

## 6 Weberian and Relationalist Worldviews: What Is at Stake?

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This volume challenges us to stretch our imagination and rethink the world of international relations. It engages modern substantialist, Weberian approaches to social science with new postmodern, relationalist or quantum approaches and concludes that substantialist views which emphasize the individual are outdated.<sup>1</sup> This conclusion is premature. Stretching our imagination is one thing; tearing it up is another. As we proceed, we need a clear picture of what we are stretching and potentially tearing up; it could be the reasoning individual and the human capacity to imagine itself.

This chapter offers a full-throated (albeit limited) exposition and defense of the Enlightenment/Weberian worldview that underlines modern social science. The Enlightenment worldview gave form to the aspiration for individual freedom and choice. It rescued humanity from the stultifying clutches of mysticism (Nature) and religion (the Divine). It dethroned philosopher kings and papal elites and empowered ordinary, individual human beings, equipped with reason, spirit (emotion, faith), and education, to create, assess, debate, and pass judgment on alternative worldviews. Natural science exploded under Isaac Newton's vision of an orderly universe fixed in time and space following predictable laws. And social science spawned a virtual cornucopia of modern worldviews, both individualistic and authoritarian. Liberalism (John Locke), capitalism (Adam Smith), humanism (Max Weber), communism (Karl Marx), and fascism (Friedrick Nietzsche), among others, competed (and fought)

<sup>1</sup> These terms have shifted several times in the course of this project. Substantialist may be a better term than rationalist because it implies substance (entities) rather than just method (practices). But to juxtapose substantialist with relationalist implies that relationalism has no substance, when of course it does. That substance lies in the content of relationships rather than of individuals. I use the terms relational-ist and relational-ism rather than relational to acknowledge the relationalist claim that it is a holistic worldview more than relationships or interdependence. And I use the terms Enlightenment (seventeenth–nineteenth century) and postmodern (twentieth century and beyond) to address the relationalist claim that the Enlightenment view is obsolete.

to organize and direct social and scientific life.<sup>2</sup> In the West, through struggle, humanist and capitalist worldviews prevailed, fueling material progress, the spread of republican institutions, and gnawing anguish about minorities left behind.

Now, postmodern worldviews of relationalism and hyper-humanism (unity of human beings and nature) challenge Enlightenment worldviews. They reject the individualistic ontology of human affairs in favor of a wholistic or cosmological one. Milja Kurki writes: “The relational perspective explored here suggests that the sciences – natural and social – are undergoing a ‘relational revolution,’ moving from Cartesian, Newtonian, and empiricist ways of knowing toward more relational ontologies and epistemologies in line with not only quantum science and relativity theory but also with ecological thought and decolonization of the sciences.”<sup>3</sup> Relationalist views envision a world of intense and entangled relationships deeply embedded in historical and cosmological context, in which substantialist things such as individuals and institutions do not exist or exist only in emergent form when they are investigated. In this holistic and processual universe, individual human beings have no location (position), no alternative (choice), and no escape (only one observed universe). The relationalist worldview draws from quantum science, in which reality is not fixed in time or space but appears simultaneously and unpredictably in multiple places and dissolves the distinction between the observer (individual) and the observed (universe).

These different worldviews not only reflect different ontologies, they prescribe different world politics. As Kurki infers, the relationalist turn entails a political agenda – a broadside assault on western rationality (reason), individuality (freedom), capitalism (growth), and colonialism (control/hierarchy).<sup>4</sup> In place of Enlightenment goals, relationalism advocates a future agenda of environmentalism that prioritizes climate change, hyper-humanism that relinquishes human control of nature, and egalitarianism that flattens material and moral differences. Much more is at stake than abstract intellectual discourse. The relationalist turn may imperil the very notion of free, reasoning individuals capable of self-conscious thought and choice in human affairs.

This chapter insists that individual human beings remain at the epicenter of social science inquiry. Quantum science does not mandate an epochal transformation of worldviews from rationality and individualism to relationality and cosmology.<sup>5</sup> Modeling the social sciences after the

<sup>2</sup> See Duara, Chapter 7. Hereafter, unless indicated otherwise, chapter cross-references refer to chapters in the present volume.

<sup>3</sup> Chapter 3. <sup>4</sup> Chapter 3. <sup>5</sup> Katzenstein, Chapter 10; Wendt 2015.

natural sciences is, in fact, a cardinal mistake. Relationalists highlight that mistake when they argue that Enlightenment science under Newton hijacked the social sciences and created a disenchanted modernity of atoms (individuals) and laws (causality) devoid of spirit and meaning. Now they make the same mistake by modeling the postmodern world after quantum science. But the Newtonian world was never just a billiard ball world of fixed entities, time and space. It was inspired and limited by Christian beliefs that the divine did not roll dice (a predictable world) and human beings were made equally worthy in the image of the divine. And the quantum worldview today is not just a mathematical model of entanglement and uncertainty; it is also a social vision to reimagine the political world as harmonious, contingent, and relationally or group-based (identity politics, multiculturalism, etc.), rather than as competitive, progressive, and individually based (markets, individual human rights, etc.).

The Enlightenment produced good and evil. This chapter does not claim otherwise. The Enlightenment's crown jewel, however, was the emancipation, for better *and* worse, of the individual human being as a reasoning, responsible, and rights-seeking agent in society. On balance, this secular, individually driven humanist worldview was progressive, materially and socially. Despite all of its wars and warts, the Enlightenment era superintended unparalleled expansion of material prosperity, human longevity, public education, political freedom (yes, more democracies than ever before), and global equality (yes, half of the world's population is now middle class).<sup>6</sup> Any post-Enlightenment worldview that challenges the individualist ontology of the Enlightenment has a high bar to meet.

The chapter proceeds in four parts. The first part explores the relationship between the individual and the whole, the timeworn conundrum of agency and structure. It contends that the individual remains primary over structure in several principal ways: as a source of endless diversity, a repository for the capability of reason, a portal of entry for human conversation, and the only species thus far that practices science and is capable of representing and studying itself. Individuals are not autonomous, but they have space in their embedded situation for choice and change. The main issue between this chapter and others in this volume is *how much* space they have and where that space *resides*. Relationalist

<sup>6</sup> Among many accounts of this progress, see Pinker 2011; Pomeranz 2000; Maddison 1991; Landes 1999; Nau 1990; and Mokyr 1990. On recent progress in race relations in America, see Thernstrom and Thernstrom 1997. By contrast, relationalists argue that the Enlightenment is the cause of everything retrograde about modern life: environmental degradation, systemic racism, white supremacy, oppression of minority cultures, unrelenting material inequality, and so on.

accounts tend to discount agency at the individual level, Weberian accounts at the structural level. We risk a lot by disregarding either.

