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SELFHOOD, HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS, AND  
THE STATE IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THEORY

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A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies

University of Denver

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

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by

Edinson Oquendo

June 2017

Advisor: Alan Gilbert

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Title: SELFHOOD, HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS, AND THE STATE IN  
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## ABSTRACT

This work seeks to examine the role of the state in international relations. While international relations treat states as institutions endowed with agency, they lack any means of explaining how the state can gain agency, autonomy, and rationality.

My dissertation seeks to reorient the theoretical assumptions of international relations in two ways. I develop a theory of the state that seeks to explain the mechanisms by which individuals are able to form collective social institutions and to endow them with authority and agency. I examine the relationship of the individuals to collective bodies such as states that can account for how human beings are able to forge communities, and a theory which has the ability to explain how these collective representations are endowed with authority and agency.

I then seek to incorporate these views of human sociality, community, and the state in international relations. I do this by re-engaging with the classical foundations of the field. Specifically, I seek to integrate a more comprehensive account of both the state and international relations beyond a limited reading of Thucydides' *Peloponnesian War*. By engaging with the works of Aristotle, Plato, and Herodotus, I show how these theorists had a very sophisticated view both of the state and the international system. If we examine their arguments closely, the field of international relations can find a more comprehensive theoretical and historical foundation.

Instead, to date, the field has simply utilized social contractarian and utilitarian-rationalist models of individual rationality to describe states in an anarchic system. The ‘state’ of nature serves as the central metaphor of the social sciences since it believes that its models require the articulation of rationality in the form of a presocial egoist. The model of the presocial individual, formed in anarchy, becomes the basis of political theories’ rationalist accounts of the formation of states. For international relations, the anarchy of the international system is defined by the absence of governmental structure to regulate the behavior of states. The same explanatory assumptions and methods are used to explain the behavior of individuals and states. The collapsing of social institutions like the state with models of individuals is deeply problematic and limits the ability of the field to develop its own theoretical approach to interstate relations.

For international relations to grow as a discipline, it must recognize the basic social and cultural nature of man. International relations requires a theory that can explain the relationship of the individual to collective bodies such as states, that can account for how human beings are able to forge communities, and which has the ability to explain how these collective representations are endowed with authority and agency. In other words, it must explain the ways social institutions are formed and operate, how they gain their own autonomy, and their forms of collective rationality.

To explain the ways that human beings realize and maintain their social world, however, requires revising the foundational assumptions of political theory at work today. My dissertation seeks to do so by confronting the problem of anarchy and the ‘state of nature’ directly. Specifically, by drawing on the insights from anthropology,

evolutionary biology, and cognitive psychology, I examine the evolution of human sociality within hunter-gatherer bands which are structured as egalitarian and cooperative communities without need for coercive mechanisms of enforcement. Working from traditional political theory and international relations theory, I seek to find a better theoretical account of the nature of the state and to explain how the state gains agency in ways that help expand the theoretical foundations of international relations.

My dissertation does this in two ways. First, I develop a cognitive theory of community by tracing the evolutionary development of our species and seeking to identify the cognitive and emotional mechanisms that allowed for the emergence of human collective agency through the unit character of human selfhood, empathy, and collective rationality. I speculate about how aspects of these faculties allow them to be scalable from hunter-gatherer bands to larger forms of affiliation, giving humans the capacity to deploy 'we-feeling', to articulate a common set of interests, from the nation state to religious communities. The cognitive theory of the state is grounded in an evolutionary study that seeks to identify the symbolic normative representations that have allowed for collective action as well as for collective identity in group solidarity.

A cognitive theory of the state provides a scientifically grounded explanation for the emergence of a distinct realm of social ontology among humans. This has allowed for the development of collective agency. I draw out the implications of this approach to international relations by seeking to integrate a more comprehensive view of the state and community in international relations.

I engage with Greek political theory. I link the study of human sociality and the state to the Greeks, specifically seeking how Herodotus and Plato can help us develop more comprehensive theoretical approaches to international relations. Lastly, I examine the ways that human communities have become closely linked to the territorial state and the potential implications of neoliberal globalization for the relationship of governmental structures and communal organizations.

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# **CHAPTER 1: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, THE STATE, AND THE STATE OF NATURE**

## Overview

In this chapter, I will examine the limitations and contradictions of Hobbes' description of the limited role of human rationality as defined in the state of nature and his argument in favor of government to establish security and cooperative social relations.

I will discuss the distinct levels of analysis in international relations which treat the motivations of individuals and states as analogues, how IR lacks its own theoretical mechanism to account for the state or its operation, and how heavily IR has borrowed from other disciplines.

I will examine the failure of realism, liberalism, and mainstream constructivism to move international relations theory in new directions. I will acknowledge how neoliberal institutionalism has made contributions to IR with respect to its explanation of the emergence of cooperative institutions among states which might be applied to the function and rule of government for subjects.

I will recognize how IR has made progress in highlighting the social and ideational components of the international system as shown by the English School's emphasis on international society and how constructivism has emphasized the role of norms and identities in the conduct of states.

I will examine Ferguson and Mansbach's argument in favor of the study of politics rather than states. I will also discuss the limitations of positivist and non-positivist accounts as well as those of constructivism, state-centered constructivism, more radical forms of constructivism and postmodernism.

Only Marxism will be found to somewhat approach the need to include sociality in a theory of the state. In fact, in this chapter I will argue that IR needs a theory of the state which accounts for human sociality and that the place to begin is with the development of a new theory of community. Only in this way can IR account for how people organize and act collectively, and, thus, be able to adequately understand states and other forms of social organization.

### *The state and the state of nature*

Contemporary social science, political theory, and international relations are operating from a limited and contradictory conceptual framework: specifically, that social studies, grounded in the study of 'society,' develops from three ever present, though underexamined, interrelated metaphors. Namely, assumptions in theoretical paradigms are grounded in ideas about the state of nature, anarchy, and human nature.

Modern political theory and international relations theory both emerge as meditations on the state of nature. The state of nature acts as the central theoretical meditation of Western social science because it seeks to discover something foundational, institutional, and universal in human nature. The state of nature allows the true nature of human rationality to be defined, irrespective of cultural differences. Human rationality in the state of nature, however, in its operation also highlights the limitation of human rationality, namely its inability to establish security and form state cooperative social relations independent of government.

The state of nature is often seen as developing in the early modern period, but it has its origins in antiquity as a theoretical construct. The state of nature is operant in both ancient, early modern, and modern political theories (Jahn 2016). Behind the theoretical utility of the state of nature rests a deeper, persistent historical quandary of the origin and nature of humanity.

The state of nature provides the prism from which four intertwined arguments emerge: first, a theory of human nature; second, anarchy as a zone of unrestrained human behavior in the absence of exogenously imposed limitations; third, a theory on the origin and function of government; and, fourth, as a temporal point from which social and political developments emerge in the realm of history and become objects of investigation.

