

John Hobson claims that throughout its history most international theory has been embedded within various forms of Eurocentrism. Rather than producing value-free and universalist theories of inter-state relations, international theory instead provides provincial analyses that celebrate and defend Western civilization as the subject of, and ideal normative referent in, world politics. Hobson also provides a sympathetic critique of Edward Said's conception of Eurocentrism and Orientalism, revealing how Eurocentrism takes different forms, which can be imperialist or anti-imperialist, and showing how these have played out in international theory since 1760. The book thus speaks to scholars of International Relations, but also to all those interested in understanding Eurocentrism in the disciplines of political science/political theory, political economy/international political economy, geography, cultural and literary studies, sociology and, not least, anthropology.



Cover illustration: 'Fool's cap map of the world' (circa 1580, artist unknown, coloured engraving). By depicting a world map set within the cap of a fool, or jester, this satirical print could be interpreted as questioning the distorted world image that we have constructed.
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COVER DESIGN: SUE NATION

'Hobson's powerful indictment that international theory merely constructs a Eurocentric conception of world politics represents a significant challenge to theorists both of mainstream- and critical-persuasions. In light of the broad intellectual history that Hobson provides, this book will be of immense interest to a diverse audience of readers.'

BRIAN C. SCHMIDT, Carleton University

'A masterful and provocative history of Western international theory that challenges IR scholars to be sensitive to the Eurocentric biases of their intellectual heritage. This important and carefully reasoned book is a call to all of us to re-examine the moral and ethical implications of our research.'

J. ANN TICKNER, University of Southern California

'John M. Hobson's ambitious, searching, and wide-ranging critique of a longline of thinkers – from Immanuel Kant, Adam Smith, to Hans Morganthau – whose writings gave Western international theory its current shape, is a tour de force. Not only does Hobson point up the persistently Eurocentric organization of the field, he also succeeds in making careful and important distinctions between varieties of Orientalism and Eurocentrism that are usually missing from contemporary analyses. All students of "world politics" will benefit from this book that represents one of the finest contributions to date to postcolonial studies of international theory.'

DIPESH CHAKRABARTY, University of Chicago

HOBSON The Eurocentric Conception of World Politics

JOHN M. HOBSON



The EUROCENTRIC CONCEPTION of WORLD POLITICS

Western International Theory, 1760–2010

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