The second and third parts address the content and juxtaposition of competing worldviews. How do we compare and test them? This part holds fast to the notion of a *universal capability* of individual human beings to reason and a *universal method* of science to test alternative propositions (worldviews) by experiment against an outside physical and social world. To be sure, the *content* of reason and science is *parochial* and differs by culture. In some worldviews, rational and individualistic factors play the larger role, in others nonrational (e.g., emotion, intuition) and holistic factors.<sup>7</sup> If these multiple worldviews are incommensurable, however, we have no way to evaluate and test them. Worldviews become religious not scientific undertakings, adopted by faith not reason. On the other hand, if we retain science as a common method (mathematics, experimentation), we can compare and evaluate worldviews across different cultures. In this section I assume that all worldviews incorporate two elements: *content*, or their relative emphasis on rational vs. nonrational factors; and *scale*, or their relative emphasis on individualistic vs. structural levels of analysis.<sup>8</sup>

The fourth part addresses the ethics of different worldviews. Worldviews have consequences – some horrific, such as the Holocaust. Who or what is accountable for these outcomes? If Weberian worldviews have moral shortcomings – and they do – relationalist worldviews do as well. Calling for openness and multiple worldviews (modernities), relationalist views are at times quite dogmatic. They pass judgment on worldviews as “right” or “wrong” not as “false” or “not false,” and speak of the pursuit of “truth” against which, they claim, resistance is futile.<sup>9</sup> They downplay individual agency and emphasize entangled relationships, conjuring up a “totalizing” worldview that marginalizes individual rights and privacy. They blur distinctions between science and religion and argue that worldviews “are inescapably normative.”<sup>10</sup> Yet, curiously, relationalists say little about the substance of relationalist norms. They pass over the question of how a relationalist world, in which all possibilities are welcomed, defends itself against the barbarity of an Adolf Hitler or a Joseph Stalin; they infer that other religions (Hinduism, Buddhism) are more in tune with nature than Christianity; they refrain from spirited criticism of worldviews that

<sup>7</sup> See for example, Duara’s discussion of the Chinese imperial world order: Chapter 7.

<sup>8</sup> In this sense, content (relative weight of rational vs. nonrational factors) and levels of analysis (relative weight of agency vs. structure) are “common” elements that individuals mix and match to create worldviews, analogous to the way historical elites or “creative agents” mix and match “cosmological” elements in Allan’s account. See Chapter 8.

<sup>9</sup> See Byrnes, Chapter 9. <sup>10</sup> Katzenstein, Chapter 1.

discriminate against women (Saudi Arabia, India) or Muslims (China); and they blame America and the Enlightenment for elevating European worldviews and marginalizing others. Weberian worldviews, by contrast, with their individualistic and disaggregated ontology, accommodate alternative worldviews as long as these worldviews submit to objective falsification and do not claim that their world is the only world which cannot be tested or resisted.<sup>11</sup>

## 6.1 The Individual and the Whole

As noted, Enlightenment worldviews are multiple. Where do we start? Michael Barnett provides a pretty good definition of liberal Enlightenment worldviews: “By privileging reason over superstition, change over tradition, science over religion, and, most importantly, humanity over discrimination, enlightenment thought held that people should be judged as individuals and on their achievements, not their religion or other discriminating factors.”<sup>12</sup> In this world, individuals are not only real and significant, they are morally and ethically accountable! They do not disappear, along with other “things,” from a Newtonian/Weberian world of “essence and identity” to join a relationalist world of “different kinds of dances.”<sup>13</sup>

Where did this emphasis on individualism come from? In the early Enlightenment, it came from Isaac Newton and his application of individual reason to the study of nature. “Think of it,” Gale Christianson writes, “a lone human being bent low over a desk, supplied with nothing more than a quill pen, a pot of homemade ink, and countless sheets of blank paper, calculating precisely how the cosmos goes.”<sup>14</sup> In the late Enlightenment, Max Weber generalized this application of reasoning to the study of human as well as natural sciences. Individual human beings, not the divine or prophets, interpreted reality. In Weber’s sociology, according to Stephen Kalberg, “individuals are genuine actors capable of interpreting their social realities and of initiating creative action.”<sup>15</sup> (Note the word “creative”: the capacity to imagine something that is

<sup>11</sup> In the Weberian account, the working world of science as method is closed in the sense that a single, objective but unknowable universe exists to adjudicate across worldviews, while the imagined world of reason is open in the sense that no specific worldview is excluded. This is the opposite of relationalism and quantum science, in which the imagined world is closed (the only world is the observed world), while the working world is open, accommodating many different localized, nongeneralizable methods. See Katzenstein, Chapter 10. On the closing of imagination in the quantum world, David Waldner (2017: 208) writes: “we must, however difficult as it is, refrain from imagining that we know what is going on prior to the act of measurement: the principle [of uncertainty] prohibits us from asking ‘what is really going on.’”

<sup>12</sup> Chapter 5. <sup>13</sup> Kurki, Chapter 3. <sup>14</sup> Christianson 2005: xiii.

<sup>15</sup> Kalberg 1994: 25.

neither embedded in the past nor represented in the present.) Kalberg continues: “Weber welcomed emphatically the freedoms and rights the modern world bestowed upon the individual<sup>16</sup> . . . Individuals act, for Weber, not social organisms or collectivities . . . meaning is found only in the consciousness of human beings.”<sup>17</sup> In their introduction to *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, Gerth and Mills concur: “His [Weber’s] point of departure and the ultimate unit of his analysis is the individual person.”<sup>18</sup> In Weber’s own words, “action in the sense of a subjectively understandable orientation of behavior exists only as the behavior of one or more *individual* human beings.”<sup>19</sup>

Weber considers four types of social action rooted in individual behavior: means–ends rational action (rational choice), value-rational action (idealistic or ideological), affectual action (feeling or emotional), and traditional or customary action (habitual).<sup>20</sup> Only one, means–ends rationality, is materially based. He does not conflate the social world with the natural world. Reality is not dead matter, disenchanting. It is both material (means–ends) and ideal (value-rational), emotional (affectual) and habitual (practices). Enchantment persists. It just doesn’t rule human minds at the expense of reason, as it did in pre-Enlightenment thought.