Anarchy is a theoretical quandary for both modern political theory and international relations theory because anarchy links the absence of governing institutions with systems that are open to conflict, struggles for domination, and violence.

Anarchy as a philosophical construct is centrally a normative argument. In anarchy, human nature is stripped of its cultural or social particularity, its socially imposed beliefs, and its habits. What remains is what is true. What does remain, all too often, is a being devoid of moral quality, egotistical, and driven by avarice and desire. Human nature, in this way, can emerge as a universal category, but it is one that sees reason and interest in terms of everyone's own individuality and particularity. The universal character of 'human nature' does not facilitate cooperation, nor does it foster understanding. It acts, rather, as a central mechanism that drives violence and insecurity.

For brevity, I am going to focus on Hobbes's articulation of the state of nature and the state since it forms the theoretical background for the ways that political theory would engage with the idea. In addition, Hobbes's state of nature is the basis for realism's view of anarchy in international relations.

Within Hobbes's theory, far from an argument for a perfect geometric relationship, there are two distinct views of human nature. One articulation portrays individuals as rational, egoistic, self-regarding, and focused, above all, on their self-preservation. The other sees human beings as driven by emotions and appetites, with desires for recognition and admiration from others, but also desirous of exercising domination. They are not only covetous but prone to bad judgment. Hobbes's political theory is psychological. It is our commonality that makes us all potential threats and enemies. Hobbes argues that when we each are honest with ourselves about our true individual natures, with their base passions, vanities, and desires, we recognize our true

animality. In recognizing our true natures, we recognize the inherent passions, vanity, and egotism of others, what makes each and every one a danger to others. As Hobbes states:

Read thyself....to each us that for the similitude of the thoughts and passions of one man, to the thoughts and passions of another, whosoever looketh into himself and considerth what he doth when he does think, opine, reason, hope, fear, etc.....he shall thereby read and know what are the thoughts and passions of all other men upon He that is to govern a whole nation must read in himself, not this, or that particular man; but mankind  
(Hobbes 1996, 10-11).

Human beings are prideful and given to hubris. We are the children of pride, bound by our own passions to destroy ourselves in the absence of restraint.

### *The Problem of Equality*

The most important force at work in driving anarchy in the state of nature, however, is not human rationality or passionate irrationality but human equality. Equality and inequality is a central dialectic of modern political theory. The equality of man is, I argue, the most important component at work in the state of nature, precisely because it treats human equality as a problem. Equality does not form the basis of human society, but is the general problem to overcome. The state of nature creates insecurity, precisely because human beings are roughly equal in capabilities. No single man can dominate or surpass others absolutely. Approximate human equality does not allow any individual to dominate another; superiority in one domain can be countered in other areas. While some individuals might have greater strength, that can be overcome by another's craft or cunning. All members of society are insecure because each has the ability to destroy the

other (Hobbes 1996, 86-93). It is our commonality that makes us enemies. When we each are honest with ourselves, we recognize our own base desires and interests.

The security dilemma of the state of nature can be overcome by the establishment of government. The state is formed by its members as an extension of their individual rationality. The 'rationality' of the state rests on its development as an instrument of agreement, a covenant created by individuals as a way to secure their lives and advance their interests (Hobbes 1996).

*What is the state?*

Just as the state of nature is produced by equality, the answer to the security dilemma is through inequality. Inequality plays an important role in the social contractarian articulation of the state.

Politically, the state is defined by its ability to centralize power and to act as an unequal, and superior social agent. Economically, the state allows for the development of inequality through the enforcement of property rights, and the establishment of commerce (Hobbes 1991, 238-40).

The political dimensions of the state center around the development of government as a mechanism that can prevent violence among individuals. The state overcomes the security dilemma by creating an institution with unequal power over all other members; the agential power and legitimacy of the state rests on its capacity to dominate its individual members. The state is realized and defined by its capacity to

*impose* order upon its subjects—in other words, to rule over its subject, as defined by Hobbes, with fear and awe (Hobbes 1991, 102-10).

This definition of the state, however, is understood not merely by early modern theorists, but also in the Weberian definition of the state as the monopolizer of legitimate violence. Power is defined negatively—as a mechanism that can be used by government against its citizens, as opposed to seeing power as an agential resource.

Liberal theories of the state view the state as a means not merely of preserving the life of its citizens, but also of allowing for the development of inequality through its role as an enforcer of contracts and private property (Locke 2005).

Western social theory operates within a paradox. The state becomes the central institution of historical and political investigation, yet the theoretical articulation of the state is profoundly limited. Indeed, if closely interrogated, the theoretical logic that underpins Western political practice actually denies the capacity of the state to exist as a meaningful social institution.

This is because we have developed theoretical systems that define human nature as distinct and independent of society, and define rationality in pre-social and very narrow, self-regarding terms. Rationality, therefore, is expressed in the capacity of individuals to act on the basis of their self-interest, with self-interest formed outside of a social order.

In this way, human sociality as a component of our species is both denied and transformed. Its transformation rests on the merging of two distinct phenomena: namely, social and political order. By collapsing society and the state into a single conceptual



category, we link the state as the institution from which social living emerges and depends.

Government becomes the authoritative institution of human social organization; the criteria of 'society' operates in terms of politics. In this way, we explicitly link the study of human history with the development of coercive governmental institutions. We define history in terms of politics, and politics in terms of government, and the study of governmental institutions as the study of 'man.' This process reinforces a key dogma that believes human cooperation can only be accomplished through the development of regulative and juridical bodies.

The state becomes the central institution of Western political and historical orientation, yet the rationality that forms the state sees the state as a mechanism of satisfaction. The state is instrumentalized, and yet the state also acts as an independent category of reference.

### *The Limits of the Leviathan*

Hobbesian individualism, operating within modern conceptions of individual rationality, cannot develop into a theory of the state. Theoretically, the state cannot establish a coherent relationship between itself and its citizens that is not purely instrumental.

The rational egoist forms the state as a mechanism to further his/her self-interest. The Hobbesian individualist, however, is not capable of developing into a citizen. A corollary to the state's monopoly of the use of violence domestically, however, is the

capacity of the state to protect its citizens from foreign threats. To provide for the security of its citizens in war, however, requires that a state's subjects engage in actions which risk their lives and property. For Hobbes, the individual enters the state to protect his/her life, and, therefore, the state cannot murder its own citizens without cause. Still, he recognizes how states act as 'armed gladiators' in competition against each other (Hobbes 1991, 89-90). Hobbes also argues that the state can call upon its subjects to perform military duties, even if they result in the death of the individual. In addition, the sovereign can call for the death of his subjects even if he/she is doing so for immoral ends. Therefore, when King David orders his soldier into battle to die so that he might take his wife as a lover, Hobbes argues he was justified, politically, and that the only moral sanction he violated was with God (Hobbes 1991, 148; Schrock 1992, 98-114). Therefore, the right to life, which is the only right that Hobbes sees as foundational to citizens, is extinguished, given that the interest of the state and society take precedence. Should the sovereign breach his/her primary ethical responsibility, acting in his/her own private interest, Hobbes seemingly accepts this, but the functions of the sovereign have now been reduced to the whims of a tyrant. He/she is an individual, superior in power, but driven by the same egoism common to all in the state of nature.

