concerned with order rather than justice, and the non-Western world, which has stressed the need for greater justice. In one of his last essays Vincent returned to the theme of his first book which defended the principle of non-intervention. He observed that states are increasingly open to external scrutiny and under pressure to comply with the international law of human rights (Vincent and Wilson 1994). Some violations of human rights might be so shocking that states have to set aside the convention that they should not intervene in each other's internal affairs.

Whether and how they should do so are questions that became central to international relations with the destruction of Yugoslavia and genocide in Rwanda (Dunne and Wheeler 1999). International action to try persons suspected of war crimes and gross human rights violations has progressed but, as the debate over NATO's military action against Serbia demonstrated, there is no global consensus about when sovereignty can be overridden for the sake of human rights.

In fact, two very different tendencies have appeared in the English School in recent years. Dunne and Wheeler (1999) argued in the late 1990s that the end of bipolarity made it possible that states could agree on how to introduce new principles of humanitarian intervention into the society of states. They added that the aspiring 'good international citizen' should be prepared to intervene in societies where there was a 'supreme humanitarian emergency' even though their action was in breach of international law. This argument has been rejected by Jackson (2000: 291ff.) who stresses, citing the example of Russia's long-standing affinity with Serbia, the danger that humanitarian intervention might disturb order between the great powers. Jackson (2000) argues that the greatest violations of human rights take place in times of war, and so preserving constraints on violence between states should have priority over the use of force to safeguard human rights, whenever it is necessary to choose between them.

The 'revolt against the West' is a subject for the next section, but one of its dimensions, namely the demand for racial equality, is pertinent to the present discussion. Bull (in Bull and Watson 1984) and Vincent (1984b) argued that the rejection of white supremacism has been a central theme in the transition from a European to the first universal society of states. The demand for racial equality demonstrated that international order may not endure unless Third World peoples realize their basic aspirations for justice. Although order was also an issue – disorder in Southern Africa was possible while white supremacist regimes endured – the deeper matter was the immorality of apartheid. This dimension of the revolt against racial equality adds force to Wight's point that the modern society of states differs from its predecessors in making the legitimacy or illegitimacy of particular forms of government a matter of importance for the entire international community (Wight 1977: 41). Disgust with apartheid was a matter on which the whole of international society was agreed. Mindful of the ideological competition between the United States and the Soviet Union, Bull added, however, that agreement on apartheid was about as far as the global moral consensus extended in the 1970s and 1980s (Bull 1982: 266).

The revolt against white supremacism reveals how progress towards greater solidarism can be made. As Bull (1977: 95) put it, if 'there is

overwhelming evidence of a consensus in international society as a whole in favour of change held to be just, especially if the consensus embraces all the great powers [then] change may take place without causing other than a local and temporary disorder, after which the inter-national order as a whole may emerge unscathed or even appear in a stronger position than before'. Whether Bull thought that a global moral consensus could emerge in other areas is unclear although Watson (1987: 152) maintains that Bull and he 'inclined [towards the] optimistic view' that states in the contemporary system are 'consciously working out, for the first time, a set of transcultural values and ethical standards'. Perhaps a growing consensus about the need for democratic government – or at the very least for constitutional safeguards for human rights – reveals that further progress has been made. As noted earlier, exactly how far this consensus can extend is disputed in recent writings by mem-bers of the English School. It is worth adding that Bull (1983: 127–31) wrote in the 1980s that neither superpower seemed to have the requisite 'moral vision' for dealing with the central problems between 'North' and 'South'. At the present time one crucial question is whether the United States and the United Kingdom have displayed a similar lack of vision which threatens to deepen the divisions in international society by combining the defence of liberal-democratic values with a 'war against terror' which included regime change in Iraq without UN approval.

It is hard to tell whether Bull and Watson believed the expansion of international society to include the West's former colonies would lead to greater solidarism or demonstrate that aspirations in that direction were still 'premature' – and few contemporary members of the School have built on their comments (Wheeler 2000; see also Mayall 1996). An exception is Jackson (2000: 181), who believes that the diverse nature of international society in the postcolonial era makes it all the more important to defend the pluralist conception of international society which Jackson regards as the best arrangement yet devised for promoting peaceful relations between societies which value their differences and independence. For his part, Bull (1977: 317) did think that a elite cosmopolitanism was emerging – and observers might now add that he was touching on the impact of globalization on the society of states – but he was quick to add that this 'nascent cosmopolitan culture … is weighted in favour of the dominant cultures of the West'. Incorporating non-Western ideas in international law would help to overcome this problem but, Bull (1984a: 6) argued, there was clear evidence that the West and the Third World were drifting further apart:

we have to remember that when these demands for justice were first put forward, the leaders of Third World peoples spoke as supplicants in

a world in which the Western powers were still in a dominant position. The demands that were put forward had necessarily to be justified in terms of … conventions of which the Western powers were the principal authors; the moral appeal had to be cast in terms that would have most resonance in Western societies. But as … non-Western peoples have become stronger … and as the Westernised leaders of the early years of independence have been replaced in many countries by new leaders more representative of local or indigenous forces, Third World spokesmen have become freer to adopt a rhetoric that sets Western values aside, or … places different interpretations upon them. Today there is legitimate doubt as to how far the demands emanating from the Third World coalition are compatible with the moral ideas of the West.

Intriguing questions about the future of solidarism are raised by these comments, which foreshadowed the more recent analysis of the coming 'clash of civilizations' and discussions about whether the rise of 'indigenous' values and the development of radical or militant Islamic groups will deepen rivalries with the West (Huntington 1993). Yet nothing in Bull's writings suggests that the breakdown of international society is imminent. As we shall see in the next section, Bull believed that the majority of new states accepted the basic principles of international society including the ideas of sovereignty and non-intervention. Despite cultural and other differences which seemed to be increasing, new states and old could agree on some universal principles of coexistence and on some moral universals such as the principle of racial equality. How different societies come to agree on the universal principles pertinent to either a pluralist or solidarist conception of international society is the central theme in a form of analysis which steers clear of the fatalism of neo-realism and a naïve belief in the inevitability of global progress which occasionally surfaces in triumphalist forms of liberalism. In the end, diplomatic practice decides how far states can agree on moral and political universals which transcend cultural and other differences. On such foundations does the claim to be the *via media* between realism and revolutionism finally rest.

The revolt against the West and the expansion of international society

The impact of the revolt against the West upon the modern society of states was central to Bull and Watson's writings in the 1980s. Their key question was whether the diverse civilizations which had been brought together by the expansion of Europe have similar views about how to