Per Weber, ideal and material interests intersect to yield patterning action. This patterning action is shaped by both individuals and structure. Structures exist, to be sure. Weber speaks of “value spheres” which prescribe obligations in various life spheres and “are not created by individuals.”<sup>21</sup> But value spheres conflict; there are no universally valid value spheres; and the individual adjudicates among them: “Torn between conflicting obligations derived from different value spheres, the individual must simply choose.”<sup>22</sup> For Weber, this choice is free, not determined by science or higher norms. As Gerth and Mills write, “He [Weber] felt that freedom consists not in realizing alleged historical necessities but rather in making deliberate choices between open alternatives.”<sup>23</sup> For Weber, “choice is the task of life itself.”<sup>24</sup> While Weber accords a role to structure, he warns against the holistic, all-encompassing notion of structure that Grove emphasizes in relationalism. As Kalberg writes, “organic theories, according to Weber, are helpful and indeed indispensable, yet, if utilized other than as a means of facilitating

<sup>16</sup> Weber 2009: x. <sup>17</sup> Kalberg 1994: 25.

<sup>18</sup> Introduction by Gerth and Mills, in Weber 1958: 55.

<sup>19</sup> Quoted in Kalberg 1994: 25 (emphasis original).

<sup>20</sup> Kalberg 1980: 1147–49; Kalberg 1994: 63–66. <sup>21</sup> Brubaker 1984: 72.

<sup>22</sup> Brubaker 1984: 72. <sup>23</sup> Introduction by Gerth and Mills, in Weber 1958: 70.

<sup>24</sup> Brubaker 1984: 72.

preliminary conceptualization, a high risk of 'reification' arises: 'society' and the 'organic whole' rather than the individual may become viewed as the single important level of analysis"<sup>25</sup>

Relationalists reject this Weberian view of individualism. They indict individualism as "the inability of man to see itself as part of nature due to a Christian legacy of seeing humans as 'lifted' above nature."<sup>26</sup> The original sin is hierarchy, "the 'human' standing over the 'environment',"<sup>27</sup> free and separate from nature (animals, plants) and other human beings (society), able potentially to surmount heritage and context, dethrone the architects of authority (church and state), and shape, in part, the world of the future. As Kurki suggests, this heresy of hierarchy derives from the Protestant worldview that human beings are called upon by reason and faith to explore, master, and grow the natural universe around them. By fostering such heresy, Christianity did not unleash freedom; it unleashed the master-less man, the rapacious capitalist, and the relentless colonialist.

Relationalists minimize the role of individual reason in human affairs and categorically reject any universal principles derived from reason. As Kurki writes, "knowing through reason is a particular way of materializing the world, not a universal manifestation of some abstract principles."<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the *capability* of individual human beings to reason and give meaning to the world around them *is* universal, even if the *content* of reason and its multiple manifestations are parochial and differ by culture, religion, and other factors. As Allan points out,<sup>29</sup> the application of reason or rationalization takes many localized forms. Individuals are endlessly diverse and wrapped up in many parts: heritage, race, class, nationality, emotion, psychology, intuition, charisma, character, reason, religion, civilization, cosmology, and so on. Many of these parts are deeply embedded and constitute the historical antecedents or "inheritance" that Allan

<sup>25</sup> Kalberg 1994: 27. In remarks submitted too late in our deliberations for a full response (Grove, draft of Chapter 4), Grove asserts that Weber is totally relationalist and "deconstructs" individualism. As my brief response suggests, that is an overreach. In the passages Grove cites, Weber is discussing charisma as "a balancing conception for bureaucracy" (i.e., for rational behavior) not embracing it as an overriding reality "in which," as Grove writes, "all of the agents of change are swept up in a whole." The value spheres remain independent of one another, and the individual remains the indispensable fulcrum of human (moral) choice among them. Wilhelm Dilthey also insists on the separation of the individual and society: "The individual is on the one hand an element in the interactions of society, a point of intersection of the various systems of these interactions, reacting to the influences of that society with conscious intentions and actions; but on the other he is an intellect contemplating and investigating all of this"; Dilthey 1989: 89.

<sup>26</sup> Kurki citing Rovelli, Chapter 3. <sup>27</sup> Kurki, Chapter 3. <sup>28</sup> Chapter 3.

<sup>29</sup> Chapter 8.

emphasizes; they anchor individuals in place. Reason, however, is the one part that offers the human being a potential escape from this procrustean embeddedness.<sup>30</sup> Incorporating self-consciousness, reason “lifts up” the individual human being to investigate, organize, study, and influence nature and society. Reason facilitates reflection, discussion, and *self-study*, offering a portability across differing worldviews that emotion, intuition, and religion do not. In some worldviews, reason plays a bigger or prior role; in others, intuition or religion does.<sup>31</sup> But in all cultures reasoning is present if individuals choose to apply it. To argue otherwise is to discriminate, to endow a particular individual or culture with a capability of reason that other individuals and cultures do not possess. And to ascribe reason to nonhuman beings (plants and animals) ignores the obvious fact that they do not have that capability yet, at least not in sufficient measure to permit self-study. When they do, they will join the world of humans and represent themselves. Hyper-humanism will have arrived.

In a sense, the capability to reason is the agency of modern human life. This agency is distributed at all layers or scales of human activity, individual and collective. It is perhaps most accessible on the individual scale; but without the structures of schools and free societies that educate and protect it, reason soon withers, locked up in monasteries, gulags, and samizdats. Thus, individuals and the groups they form are never completely autonomous from society. Indeed, at birth, they are relationally constituted without choice. But subsequently, based on the Weberian worldview, individuals may be educated by reason and reasoning communities (that’s us, the academy) to determine meaning for themselves and to choose practices and communities that meet their standards of reality and morality. Relationships are important, but relationships, unlike individuals, are not self-conscious and do not exercise reason. Somewhere in the relationalist world, therefore, agency – by which I mean self-conscious, reasoning individual human beings and the *inter-actional* (not *intra-actional* as in relationalism) communities they join and leave – is the starting and enduring point of reflective inquiry. For

<sup>30</sup> As Robert Nozich writes: reason is “a means whereby . . . humanity is able to correct and rise above personal and group bias.” See 1993: xiii.

<sup>31</sup> Notice I am not claiming the dominance of reason in all worldviews. In some, as Grove suggests, intuition comes first: “I have an intuition of what makes sense . . . and then I begin the reasoned process of discounting the other positions to build a defensible image of a judgement” (quote from Grove’s memo exchanged among authors before Zoom Sessions, June 8, 10, 12, 2020.) In others, such as the Weberian approach, one starts with reason and peels off the layers of intuition and other nonrational factors that don’t make sense.