An additional, and often ignored, dimension of Hobbes, is that the sovereignty of the state, once established, is founded on its capacity to control the church and education. It is in building the state, in establishing the Leviathan, that Hobbes's theory further loses its structure, as the centrality of beliefs and moral convictions are recognized as essential features of human beings. It stands to reason, that it is only in the moment by which the

state is created, that the validity of the theory—in its capacity to describe the transformation of the state from the original condition of nature to the institutions of society—that the test of appropriateness and validity can be tested. Yet, while the role of the state as educator and censor is critical, morals did not exist before the state. Language lacked power as a communal practice because words and meanings were used according to the interpretation and desires of each individual (Hobbes 1991, 195). Right and wrong, good and bad, have significance only when their meaning and use are held in common and are articulated by law.

Hobbes gives the sovereign great power to censure deliberation, education, and church doctrine in order to reinforce the authority of the state and obedience to the law as the most central duties of citizens. Citizens' beliefs, moral concerns, consciousness and any objections to actions or decrees by the state threaten the state's moral autonomy and are among the greatest dangers to it. Moral discourse is very dangerous to a state. To argue about principles is to invite irreconcilable divisions that not only divide people but may also potentially motivate people to engage in actions that lead to their own destruction. The danger to the state, therefore, emerges from its citizens' overwhelming propensity to act by faith, by belief in erroneous doctrines, and, by so believing, to engage in irrational, self-damaging actions. One must ask why, unlike Locke, Hobbes cannot posit a state in which the function of the sovereign stands separate and without regulative authority over churches and allows for faith among religious communities. Sovereign power is conditioned on absolute authority over the military, taxation, religious beliefs, and doctrines (Hobbes 1996, 127). The government operates through the

power and fear in evokes in its subjects. It does not advance a positive doctrine; it only requires its citizens' absolute obedience and faithfulness to the laws. The state must regulate society, but, by the logic of Hobbes's theoretical postulate, the state and society should be basically identical. Hobbes, however, recognizes that they are not.

Hobbes believes that one cannot speak of morality objectively. Morality is understood strictly as adherence to law, and laws are only formulated within the state. Morality is formed in the state. It does not exist outside of the state. Morality it is not something transcendent in nature (Hobbes 1996, 147). All judgements and opinions in the state of nature are individual assertions, beliefs, and claims. In establishing the state, the individuals surrender not only their power to the sovereign, but also their capacity to independently judge the actions of other individuals (Hobbes 1996, 90, 122-23). All conduct must be judged in accordance with sovereign law.

The erecting of the state, the central act of statesmanship for Hobbes, is conducted in language. The sovereign creates a common culture with a common set of shared definitions. In this way, heresy is nothing but a particularly malicious form of "private opinion" (Hobbes 1996, 318). At the same time, Hobbes recognizes that what a sovereign must guard against among his subjects, however, is not actions that arrive from their self-interest. Instead, it is the absence of reason or logic. Humankind has an inherent tendency to be seduced by moral and religious beliefs. He/she tends to be led by passion to act not only against the state but against himself/herself. The rational, self-interested individual found in nature—where justice and morals do not exist—is replaced by a human being of

passion who is illogically ready to wage war against others over the slightest difference in religious interpretation.

Reason is limited to self-interest, to the facts of the world. By this token, however, the force of reason in the operation of human affairs is profoundly limited.

### *State of Nature or Civil War?*

Indeed, the irony of early modern political theory is that it was motivated not by the absence of social order, but by the collapse of a social society fractured by civil and confessional wars. Hobbes and Thucydides, both paragons of international relations theory, were confronted above all with the violence and savagery of individuals within divided states, not outside them. Like Thucydides, and no doubt much influenced by him, Hobbes was at a loss to comprehensively answer the great tragedy of his age. Hobbes's view of language parallels Thucydides' description of the corruption of language during the civil war in Corcyra. It is civil war, the loss of communal unity, that motivated Hobbes.

Hobbes believed that the emerging civil society, the exchange of ideas and values, and moral debates could only herald disaster. I argue, that Hobbes's underlying philosophical arguments were driven by a set of concerns that are ignored, but recast his basic argument. In the tumult of his age, it is the irrational passions of humankind, his/her lack of self-regard, his/her tendency to revolt, and to scarify himself/herself in the name of moral and political doctrines that concerned Hobbes (Hobbes 1996, 55). Hobbes's writing was motivated by the application of narrow self-interest, the limiting of an

individual's frame of reference *away* from debates about heavenly matters, *to* each individual concerning himself/herself with the facts of this world and the preservation of his/her life. Hobbes could not, however, understand the way that normative questions shaped social unity and division. Therefore, he reduced the state to a zone of uniformity and the standard of morality to conformity with the law.

Hobbes illuminated this by tracing the etymology of conscience. Conscience, as a deep personal truth, had been a rallying cry among English rebels and dissenters. Conscience was understood as what was integral to its possessor; Hobbes would not compromise it for any earthly institution. In its original Roman form, consciousness meant to "know together." It was a fact between two individuals that both of them knew to be true. It became increasingly used to refer to private thoughts and ideas until it was virtually meaningless. It became nothing more than, in the eyes of Hobbes, a way for individuals to assert their private opinions and beliefs (Hobbes 1996, 54-57).

This merely reflects just how unable Hobbes was to engage in understanding the motives that were driving the behavior of individuals in his time. Hobbes could not understand the psychological and moral dimensions of society; therefore, he reduced society to individuals, judgments to private opinion, and moral claims to mere assertion. More contemporary analyses show similar limitations.

### *International Relations and Levels of Analysis*

The intellectual autonomy of international relations as a field is most clearly articulated by the distinction drawn between different levels of analysis. In *Man, State*

*and War*, Kenneth Waltz argues for three levels of analysis: the individual, the state, and the international system.

Each level forms an alternative realm of investigation, theorization, and explanation. Individual level explanations are grounded in psychological theories of human nature or on the beliefs and interests of a particular statesman. State level theories focus on the factional politics of interest groups within the state, institutions of the state, its class composition, and its ideological orientation. It is commonly assumed by IR scholars that the validity of international relations theory depends upon its ability to explain the international system as a distinct interplay of social reality and action (Waltz 1959, 288-92).

While three distinct levels of analysis might exist, however, a single logic of analysis explains all levels. The behavior of individuals and the behavior of states are explained in nearly identical terms, using the model of rational agents operating strategically within a system. Social contract theory, economic theory, and game theoretical models all operate from the premise of utility-maximizing individuals operating rationally within a system (Suganami 1986, 145-58).

International relations is the study of the state system. Luminaries in international relations theory readily admit that, to date, international relations has largely imported theoretical contributions from other disciplines. As a result, international relations theory suffers from a wide intellectual deficit, and, in consequence, the discipline itself has had hardly any discernible influence on other academic subjects (Buzan and Little 2000, 23-25).

This highlights the deepest problem in international relations theory. It treats the motives of individuals and the motives of states as analogues. Interests are treated as givens. For realists, states seek power. Why do they seek it? Either from the fear of losing power or from the simple desire for more power. Liberal theories operate on the same basic correspondence of individual and state; they are thought of as being mirrors of each other in interests and reason.

As Lydia Odysseos has correctly pointed out, modern social ontology rests on the question of the self. International relations theory is based on the question of the ontological status of the state (2007, 22-23). This requires a way to explain the relationship of individuals to the state, not by the application of a model of explanation that is inadequate for either.

International relations theory is deficient. As an intellectual discipline, international relations theory assumes the ontological status of states. It has, however, no theoretical mechanism by which to account for the state nor ways to explain how it operates. This is, in part, because international relations does not have its own theoretical foundation. It applies political and social theories developed within political and economic systems, and deploys them at the level of the international system as a whole. However, the ontological commitments embedded of many of these theories deny the capacity of the state to exist as a cohesive, autonomous institution. Therefore, international relations cannot be a truly legitimate field.

International relations theory does not explain the state, but subsumes the state in theories of individuals. The behavior of individuals within the state, and the level of



states within the international system are explained by an identical logic. An examination of theories of the state, both within political and economic theory, will reveal the inadequacy of current theories to explain human cooperation.

The anarchy of the international system is the result of the same lack of a governmental structure. States seek their independence as well as are driven to accumulate power, either to dominate others or prevent their own domination. Together, this leads to cycles of violence among states (Waltz 1979, 102). The only way to overcome anarchy, as Hobbes would happily answer, is in the development of a world state. Peace among states can only come through a sovereign with the power and ability to act as the ruler among states or by incorporating all the states into a single world state.

The individualist articulations of rationality and “human nature” become the leitmotif to describe politics among states. The limited view of man is applied to states. As such, we get a consistent tautology that describes the “unit” by the same reductive qualities which are motivated by power, fear, and the desire to dominate. This is not to say, however, that this problem is the result merely of the way international relations appropriates theory from other disciplines. Instead, it is a reflection of the way that human beings have continued to be defined in negative, antisocial, and oppositional ways. As such, all social phenomena and individual agents are being reduced: politics is simply about power; moral discourse is masked power.

### *The Individual and the State*

There are two elements that must be addressed. First, international relations theory cannot merely use theories of individuals. It must develop a robust theoretical account of the state. However, to do so, it must also tackle the political theories of the individual that are operant in political science. After all, we cannot entirely escape theory at the level of the individual. To do so, however, requires a comprehensive theory of human sociality.

It requires that we recognize how and why social institutions are distinct from individual agents. Different levels of explanation, though important, must be able to build a theory of human interaction, and, from there, a theory of the state. If we are to preserve distinct levels of analysis, it still requires there be a coherent way to explain the relationship of individuals, states, and the international system. There necessarily is a dynamic and explicit relationship among individuals, their political communities, and the organization of the international system.

### *IR Inverted: There Is No Inside*

R.B.J. Walker, for instance, argues against the notion that there exists a separate field of international relations theory. International relations theory is political theory, and, more to the point, a critical constituent of political theory precisely because of the way it constitutes the state as a bounded space between inside and outside (Walker 1993, 5-22).

I agree with Walker, but I make a fundamental shift in the categorical interpretation of the relationship between the international and the political dimensions of theory. The deficiency rests not solely with the inadequacies of international relations, but also with the limitations of political theory as a whole. I argue that nearly all forms of political theory are actually just forms of international theory. Political theory is a form of international theory since it posits a pre-social form of human individuality.

*The State: Survivalist or Merchant*

The intellectual and theoretical limitations of international relations are embodied in its dominant theoretical articulation—specifically, in structural realism. Why? Because neorealism is not a theory of international relations. Instead, Waltz simply imports microeconomic market models and deploys them to explain state behavior in ways that are identical to theories of the firm in the marketplace. Importantly, just as microeconomics does not require a theory of the firm, neorealism eschews developing a theory of the state (Waltz 1979, 76-7). In this, however, international relations does little more than reproduce the dominance of a narrow economic interpretation of human behavior widely shared within the social sciences.

Debates regarding the best way to study international relations have been undertaken for decades. Realism, liberalism, and mainstream constructivism (as most clearly articulated by Alexander Wendt) have all failed to move international relations theory in new directions. At face value, this might seem to be the result of the ways in which liberal, constructivist, and postmodernist international relations theorists produce

more a critique of realism than a robust research program in its own terms (Elman and Elman 2002).

The limitations of these theoretical schools, including the incoherence of neorealism, are fundamentally rooted in the field's inability to deal with the phenomena of the state. The state acts as the central object of theoretical analysis, but it is stripped of any content as a social phenomenon.

One cannot have a theory of international relations without having a theory of the state because the model of the individual and the model of society are always reducible to the egoist formed in the state of nature.

Therefore, one of the greatest advancements in international political theory centers on the development of neoliberal institutionalism. What I find most salient about neoliberal institutionalism, however, rests on how Robert Keohane, one of the most influential figures of international relations, maintains that theoretical advancements in the field had to develop out of the theoretical premises that constituted the paradigmatic assumptions of the field about the nature of the state.

Therefore, for cooperation and reciprocal relations to develop between states, it had to operate within the anarchic character of international relations, the sovereignty of the state, and, above all, the principle of "self-help," i.e., the state as a rational egoist.

For Keohane, states must be treated as rational egoists and interest-maximizing agents (1984, 29). International institutions are developed by and express the interest and concerns of sovereign states. The theory of cooperation of neoliberal institutionalism

marginally expands the theoretical assumptions of neorealism, but it also demonstrates how the interests of the state are not solely defined by security and relative gains.

What is salient here is that the regime theory developed to explain the emergence of cooperative institutions among states could also be applied to and serve as the same explanation for the function and rule of government for subjects.

Regimes help to lower the asymmetric distribution of information that facilitate free riding and cheating. By increasing transparency and lowering the risk of exploitation from any one party, the dangers presented by collective action can be sharply reduced. Through this, regimes lower the cost of entering into mutually beneficial agreements among states (1984, 255-62). Furthermore, as informational asymmetry is lowered, the information collected and disseminated by the regime increasingly becomes credible. The reputation of states, along with the cost of defection, hinders the reputation and, therefore, the capacity of states to enter into beneficial interactions with other states. Therefore, there is an increased incentive for states to interact in ways that are transparent and predictable, with a focus on the long-term benefits of such exchanges rather than on any short term opportunities that defection or cheating might present (1984, 103-6). The “shadow of the future”—in that there are repeated interactions among states—is what allows for cooperation to emerge (Axelrod and Keohane 1993, 91).