Weberian thought, the bottom line is that human agency, at whatever level it may exist, is sufficient *enough* to provide *meaningful* choice.<sup>32</sup>

Individualism is indispensable for several other reasons. First, individual human beings are the only actors that can represent themselves. The kind of discussion we are having in this volume would not be possible without individuals. Notice there are no institutions authoring a chapter, no representatives of the embedded world we inhabit – no community practices, background or tacit knowledge, cosmological elements, religious communities, relationalist bundles or folds, quantum worlds, or any other holistic entity. Not even AI (artificial intelligence) – that is, no robots equivalent to the individual human being, at least not yet.<sup>33</sup>

Second, individualism is the source of endless diversity in human affairs. No two reasoning individuals are exactly the same! This is a remarkable feature of human evolution and distinguishes “human” particles studied by the social sciences from “natural” particles studied by natural scientists. Being “unlike,” human beings do not equate with “like atoms” in a Newtonian world or “like particles/waves” in a quantum world. To impose the natural science model on the social sciences commits the second sin of Aristotle’s understanding of equality: it treats unequal things – natural particles and human beings – equally.<sup>34</sup>

Third, human particles seem to be, again so far, the only specie that can conceptualize and study themselves, the only specie that is self-conscious and can practice both natural and social science.<sup>35</sup> If nonhuman beings (animals) were included in this exercise, how would they communicate and represent themselves? They would have to depend upon human beings. But who gave human beings that right? As Kurki acknowledges, “we represent them even at present, but often badly: we can learn to represent them and ourselves and our symbiotic relations better.”<sup>36</sup> Maybe so, but isn’t the presumption that we can represent them at all without their consent an exercise of hierarchical or colonial control? I’m not arguing against speaking out for animal rights. It’s a good thing, in my worldview, when human beings take care of all living things and nurture

<sup>32</sup> Relationalists contend that agency is a consequence not a choice: “agency is already relationally constituted in the sense that it was made possible by the configuration of historical inheritance and interactions with other actors” (Allan, Chapter 8).

<sup>33</sup> Even AI and robots depend upon causal (agentic) as well as contextual (structural) reasoning: “AI will stall if computers don’t get better at wrestling with causation” (Bergstein 2020: 63)

<sup>34</sup> The first sin is the one we usually think about, treating equal things (two human beings) unequally. See Aristotle, *Politics*, translated by Benjamin Jowett, book 5, part 1, <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/politics.5.five.html>.

<sup>35</sup> Except occasionally, this volume pays little attention to consciousness. See Katzenstein, Chapter 1 and Chapter 10; Wendt 2015: Part II.

<sup>36</sup> Chapter 3.

nature. I'm suggesting instead that human beings are the only creatures that raise these questions. Nonhumans are not yet at the table or, as far as we know, clamoring for a seat.

Finally, even if individuals are totally entrapped in the embedded features of their environment (that is, not autonomous *at all*), they are still the only channels by which we learn about worldviews, including holistic ones that deny individuality. Worldviews don't emerge out of the ether. They emerge from the mind and experience of a single individual.<sup>37</sup> *We can get to the "real" world of relationalism or any other "real" world only by starting in an individualist world.* The individual remains the *portal of entry* for worldviews and intellectual discourse about them.

## 6.2 Multiple Worldviews

There seems to be, at least to me, a consensus in this volume as to what worldviews are. They are a combination of values together with methods by which we navigate the world around us.<sup>38</sup> Without methods, worldviews become pure ideals or truth. They cannot be tested; they can only be accepted, like religion. And without values, worldviews become meaningless methods leading to anomie, the ultimate disenchantment. Critics like to characterize Weber's approach as "methodological individualism," but they ignore the prior value he placed on the reasoning individual. The individual was not a tool of analysis; it was the valued agent that gave meaning to analysis.

One way to compare worldviews, therefore, is to examine the relative content of worldviews – that is, the relative role of rational (reason) vs. nonrational (religion, emotion, etc.) factors in various worldviews, and the relative level of analysis being emphasized (i.e. individual vs. structure). Weberian worldviews tend to be heavy on reason and the individual level of analysis, relationalist worldviews on nonrational factors and the holistic level of analysis.<sup>39</sup>

In this volume, Milja Kurki, Peter Katzenstein, and Jairus Grove make the case for a strong relationalism that minimizes rational factors in human behavior and adopts a deeply historical and holistic level of analysis. Katzenstein highlights the nonrational aspects of reality: "The

<sup>37</sup> We acknowledge that when we celebrate events such as Kuhn's Aristotle experience, in which the pieces of an intellectual puzzle suddenly fall into place in the mind of a single human being. See Katzenstein, Chapter 10.

<sup>38</sup> Katzenstein, Chapter 1.

<sup>39</sup> By comparing worldviews, I am not insisting that worldviews are rivals or assuming that they are nested harmoniously inside a single preeminent worldview. I am simply suggesting that there is more than one valid worldview that is potentially falsifiable against an assumed objective world. See Katzenstein, Chapter 10.

interpretation of reality as consisting only of risk is not readily open to rational reconstruction or refutation.”<sup>40</sup> Kurki emphasizes the interconnectedness of everything: “nothing in the universe is outside of relational unfolding of the universe – not even the scientists or the laws of the universe which are also made relationally.”<sup>41</sup> Grove prioritizes intuition over reason (see footnote 31) and, while acknowledging that some layers or scales of agency may exist within the holistic structure, argues that such agency does not equate with a rational subject or individual human being. Instead, agency is relational at all scales: “We are not constituted *by* relations. We *are* relations.” The individual “comes from the unity we ‘feel’ as an ‘I.’” Actors become assemblages, ensembles, and folds that exceed the particular human subject and appear depending on “at what scale one asks the question.” “The scale of the investigator,” Grove adds, “radically alters what appears as a part and what appears as a whole.”<sup>42</sup>

Bentley Allan’s worldview is slightly less holistic and more attentive to creative elites, albeit still acting at a deeply embedded level of analysis. He starts with cosmological elements – ontology, episteme, temporality, cosmogony, and human destiny – that provide the ingredients for worldviews and exist outside worldviews in the sense that they come first.<sup>43</sup> Then, according to Allan, “creative actors” mix and match these elements in various ways to produce worldviews or “local stabilizations of cosmological elements.” The content of these stabilizations is not universal and depends on the history and experiences of different cultures. In the case of western thought, rationalization produced a localized worldview of “materialism” and “object-orientation.” This combination gave rise to “modernist values of rationality, control, and growth which serve as the basis of world politics today.”<sup>44</sup> In other civilizations, rationalization created nonmaterialist and “subject” oriented worlds (Haitian *Iwa*, Buddhism). Allan creates more space for individual agency: “Agency is always possible but never omnipotent. Creative agents must work with and against the cosmological and institutional resources at hand.”<sup>45</sup> The question is whether contemporary elites can interpret or reinterpret their inherited experience and alter it in any way that significantly affects the future. Who are the creative elites today that become the embedded historical elites tomorrow?

<sup>40</sup> Chapter 1.