The resilience of the state as a political institution is similar to the ways regimes become institutionalized in interstate relations. These interactions allow for the development of regimes, which, in turn, bind interstate issues into a complex set of mutually-interrelated areas. Even when disputes arise over specific points, these points of

disagreement are embedded within a wider area of commercial and informational exchange. This gives regimes greater stability. Since they serve a broad set of issues, no single issue acts as the cause of their effective dissolution. It also prevents institutions from being captured by a narrow industrial interest (Keohane 1984, 89).

For both neorealism and neoliberalism, the nature of the state is never questioned or interrogated. The differences rest on terms that are entirely independent of the state; they are rooted in what kind of processes are at work in the international system. For the first, the anarchic nature of the system places security as central. For neoliberalism, the economic forces of the market engender the highly responsive, market-oriented state that seeks to both adapt to and organize itself around the demands of a globally-competitive economic system.

### *Socializing the State*

The greatest contributions in the field of IR have been in highlighting the social and ideational components of the international system. The social dimensions of international relations among states, for instance, are increasingly recognized. The social dimensions of the international system, however, also reinforce the basic paradigm that hinders progress in the field. Social and cultural theories operate from the articulation of the individual developed by modern political theory. They seek to demonstrate that the relations of states are not the product of an uncontrollable anarchy, but are the result of social interactions among states that are based on intersubjective beliefs and practices.

The English School of International Relations is the first to emphasize the notion of an international society. International society is formed by the interaction of states by which sovereign states can be united narrowly by a common set of rules and practices, or, more broadly, but a common culture. This common culture is reflected in their existence as sovereign states that recognize each other's independence. While Bull and other authors working in the English School tradition raise many questions, they have many affinities with realism. They never develop an alternative paradigm for the study of international relations, however, and produce only a slightly more nuanced form of realism (Reus-Smit 2008, 487-491).

An international society is distinct from the mere conduct of diplomatic relations among sovereign states. The institutions and practices of an international society are not merely instrumental. Instead, the states that make up an international society share common values that guide the ways they relate to one another.

Constructivism, by emphasizing the centrality of norms and identities in international relations theory, has greatly increased the capacity to understand the conduct of states. It recognizes that anarchy is produced by choices and beliefs. Its function could alter, even in the absence of a world state. The development of constructivism brought issues of norms, identity, and culture to the forefront (Onuf 1998, 59-61).

Concepts such as the balance of power, the operations of modern diplomacy, international organizations, treaties, and negotiation are only possible because states hold

a common set of beliefs and expectations. That is, the intersubjective nature of these institutions and practices is what allows them to develop.

Without a sense of common understanding, no such forms of cooperation would be possible. However, equally, intersubjective beliefs and practices often form violent and oppositional relationships. Even when states are in opposition, constructivists have shown how such antagonism is directed and socialized toward a common set of rules and beliefs.

For example, MAD—the mutually assured destruction doctrine upon which Soviet and American nuclear defense posture was predicated—took place through a rough dialogue between the two superpowers, a logic which each one taught the other to understand (Wendt 1999).

Liberal and constructivist scholars have increasingly studied the role of civil society and transnational advocacy groups. To sight just a few examples, John Ruggie argues that the rules that governed the international economy remained in place even after the decline of American hegemony in the 1970s because these practices had been internalized by states (Ruggie 1998, 863). Martha Finnemore and Kathryn Sikkink have studied the way that norms become embedded internationally, tracing how normative entrepreneurs, through organizations and social networks, can persuade a critical number of states to adopt new practices that then become subsequently generalized to the system as a whole. The dynamics of the “norm cascade” deal with the desire of states to conform to the standards of peers, their desire to achieve legitimacy, and to their



internationalization of norms as goods in themselves (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998, 887-901).

There has been a reinvigoration of Ernst Haas's work on epistemic communities, as coalitions constituted of individuals with highly-technical knowledge and skills upon which states and bureaucracies depend, make specialized recommendations (1964). The scientific knowledge is bound by normative principles, thereby creating communities that advocate for specific policies. These epistemic communities include economic, trade, environmental, and nuclear expertise that work internationally to create common standards of practice (Adler and Haas 1992, 367-78).

Adler and Barrett (1998) have developed the study of a security community, organized by groups of members states that do not view each other as posing an existential threat to each other's existence, nor do they expect that any political disputes that arise among them will be resolved by military means. Instead, these communities exhibit solidarity and cooperation on security issues, with a shared understanding of issues such as the rule of law and the role of the military.

These represent merely some of the best known works that focus on bringing more attention to social and communal elements of international relations. They highlight transnational processes and institutions at work in international relations. They examine the growth of the field of international relations from an exclusive study of interstate relations to one that studies states within a broader set of issues, such as regional integration, international civil society, transnational organizations, ecology, and the operation of norms and ethics.

These efforts seek to socialize international relations. However, the problem inherent in this effort is tied to the way that “society”—as articulated in the interstate system—is tied to individualist models of socialization: specifically, to the model of social contract theories of the rational individualist. All argue that the international system is able to socialize states.

Wendt’s constructivist account of international relations has been the most influential theoretical challenge to realism. Wendt develops three distinct cultures of anarchy at work in international relations. Wendt treats these distinctions in anarchy as a product of specific cultures of anarchy. The Hobbesian culture is one of enmity and pure power politics; the Lockean creates rules of conduct that limit the destructiveness of things like war and help to generate economic exchange. The Kantian is based on a sense of common values and reciprocity among nations. Each step further along the “culture of anarchy” leads towards greater forms of collectively-beneficial actions (Wendt 1999, 257-69). According to Wendt, change takes place with the development of four sociologies of international relations. These are dominated by “master variables” that determine the formation of collective identities: interdependence, homogeneity, common-fate, and self-restraint (Wendt 1999, 343).

At its center, however, the culture of anarchy is tied to the nature of the state. The state, in turn, is defined by the political interest of its dominant class. The system of states, therefore, is dependent on processes that operate below the state: namely, they depend on those who rule the state and control its interests. For practical purposes, the Lockean and Kantian cultures of anarchy are both forms of liberalism. Therefore, the

Kantian vision of the state is elaborated by the rise of a bourgeois class that favors commerce over war, that reins in the bellicose and authoritarian nature of monarchy, and that creates a civil society constituted by laws.

The internal structure of the state defines the state, and, through it, can come to represent and extend to interstate relations. In other words, Wendt developed a theory that unerringly follows the logic of liberalism, by which the possessive individual creates the possessive (territorial) state (Macpherson 2011). Furthermore, the state cannot be given a distinct ontology, as states are determined by internal domestic processes.

#### *What Should We Do About the State?*

I believe that Yale Ferguson and Richard Mansbach have provided the most salient and important argument for an alternative to the present conceptualization of international relations. As I have argued, Ferguson and Mansbach recognize that theoretical treatment of the state as a unitary, rational, and monolithic institution has been the most salient barrier to progress in the theoretical, empirical, and historical study of international relations. The field must move beyond the state and recognize the multiplicity of communal networks, identities, and values that exist within and beyond the state. States make up simply one form of communal organization. In the place of states, Ferguson and Mansbach argue that we should study polities (Ferguson and Mansbach 1996, 32-35).

Ferguson and Mansbach seek to locate the state as one symbol within a more diverse set of symbols. They shift away from sovereignty as the defining criteria of the

state since it does not provide great insights into the functioning of the state. It is simply the means by which the interstate system is normatively organized.

The state system is based on a form of intersubjective recognition among states that legitimates their function as well as establishes a criteria of authority based on their right to exercise sovereignty over a designated territory. This is conceived of as a right rather than as a capacity; this is so since many states lack the capacity to control their territory, and there are many states that have areas that are controlled by groups that are not recognized as states (Ferguson and Mansbach 1996, 10-20).

Ferguson and Mansbach believe it is critical to stop treating the state as a unitary actor who can seemingly deliberate and make decisions autonomously. In place of this, they study how networks of communities and societies exchange, function, and interlink. The state is one such community, but it is not the only form that communities can take.

All communities and networks are defined as polities by Ferguson and Mansbach. It is polities, and not just states, that we should study. The pair define polities as moral communities in which members establish codes of behavior and expectations that are incumbent towards other members of their community but are distinct from humanity as a whole (Ferguson and Mansbach 1996, 33-38).

Distinct communities place moral expectations on their members, competing to be the central source of moral conduct and loyalty among individuals, although most individuals are not members of one community, but rather of many. These distinct polities both interact and compete, acting as sources of tension and also of interlinkage. Distinct polities can be cooperative and supportive, or conflictive. In this way, Mansbach

and Ferguson reiterate David Easton's definition of politics as "...the authoritative allocation of values" (Ferguson and Mansbach 1996, 8).

Ferguson and Mansbach, however, have failed to build a truly distinct theoretical approach. While they emphasize the normative dimensions of politics in its varied manifestations, they are dependent on comparative and macro-level histories to shed light on the diverse ways that communities and international systems are organized. Precisely because of this, we are soon confronted with the limitation of a purely historical approach and the inadequacy of "reflectivism" to ground social analysis in social theory.

The amorphous nature of human society itself is reflective of a protean quality of human capacity to radically alter the social rules that guide lives.

For every theory that explains the workings of a particular social arrangement, we encounter periods and peoples, systems and cycles, that prove beyond the limitations of any single theory that focuses on economic processes or sociopolitical institutions.

I now focus on the problematic structural and political theories that emerge from all contemporary social theories of international relations. Far from having a distinct theory of social praxis and human nature, constructivists and postmodernists often reject the possibility of human cooperation and sociality.

### *The Limits of Standard Approaches to International Relations*

Positivist models of international relations are organized as structural accounts. Positivist theories are systemic because they treat actions as conditioned by the nature of the system as a whole. Because the system is the independent variable, it accounts for the

set of interactions and causal processes that take place within it. Choices are highly constrained, because they are formed by and respond to the logic of the system.

For neorealism, the anarchy of the state system functions as an eternal and immutable truth. Systemic theories inherently limit the agential capacity of members, be it world systems theory or neorealism. The systems are highly determined and its units lack agency. The units of the system are contained by it, and their actions and choices confirm and reproduce the logic of the system, be that world capitalism and the dependent state of the periphery, or anarchy and the international system. For Waltz, the theoretical parsimony of microeconomic theory frees international relations from the need to develop a theoretical foundation for the state and the emergence of an order that does not require formal rules to function. Anarchy rules, but it is produced by interactions, not consent (Waltz 1979, 77).

Challenges to neorealism about the nature of international relations, therefore, typically are organized around the nature of anarchy and not around the nature of the state.

Systemic theories, however, depend on the state to act as a unitary social agent. The state is rational, but how that state is formed and acts is outside the theoretical capacity of the positivist model to answer.

The essential limitations, however, rest on the fact that neither the state nor the nature of anarchy have fixed structures; they are artifacts of social agreement, with the logic of their conduct and boundaries of their world subject to alteration and change.

Structural neorealism explains international relations by what is inherent to the system, but often incorporate it into state level attributes.

Furthermore, while structural accounts play an important role in social theory, and human interactions are organized into relational structures, these relationships can change. The system in which humans interact operates as a structure, but one in which the ideological processes at work, rather than strict environmental or material factors, form the defining element. This is not to say that it cannot act as a very entrenched structure, just as the relational patterns which constitute it do. It can, however, be radically reformed by alterations in the relational interactions of its members.

I recognize that neorealism is simply using a model. For international relations, however, the model has overtaken the subject. The perceived rigor of relational actor models has extended far beyond questions of markets. The social world and behavior are described by a single logic, The market paradigm has not simply become applied to all social dimensions. All social dimensions have been reduced to market interactions. Gary Becker's work on crime and law enforcement is worth highlighting. Becker is an economist and studies questions of family, discrimination, and law from an economic perspective. It is not, however, Becker's identification of crime as a rational act that depends on the right balance of reward to the risk of punishment which interests me. Instead, in my opinion, Becker's application of that model to questions of legal regulation and prosecution against the monetary costs to other members of society exemplifies how limited and incoherent these methods are when applied to social, moral, and political questions. His approach evidences a shallow logic that cannot distinguish social

pathologies from economic opportunity (Becker 1968, 168-217). Law is a matter of costs and benefits. The state is driven by economic efficiencies as are its citizens. This economic model, however, is the dominant paradigm for the investigation of political science.

The limits of positivism are clear. Too often critics of positivism challenge it on the wrong grounds, however. Positivism is an inappropriate tool because, in its theoretical assumptions, it cannot see the social world or the state as independent phenomena. By this, I do not merely mean the development of a positivist international relations theory, but positivism in general. Its inherent contradictions are expressed, however, in its inability to explain collective social phenomena. Positivism breaks down because, on the one hand, social institutions are merely the aggregation of individual interests, and yet, at the level of the international system, a social institution of the state is transformed into an autonomous and rational agent. The full implications of this will be examined in a subsequent chapter.

Non-positivist accounts, however, prove to be similarly inadequate. Society and the individual actually correspond with the antisocial and individualist assumptions of positivism.

Marxist theories of international relations can treat the state as a social institution. The state, therefore, is always an institutionalized form of the broader set of social relations that help maintain the power of the capital class against the worker, precisely because it acts as a tool of the owners as opposed to an independent institution that shapes society.



For Marx, it was important to see that any social order, form of production, and system of exchange rested on the relationship among individuals. The social relations that underpin the economic and political system are what are most important. In other words, the error of the economists and the state theorists rests precisely on their tendency to shift their investigation from the social relationships that condition and reproduce the world towards the products of those relationships as exemplified in commodity fetishism (Marx 1959, 43-86).

In addition, the economic systems function through a complex social and ideological matrix, in indivisible and reinforcing linkages between material and ideational elements.