<sup>41</sup> Kurki Draft, International Studies Association, Toronto, Canada 2019: 3.

<sup>42</sup> Grove, Chapter 4. This formulation preserves a rather critical, agentic role for the investigator, which is also true in quantum science. See discussion later in this chapter.

<sup>43</sup> Can these elements change? Can we add or subtract a cosmological element? If so, who or what does that?

<sup>44</sup> Chapter 8. <sup>45</sup> Chapter 8.

Presenjit Duara takes one element of Allan's cosmological menu, namely temporality, and links it, via the "epistemic engine" of the nation-form, with the Enlightenment worldview of modernity. Like Allan, he is sensitive to the multiple content of Enlightenment modernity – autocratic, emphasizing nonrational and holistic factors, as well as liberal, emphasizing reason and individualistic factors – and regards agency as weak even at collective scales. That leads him to wonder if the agentic force of civil society, which he sees as the most hopeful challenger of the Enlightenment nation-form, is ultimately too weak, too diffused to succeed.<sup>46</sup>

Timothy Byrnes drops down below the cosmological level of analysis and starts with religions, not cosmological elements, as foundational to worldviews. Religions have moral content, are multiple, and are concerned with truth not just process, interaction, or inanimate cosmological elements. He raises the interesting question of how we can know separate religions. Because religion is not only a way of *seeing* the world but also a way of *being* in the world, how do we bridge different worlds of *being*? He advocates a path of "informed empathy."<sup>47</sup> You stand outside other religions and become informed, and then you try to imagine that other religion by moving as close as you can to it without assuming or usurping its identity. But how close is too close? When do you invade or take over the other religion? Here Byrnes acknowledges a role for agency. Religions exist separately; they do not smear into one another like wave functions. On the other hand, religious communities are deeply embedded in the historical process. They are mutually constituted with other factors like politics, such that "a separation of religion and politics is a chimera."<sup>48</sup>

Michael Barnett disaggregates the analysis still further. Unlike Byrnes, he does not see religion and politics as mutually constituted (holistically entangled) and thus explores a critical possibility – rooted cosmopolitanism – in which the two variables are separated – namely a Jewish community in America committed to a cosmopolitan theology and humanism, but rooted in a non-Jewish territorial state. By moving to a lower level of analysis, he retrieves a variable and a degree of freedom that is otherwise lost when variables are mutually constituted.<sup>49</sup> For Barnett, Jewish worldviews derive from independent forces of religion and politics (territoriality) and have distinctive qualities that define "who is and can be a member, and what are the boundaries between themselves and others." These worldviews

<sup>46</sup> Duara, Chapter 7. <sup>47</sup> Chapter 9. <sup>48</sup> Chapter 9.

<sup>49</sup> The methodology of mutual constitution locks up separate variables at higher levels of analysis and takes them out of play at lower levels of analysis. The higher the level of analysis, therefore, the fewer the variables that can be isolated and act as agents. In this way, more holistic worldviews necessarily diminish human agency and choice.

worry about borders where entanglement may threaten security. They also have “core tenets.” A worldview may change not only from external entanglements but also from internal tensions when members of the community begin to debate its core characteristics.<sup>50</sup> To be sure, external circumstances still matter. Interacting in America, the Jewish community by and large favored an open, civic nationalism of cosmopolitanism; interacting in the Middle East, it chose a closed, ethnic nationalism of separateness. Yet value commitments or agency may hold the key to future outcomes. Barnett speculates that Jews in America and Israel may drift apart “if American Jews continued to orbit around a rooted cosmopolitanism; and Israeli Jews migrated from a prophetic Zionism to ethnonationalist Zionism.”<sup>51</sup>

In adopting a Weberian worldview, Mark Haas and I accord the greatest emphasis to the role of reason and the individual level of analysis. To some significant degree, leaders (elites) act independently in the present both to reinterpret the past and to shape the future. While they form groups and adapt to social circumstances, they also change those circumstances and ultimately create over time the structures that define a particular historical experience.<sup>52</sup> Some structures may be harder to change than others. Some may never change – in most cases not because they are unchangeable, but rather because human actions and interactions have not yet become aware of them or mobilized sufficient effort to engage and transform them. From the perspective developed by Haas/Nau, most structures are susceptible to change, not by one action or one human being (or even by one generation or one nation) but by a train of actions and interactions moving across time in a similar direction. Agency is distributed across all levels and time but it is strongest at lower levels and contemporaneously where it constantly “stirs the pot” to inhibit, shape, or diffuse subsequent structures at more holistic levels.<sup>53</sup>

I entered the investigation of worldviews by trying to find a framework to compare foreign policy debates in aspiring powers (China, India, Iran, Japan, and Russia) and determine whether those debates were moving away from or toward the foreign policy debates in the United States.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Barnett, Chapter 5.   <sup>51</sup> Barnett, Chapter 5.

<sup>52</sup> If “creative” elites have enough agency to create or change worldviews in the past, as Allan, Duara, and others in this volume argue, why can they not do so also in the present? This argues for a broader conception of elites, not just deeply embedded historical elites.

<sup>53</sup> See Chapter 2. There is evolution in this approach, as Ernst Haas (1990) persuasively argues, but there is no determinism (see also Nau 2008). And structure and agency, as in Weber, are both material and ideological (Mark Haas 2005, ch. 1; Nau 2002, ch. 1).

<sup>54</sup> For example, was the center of gravity of the Chinese foreign policy debate moving away from isolation toward more involvement in the world, while the center of gravity of the US debate was moving in the opposite direction? And, if so, were these shifts motivated

I was reaching for a structural level of analysis that would go beyond individual events and leaders (the focus of quotidian foreign policy) but not ossify in incommensurable cultures and civilizations. I created a framework of four schools of foreign policy thought – nationalist, realist, liberal internationalist, and conservative internationalist. To be as objective as possible, I defined these schools in neutral terms of scope (limited, expansive), means (military, diplomatic/economic), and ends (accept or transform world) of foreign policy, rather than ideological or substantive terms of liberalism, fascism, Islamism, communism, culture, and the like. I started, in short, with a set of rationalist categories (science as method) presumed to be accessible to all cultures through a universal human capacity to reason (reason as universal). The country specialists in the study said the framework could not be applied across cultures. Categories don't mean the same thing in different cultures. Well, we persuaded them to try anyway, and they were surprised at the extent to which it did illuminate the respective movement of debates among the countries.

Thus, it is possible, I concluded, to study the behavior of alternative cultures/religions/worldviews without either essentializing those worldviews (danger of the Weberian approach) or shackling them in a structure that can be challenged, if at all, only from within (danger of the relationist approach).