The economic system shapes the relationship of man to nature, and, with it, the ways that the social world is organized. Social relations are the result of the underlying economic mode of production. The characteristic of the social world reflects the economic mode of production, with each new mode of production leading to a shift in the way that human relations are socially organized. The social relations of production, ideological values, and practices are also reflections of this underlying mode of production, with the beliefs and institutions of any period being a reflection of the interest of the dominant class. As such, the state is a reflection of the interest of the powerful rather than an independent institution with its own interests.

Gramsci recognizes that the role of the state as a coercive institution is limited. It is found in highly underdeveloped societies that rely centrally on the state as a coercive instrument of power. Under such systems, the contest for power is fluid but also unstable

because different parties can essentially gain, retain, and lose power through skirmishes to occupy the buildings and titles of public office. A truly powerful state is one that is embedded in the broader social system in which naked coercion is of limited effect as well as highly resisted. This does not mean that power is not exercised nor that exploitation is prevented. It means that the members of the state act as consenting affiliates of the ways in which the society is organized. The state and the society act as a complex “unit,” with one always being closely linked with the other (Gramsci 1970, 340-66). For international relations theory, Marxist theory gives a far more developed theory of society and the state. The state, through a central institution, reflects the broader economic structure of society and, therefore, is a dependent and not an independent social institution (Cox 1981, 126-34).

Constructivism is predicated on a kind of social analysis that, in being highly sensitive to the logic and processes that generate a system, does not ascribe the outcomes as a result of a broader set of material or logical forces. In other words, the world is not organized around a central and historically-unfolding system. Neorealist logic unfolds from its assumptions about the international system in the same way that Marxist theories develop from its central historical-materialist thesis of social and economic development. It is the broader and primary set of forces.

Constructivism is a cultural theory divorced from, and actively opposed to, questions of human nature. Mainstream constructivism cannot develop into a theory, precisely because it is still working from the premise of the individual as articulated by

classical liberalism. Radical constructivism eschews theories of human nature because it sees identity and thought as produced by social systems that express particular interests.

State-centered constructivism, as exemplified by Alexander Wendt, does not develop a theory of the state, but it does operationalize the agential capabilities of the state and the social system from the perspective of early modern social contractarianism.

More radical forms of constructivism and postmodernism, however, do not seek to develop a social theory of the state, but rather theories of society that are profoundly anti-social. The rational essentialism of positivist “human” is replaced by arguments that see all social and political organization as zones of power, contestation, and domination. Postmodernism sees all relationships as formed and dependent on binaries, of self and other, master/slave, savage/civilized. For the self to emerge, to be objective, it must be in relationship, but each relationship depends on its opposite to function. Therefore, friendship is predicated on enemies, solidarity within a group formed by its distinction and hostility towards others outside the group.

Society represents a zone of power and domination. The character of society is always a space of clashing and often oppositional interests. Cynthia Weber (1995) exemplifies this perspective, as the state is born from a set of boundaries that are erected between those within the “us” and “them.” The unity forged by the state is facilitated by and dependent upon the articulation of a dangerous “other.” Equally, within the state, the identity of population as good and virtuous requires identifying any “deviant” elements within the society. The moral integrity of the state has to be expressed in its punishment and marginalization of segments within its own society.

Because identities are expressed as power relations, anything that does not conform is threatening. For international relations, Weber refers to this as a crisis of representation. When the nature and organization of one state are altered, it acts as a perceived threat to the legitimacy and stability of established states who seek to destroy the emergence of 'deviant' states with alternative forms of representations.

For David Campbell, for instance, it is precisely the "threat" of an external other from which the state is born and its legitimacy accepted. As such, states are always in the process of forging enemies as a central component of maintaining their authority and domestic coherence. The Cold War was the result of the United States, deploying a highly dangerous image of communist USSR, as a way to safeguard and bolster its own domestic social order (Campbell 1990, 263-70).

Anarchy acts as the central legitimizing force of the state. As such, the anarchy of the international system, the threat of violence, and the inevitability of conflict are crucial features that will remain central to the international system because they are the foundation upon which the state itself operates.

Within international relations, postmodernists scholars treat culture as both central and ephemeral, as it is only a mechanism by which power constitutes itself. The totalized effect of culture reduces politics and all social activities into forms of discourse. Language acts as the central means by which social reality is shaped. For radical postmodernists, language encompasses all of social reality, and yet, language acts as a system that can arbitrarily impose definitions, with the capacity of language treated in relation to its capacity to impose meaning on social agents by the exercise of power. This

mirrors Hobbesian individualism. Indeed, Epstein draws on Hobbes and his description of language in her articulation of the state from a postmodern perspective (Epstein 2013, 288-92).

Language cannot foster dialogue and communication. Following on the arguments of Foucault, scholars such as Iver Neumann assert that we cannot escape power. Its articulations are a form of social analysis that understand human social relations narrowly in terms of power and domination (Neumann and Sending 2006, 677-84).

If we are to dethrone political theory, we must do so by understanding social cooperation in ways that are now defined only in terms of power relations.

### Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the limited role of human rationality as defined in the state of nature and how, according to Hobbes and other theorists, this necessitates the development of government to establish security and cooperative social relations.

I examined the role of the state and its ability to centralize power which lead to the development of inequality through property rights and commerce.

I explained how human beings' rationality has been conceived of as self-interest formed outside of the social order, and we examined the limitations and contradictions involved in Hobbes's theory.

I discussed the distinct levels of analysis in international relations which all treat the motivations of individuals and states as analogues.

I noted how IR lacks its own theoretical mechanism to account for the state or its operation, and how heavily IR has borrowed from other disciplines.

I discussed how realism, liberalism and mainstream constructivism have failed to move international relations theory in new directions, and we acknowledged how neoliberal institutionalism has made contributions to IR with respect to its explanation of the emergence of cooperative institutions among states and wondered how this might be applied to the function and rule of government for subjects.

I observed that IR has made progress in highlighting the social and ideational components of the international system as shown by the English School's emphasis on international society while constructivism has emphasized the role of norms and identities in the conduct of states.

I looked at how Wendt's constructivist account has put up a theoretical challenge to realism and how Ferguson and Mansbach have argued for the study of polities rather than states. I pointed out that Waltz argues that the theoretical parsimony of microeconomic theory frees international relations from the need to develop a theoretical foundation for the state.

Positivism and non-positivist accounts were also found wanting as were constructivism and state-centered constructivism. The former is opposed to examining questions of human nature. The latter does not even develop a theory of the state. More radical forms of constructivism and postmodernism are even antisocial. Only Marxism approaches the need to include sociality in a theory of the state.

As I briefly outlined, many scholars are seeking to reformulate international relations in ways that re-conceptualize the state as well as extend beyond it. For some scholars, international relations must transcend the state and recognize transnational institutions, communities, and social networks. In my view, however, what is of central theoretical concern is that all recognize the communal nature of human interaction: namely, the nature of collective action, forms of collective solidarity, social formation, and the capacity to endow institutions with social agency.