### **6.3 Worldviews and Science**

To do this, however, we need standards. The Enlightenment gave us the standard of science as a universal method: mathematics, experimental practice. That method depends upon the assumption of a real “objective” world even if we can never know that world. We ask and test how that world works, based on the values we hold (e.g., world is predictable or uncertain), and the real world pushes back against our experimental inquiries and tells us which worldviews are consistent with it and which are not. Notice science as method tells us only which worldviews are not false (i.e., not inconsistent with reality); it never tells us which worldviews are true (i.e., the actual reality).

This is a crucial point, at least for me. Truth lies not in the universal method of science but in the multiple values that inform science as method. Newton's Christian views led him to expect and practice a “predictable” science; Weber's human-centric views led him to anticipate a “progressive” science; the values held by Weber's critics led them

primarily by rising and declining power or by ideological competition? See Nau and Ollapally 2012.

to expect a “disenchanted” science; Hitler’s fascist and Stalin’s communist worldviews led them to promote “racist” and “pseudo” sciences (Mengele and Lysenko). Relationalists value conjunctive relationality (not individuals) and pursue a science of local not universal knowledge. Values inform all worldviews, but science as method tells us which worldviews fare best against an assumed objective world.

Strong relationalists reject science as a universal method of testing against an objective reality. They talk about “different sciences”<sup>55</sup> and argue that “science . . . is not defined by a ‘method’.”<sup>56</sup> Quoting Roberto Unger and Lee Smolin, Kurki concludes: “There is no scientific method, science is fundamentally defined as a collection of ethical communities.”<sup>57</sup> Here we come very close to worldviews as pure values (ethical communities) with methods being anything – scientific, magical, religious – that values dictate. Each community defines its own value and methods, and presumably the “real” world accommodates them all because there is no common method to determine which worldviews are not consistent with an assumed “real” (i.e., objective) world.

There are three layers of uncertainty involved in this issue of scientific objectivity (universality). Newtonian science studies the natural (nonhuman) world: objects such as planets and particles which cannot change their characteristics and which scientists neither like nor dislike. Laws are fixed and cannot be affected by the scientist. The human observer is also situated outside and independent of the natural world. In Newtonian science, the observer can be mostly objective even though scientists still operate in an intersubjective, ethical (social) community (for Newton, the Church of England) that defines what is or is not to be investigated and expected.

Weberian science studies not only the natural but also the social world in which human beings are involved and can change their minds. Laws are no longer fixed, and the observer, though still distinct, studies things it likes and dislikes, such as churches, trade unions, markets, political parties, etc. While Weberian scientists assume they can strip their social preferences from their scientific pursuits, they are human, not superhuman, and can succeed only up to a point. Objectivity is more elusive.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Katzenstein, Chapter 10. Katzenstein clings to the notion of a common mathematics which comprises “a world external to each agent that is not solely dependent on human minds.” But he argues that that reality is not an “objective entity” but a “mathematical abstraction” tied more to beliefs than facts.

<sup>56</sup> Kurki, Chapter 3. <sup>57</sup> Chapter 3.

<sup>58</sup> When relationalists make the claim that “first and foremost, relationalism is an *is*, not a *should*,” they would be more accurate to say that relationalism is a “might be,” how the world “might be” and “might be expected” to work, not how the world actually “is” or “should” work. See Grove, Chapter 4.

Quantum science adds a third level of uncertainty.<sup>59</sup> It assumes that the human observer is not only studying itself but is now inextricably entangled with the world it is studying. The observer, the observed, and the background exist only together (there is no separate individual, observation, or background), and emerge only when a particular question (measurement) is asked (made). Observation triggers or collapses the entangled quantum world and reveals the only world we can know. There is no world behind the observed one. Objectivity, in short, is now out of the question. The world depends entirely on the questions the observer asks.

Relationalism in general pushes us toward this quantum level of uncertainty. But a strong relationalism goes beyond quantum science in two ways: it drastically reduces (if not eliminates) the role of the observer (the individual investigator), and it gives up the universal method of experimental science in favor of a localized and diluted method of “trial and error.”<sup>60</sup> Quantum science does neither. In the case of the observer, it elevates, not eliminates, the significance of the observer (individual). Through the act of measuring, the observer now literally “creates” (“gives meaning to”) the world we observe, which is the only world we can know.<sup>61</sup> As Steven Weinberg muses, “Man may indeed be the measure of all things.”<sup>62</sup> That seems to reinforce the Weberian worldview that individuals are a significant location of agency. But in quantum physics the observer now has no way to test observations against an objective world because there is no objective world. The universal scientific method is no longer available, and we have to settle for a localized form of experimentation based on trial and error, yielding results which cannot be generalized. That point seems to reinforce the relationalist worldview.

But wait a minute. Some Newtonian (classical) physicists still contest the quantum proposition that there is no objective world. They argue that wave collapse is going on all the time objectively in a real but unknown world behind the observed world. They seek evidence of such “objective” wave collapse, independent of “subjective” measurement.<sup>63</sup> Interestingly, in

<sup>59</sup> Henderson 2020.

<sup>60</sup> Referencing Albert Hirschman, Katzenstein explains “trial and error” methods as “learning by doing, listening rather than preaching, humility, and the capacity to adjust and adapt to changing circumstances.” There is no systematic experimentation: “we stumble into progress rather than plan for it” or literally, “fall from error into truth” (Chapter 10). All knowledge is contingent and cannot be generalized from specific case to specific case.

<sup>61</sup> As Bob Henderson puts it (2020): “This makes human beings, who are after all the only ones making the observations, in essence responsible for conjuring the reality we experience out of a murky nether world that quantum mechanics implies is simply unknowable.”

<sup>62</sup> Weinberg 2013.

<sup>63</sup> As Henderson 2020 writes, this research involves “a class of theories called ‘objective collapse models’ that doesn’t rely on human observation to collapse a wave function’s



these efforts, Newtonian and quantum scientists use the same methods of science, mathematics and experiments, but derive very different content from those methods. Neither, however, has given up on the idea of science as a universal method. Quantum science may still prevail, but if it does it won't prevail forever, any more than Newtonian science did. Science advances from one falsified theory to another "not yet" falsified theory, not from false to true (at which point science ends).<sup>64</sup> And, since scientists tell us that we know only about 4 percent of the universe as we see it, the real world that we don't see is likely to remain elusive for a very long time to come. Scientists therefore should not speak about "the reality" let alone "the truth" of their findings, only about a method that tells them which findings are not false or not *yet* false.

In the meantime, quantum science raises some harrowing ethical issues when applied to the human world: the potential of unhinged human observers playing the role of creator, and the absence of any common moral standard by which to hold varying worldviews accountable.

#### 6.4 Worldviews and Ethics

Having downsized if not eliminated the role of the reasoning individual in shaping worldviews, and having adopted a quantum view that the world we see is the only one there is, relationalism in this volume has surprisingly little to say about ethical and moral responsibility, either individual or collective. This neglect follows from relationalist logic. Because the world is holistic and incorporates all possibilities, there is little or no choice, and hence little or no responsibility. We have removed practically all degrees of human freedom to act and change the world. What's left are different values or religions and related methods of science which are compatible but not commensurable, harmonious but not integral, and equivalent but not competitive. Katzenstein writes:

both science and religion are variegated practices of different ways of knowing . . . Both inquire into the possibility that the world might be different than it appears. Both are instances of us living in multiple realities and thus are examples of the profound human capacity of meaning-making . . . Religious and scientific practices are rooted in the world of play.<sup>65</sup>

Play is an interesting term, implying a game or imaginary reality. In that game, however, what are the rules, and who makes them? Maybe no rules are needed. Science and religion are drawing closer together: "the border

possibilities to a single outcome, but that invokes instead an objective, physical process to do the job whether anyone's looking or not." See also Powell 2015.

<sup>64</sup> Weinberg 2013; Kuhn 1962. <sup>65</sup> Chapter 10.

between quantum mechanics and religion is porous.”<sup>66</sup> Religious values and scientific methods do not collide, they resonate. Multiple beliefs and realities cut or “smear” into one another like quantum waves. They blend, harmonize.

Such a harmonious concatenation of multiple worldviews expresses an aspiration that we all share. If relationalism is nothing more than an appeal for curiosity, openness, and tolerance, it is welcomed. But what if multiple worldviews do not harmonize? What if some worldviews condone slavery, deny individual human rights, justify genocide, discriminate against women (Islam in Saudi Arabia) or minorities (Uighurs in China), wage holy war against the infidel, and so on? In the flattened ontology that relationalists advocate, are all worldviews “true” or “moral”?

The issue here is not whether human beings are entangled but what *the content* of that entanglement is. The content of entanglement is what Haas and I try to get at with the concept of “ideological distance,” whether worldviews are converging or diverging.<sup>67</sup> According to relationalists, the quantum social world is cooperative; ideological distance is always at or near zero. Conversely, the Weberian world is conflictual; ideological distance is always positive and sometimes large. As Alexander Wendt explains:

If your starting premise for thinking about social life is atomistic, then conflict is the natural starting point for life – every organism is out for itself, they’re all selfish, it’s all about survival of the fittest. Cooperation is very difficult because we’re all separate and all trying to survive and do our own thing. On the other hand, if your starting point is holistic, where everything’s entangled, then cooperation may be much easier to achieve. It may even be the default situation, and conflict is the exception. So it turns upside down a lot of the foundational assumptions, I think, of mainstream social science.<sup>68</sup>

Whether social life is atomistic or entangled, however, does not tell us much about outcomes. The master–slave relationship is entangled but not cooperative. The relationship between liberal states in the democratic peace is separate but not conflictual. No conflict in either case may mean no freedom to challenge slavery or democracy, and therefore no moral accountability – a *totalitarian* entanglement for which no one is responsible and which, apparently, no one can change.

Over time, of course, the content of social entanglement does change. Outright slavery is no longer acceptable. Communism, at least in the Soviet form, is gone. How does such change occur, and who is responsible for the original conflict and its eventual outcome? Katzenstein writes: “Divergent worldviews do not get resolved by appeals to logic and

<sup>66</sup> Katzenstein, Chapter 10. <sup>67</sup> See Chapter 2. <sup>68</sup> Wendt 2019.

evidence but through individual experiences and social processes.”<sup>69</sup> So, how do “individual experience” and “social processes” accomplish this resolution? If logic and evidence are ruled out, what are the means of resolution – emotion, habit, intuition, etc.? Are these means peaceful or violent? Practically everyone agrees that Nazism had to be defeated by rationalist instruments (Grove might say assemblages) of power; Nazi ideology could not be blended or accommodated by relationalist effects of norms.

The relationalist worldview lacks any ethical standard for evaluating or resolving divergencies in the content of alternative worldviews. Everything is local and specific even though the world itself is holistic and entangled. And all events are uncertain even though the quantum model itself is certain and can't be challenged. The combination of the loss of objectivity (no real world behind the observed one) and the multiplicity of incommensurable but equivalent worldviews leaves almost everything up for grabs. A flattened ontology leads to a flattened ethical landscape as well.

Kurki seeks a relational ethic of *response-ability*: an ability to respond sensitively, openly, and thoughtfully to human and nonhuman relationships.<sup>70</sup> It is an appealing insight. But in a world in which there are no things (individuals) or backgrounds (objective world), where exactly is this responsibility located, and what is its substance? Grove, for example, sees violence as relational but not easily overcome by consciousness-raising.<sup>71</sup> You can become aware of relations, he points out, without coming to a sense of the common good. Kurki ponders the same point about knowledge: science “is part of becoming . . . what this means is that we do not have clear criteria for good or bad knowledge.”<sup>72</sup> The substance of ethics or knowledge, what is good and what is bad, is hard to pin down. Even harder to pin down is the location of ethical responsibility. In Grove's examination of presidential powers and nuclear weapons, he admits that the president is ultimately unaware of who or what is in control.<sup>73</sup> And if no one is in control, no one has responsibility.

Responsibility is not merely the “ability to respond.” It's the ability to respond “by someone or something” in a “substantive” way toward some moral “end.” Weber distinguished between an “ethic of responsibility,” which Kurki's formulation might capture, and an “ethic of ultimate ends,” which Kurki does not consider.<sup>74</sup> Perhaps this is because an

<sup>69</sup> Chapter 1.

<sup>70</sup> Kurki Draft, International Studies Association, Toronto, Canada, 2019: 15.

<sup>71</sup> Chapter 4. <sup>72</sup> Chapter 3. <sup>73</sup> Chapter 4. <sup>74</sup> Weber 1958: 120–128.

ethic of ultimate ends requires more than a relationship; it requires a direction, an arrow, not simply a flat surface or “fold.”

As noted earlier, Grove suggests that “the scale of the investigator . . . radically alters what appears as a part and what appears as a whole.” If that’s the case, the individual investigator, the individual, is back at the heart of a quantum-based social science model.<sup>75</sup> The Weberian commitment to the individual human being as the source of meaning and morality in a multiscalar world remains indispensable. That does not rule out agency at other levels. Relationalist factors are multiple, real, and often confining. But, to a meaningful extent, they form out of the interpretations and interactions of reasoning individuals, they change because of individual initiatives, and they dissolve because individuals leave and join other relationships. *The only “authenticated” actors beyond the individual in a Weberian worldview, therefore, are those groups, institutions, classes, etc., that are chosen or affirmed voluntarily by the consent of individual human beings acting in a setting where they have a meaningful degree of choice.* Holistic worldviews diminish that degree of choice and consent, however well-meaning they may be by embracing all possibilities.

The Weberian view judges and chooses. That is neither easy nor pleasant. No one wants to be accused of being judgmental. But we all do it.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, how does one avoid it? The Holocaust was a monstrous act of evil. How do we understand it in a world that blends religion and science? As Barnett (Chapter 5) shows, the Holocaust poses a wrenching question of existence, not just a vague smearing of relationships and “response-ability” to change or becoming. If such a question can be answered only in a specific situation (when the quantum wave function collapses), then we have abandoned both our humanity and our influence on world affairs.

Am I forcing everyone into a Weberian worldview?<sup>77</sup> Possibly, but I am not saying that the Weberian view is the *only* view. I am saying that I can

<sup>75</sup> Katzenstein (Chapter 10) describes it this way: “Agents act on their personal experiences and beliefs and, based on their measurement practices of the world, they make wholly personal experiences. This does not mean that the theory is only about Self and not about Other. Anyone can use the theory. And in using it each one assures themselves that beliefs about the consequences of their encounters with the world are consistent.” Thus, the theory is universally available to anyone, like reason in the Weberian approach, but deeply relationalist based on measurement practices, which assures beliefs are consistent (harmonious), unlike the Weberian approach based on reason which allows for “inconsistent” beliefs.

<sup>76</sup> In this volume, for example, relationalists indict the Enlightenment; and Grove wants to call out the “old white men [who] still strut around the halls of America’s ‘best’ institutions as if they saved us from the Cold War, even as the planet crumbles under the weight of their failed imperial dreams.” Quoted in Katzenstein, Chapter 1.

<sup>77</sup> Weber sensed this tension when he wrote: “if we are competent in our pursuit [of teaching] we can force the individual, or at least we can help him, to give an *account of the ultimate meaning of his own conduct*” (italics original). See Weber 1958: 152.

find a location in the Weberian universe to host an alternative point of view (and do so when I compare the worldviews in this volume; see earlier in this chapter); I cannot find such a location in a relationalist universe. At the beginning, this project postulated a revolution in natural and social science thought rejecting Enlightenment and Newtonian worldviews. In later stages, Katzenstein emphasized complementarities among Newtonian and Post-Newtonian worldviews.<sup>78</sup> By complementarity, however, Katzenstein forces the Newtonian view into the relationalist universe where “the determinist or probability-inflected Newtonian world can be thought of as a special case that reveals itself when the quantum world of infinite possibilities and radical uncertainty collapses.”<sup>79</sup> Bottom line? There is no location in the relationist world for dissent. Alternatives either fit into the quantum world or are patently false.

Moreover, understanding another worldview does not mean accepting it or making it equivalent. Would the world be better off today if the Reformation and Enlightenment had not occurred, or if the Haitian *Iwa* not the Weberian worldview had dominated world politics after 1600?<sup>80</sup> Best, you say, if neither dominated? OK, but spell out the global consequences of the Haitian worldview or the specific parameters of equal coexistence which makes all worldviews (fascism, communism) acceptable and worth learning from. Unless we specify “what” we learn from “which” worldview, we are simply treating worldviews like souvenirs, collecting and trivializing them. Worse, we are opening the floodgates to any worldview with no standard for judging good and bad. Maybe the relationalist turn pops open an irresistible, new window of a more harmonious world that we have missed because of the atomistic and competitive frame of western modernism. But maybe it doesn’t. And if it doesn’t, not only material progress but individual freedom is at stake.

Which leads to a final question: where do relationalist cosmologies place the divine? What lies behind the Big Bang? Relationalists are eager to unify the human and natural worlds and see a growing commonality between science and religion. The obstacle to unifying the human and natural worlds, however, is an understanding of consciousness which humans have and nonhumans do not. And the obstacle to uniting the scientific and religious (*supranatural*) worlds is an understanding of the soul, the human capacity to imagine the divine.<sup>81</sup> Separating these three worlds – nature, humanity, and the divine – has led to abuse: humanity

<sup>78</sup> Chapter 10.    <sup>79</sup> Chapter 10.

<sup>80</sup> This question does not disrespect the Iwa; it takes it seriously.

<sup>81</sup> This is what Niebuhr (1949) called the “transcendence” of the human being.

masquerading as gods (the Church before the Enlightenment) or humanity “lifted up” to control nature (the critics’ view of the Enlightenment). But uniting them may lead to even worse abuse. What stands in the way of a science that poses as a religion or a nature that restrains prosperity?<sup>82</sup> By blurring the distinction between religion and science, nature and humanity, relationalism weakens Enlightenment institutions that separate state and church, markets and feudalism. It enables potentially powerful new gods of unchallenged expertise and science to take the stage (because, remember, there is no objective universe). We could wind up again in a pre-Enlightenment world wherein scientists and their authoritarian enablers usurp the power of privilege to suppress the rights of reasoning individuals. Resistance would be anti-science and futile, as it was anti-God and heresy in pre-Enlightenment times. As Timothy Byrnes writes, “if a relational cosmology is grounded in faith or in the pursuit of what is ‘really real,’ then the unknown itself is the basis of Truth and the human propensity to resistance is ultimately futile.”<sup>83</sup> And if the unknown is truth and cannot be resisted, the Dark Ages may be upon us once again.

## 6.5 Conclusion

I come back to the need, therefore, to maintain a Weberian worldview, whatever the debate in physics, if only to retain a “critical” perspective on the totalizing tendencies of the relationalist school of thought. As Mike Barnett concludes, “Without worldviews we would not know how to go on, and would be lost in the wilds until a charismatic leader arrived to provide guidance.”<sup>84</sup> In the barren “wilds” of relationalism (the jungle), that charismatic leader would probably be a totalizing ideology, one admitting of no alternatives – radical Islam under the Caliphate, Medieval Christianity under the Inquisition, totalitarian atheism under fascism and communism, or scientific elitism under a relationalist banner that substitutes expertise for politics and human choice. The Weberian worldview is still a necessary defense against that sort of evil.

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<sup>82</sup> For a nature that restrains prosperity, see Duara, Chapter 7 and Katzenstein, Chapter 10, anticipating that “pandemics and other natural disasters may become more effective brakes than the competition between states.”

<sup>83</sup> Chapter 9.

<sup>84</sup> Barnett Draft, International Studies Association, Toronto, Canada 2019: 1.

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