I argue that despite the many years between Hobbes's writing and contemporary social science, we are still wrestling with the same set of conceptual categories and reproducing its contradictions. We have not developed a true theory of the state because we have no real theory of human sociality. This failure highlights deep problems in political theory and international relations theory. Namely, there is no comprehensive theory of the state. Human nature in its current individual articulation of rationality cannot explain how societies operate, how cooperation exists in the absence of tangible rewards for actors, nor why individuals often sacrifice themselves for the sake of their beliefs or on behalf of their community. In short, IR lacks a theory of the state which accounts for human sociality. In addition, since it derives so much of its theory from other disciplines, IR has no theoretical mechanism by which to account for the state nor ways to explain how it operates. Another defect is that it explains the behavior of individuals and the behavior of states in nearly identical terms, using the model of rational agents operating strategically within a system.

I maintained that, since current theories of international relations are inadequate to explain human cooperation, we must recognize how and why social institutions are distinct from individual agents. International relations must be able to build a theory of human interaction, and, from there, a theory of the state. The field must also move beyond the state and recognize the multiplicity of communal networks, identities, and values that exist within and beyond the state. It must also acknowledge the limitations of any single theory that focuses on economic processes or sociopolitical institutions. Marxist theory reflects a far more developed theory of society and the state. It sees the state as a dependent and not an independent social institution.

In other words, there is much work to be done in our field. Recognizing that there are many communities at work in the world tells us nothing, particularly when we completely lack true theories of collective agency.

Unless we can understand how people organize and act collectively, we will never be able to explain the state or other forms of social organization.

Thus, as a first step towards the development of a theory of the state, I argued that what is needed is a New Theory of Community that gives a clear account of how communities are formed, not merely descriptive accounts of how they operate nor of their plural and distinct forms.

I, therefore, explained that I seek to develop a theory of community that can explain the ontological status of social institutions. To do so, however, requires that we distinguish between two separate forms of collective action and organization. For political theory, collective action emerges from individual interests. Collective action is a



mechanism to satisfy individual wants. Individuals can, and often do, cooperate, but their cooperation is based on a purely means-end relationship. Even when working in groups, individuals function as separate and distinct agents, and the agency of the group emerges and depends on the fact that its members continue to have shared interests.

I maintained that communities are distinct social phenomena. What is central to the nature of communities is their function as authoritative structures, as points of identity and affiliation that take precedent over its members. They do not function on the basis of individual rationality nor do they represent institutional vehicles for individual goal realization. They are not merely the sum of their individual parts. On the contrary, communities form social collectives that operate on normative principles.

I stated that individuals form society; individuals alone constitute society, but society is distinct and seemingly independent. Therefore, it can exist as a continuous social agent, though it is subject to change and decomposition by its members.

Is all this, though, not just stating the obvious? Is this not taken for granted. Of course. What is not understood, however, is how it evolved, and how it employs a distinct form of social reasoning. I promised to return to this topic later.

## **CHAPTER 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS AND THEORIES OF THE STATE**

### Overview

In this chapter I will examine the foundational principles of international relations. In addition, I will examine the concept of the state as a distinct actor with interests. I will discuss why, in order to have a theory of international relations, the concept of national interest and the pursuit of common benefits must be embraced.

I will discuss why the state must be able to act autonomously and in the interest of society, not in the interest of a ruling elite. I will note that IR is at a loss to explain how the state can acquire interests that are not those of only a limited set of individuals and why policies must correspond to the needs and the security of the state to be considered rational.

I will highlight the importance of the central element of human cognitive processing, namely the capacity of individuals to reason on the basis of social agents and general interests. According to this conceptualization, the state emerges as a concretized and objectified communal structure, given life by its subjects; it is a mechanism that can—though it rarely does—act to secure the interest of the community as a whole.

We will point out that the state exists as a critical nexus, a central mechanism through which a set of often overlapping social processes are embedded, and, at times, can be coordinated toward common interests. This description points to the unique quality of the state in the modern world. It is, however, broadly ignored by IR.

I will discuss how theories to date have a neorealist basis and view the state as a rational actor concerned with its preservation and how the social sciences express the limits of social cooperation.

I will show how the model of rational, utility-maximizing egoists is used to describe both individuals in the state of nature and the way states act as units, making it impossible for a state-centered international relations theory to develop.

I will examine different theoretical schools, all of which have unacknowledged theories of the state: classical realism as defined by Morgenthau, structural realism, liberal, and Marxist theories.

Despite the emphasis on the rational in IR, I will explain that we need to broaden our capacity to account for why so many examples of 'irrational' socially positive behaviors appear in the world.

I will discuss how postmodernists examine how the state socializes its citizens through cultural, ethical, and educational mechanisms and how they recognize that social relations are organized by norms and values, but they view these norms and values as expressions of power.

I will examine constructivism, especially as described by Onuf, and how constructivists recognize that the international system is socially constructed and

maintained by a set of intersubjective normative beliefs and practices. Since they are intersubjective, they are constitutive of the interrelationship that social agents share—a common set of beliefs, practices, and behaviors that are accepted as appropriate forms of conduct.

I will conclude by asserting that there is a great need for a theory distinct from the utilitarian egoist in IR. To have one, however, an account of the cognitive and normative dimensions that link individuals to each other and to the world, is needed to contextualize the organization of social cooperation and the exercise of social agency based on mutual beliefs and values.

#### *Can the State Have Interests?*

What is the foundational principle of international relations? I argue that all theoretical claims and analyses within international relations rest on specific arguments about the nature of the state and the scope of objective analysis: 1) that the state has true interest, and 2) that we can distinguish and evaluate actions by the criteria that recognize and differentiate true and non-true interests. That is, not all possible behaviors that a state undertakes are rational; in addition, there are better and worse choices. These suppositions focus specifically on the state as a distinct actor. In the absence of these assumptions, international relations cannot exist as an analytical and evaluative discipline. Therefore, we must either accept the implications of these assumptions or relinquish any attempt at developing a theory of international relations. The national interest and the pursuit of common benefits must either be embraced or discarded.

If we directly confront this task, we can bring dynamism to international relations. Rather than seeing the state as an exhausted or limited unit of analysis, the state and tasks incumbent on the state finally become meaningful fields of inquiry. Statecraft, the application of rational ends towards general (state) interests, requires a critical interrogation of what are true national interests and the best mechanism of securing them. We cannot simply accept “survival” as a sufficient definition, nor reduce a state’s “interests” to “whatever the power ruling” decides it ‘wants’ as a legitimate equivalence. This represents a highly fertile challenge for the field to develop as a critical intellectual praxis. Just as Robert Cox has famously stated, a theory is always for and about something (1981, p. 128).

Therefore, international relations is premised on the idea that national interest can be known and that the distinction between rational interest and mere preferences can be distinguished. The field lacks the confident theoretical toolkit to begin to actively engage with state interests. One area that has made great strides in advancing the field is critical security studies. Critical security studies recognizes that some of the most pressing threats to the safety and wellbeing of states and their populations are the result of poverty, ecological degradation, and unequal access to basic resources. Security is not the same as military power, and it never has been. It is only in recent years, however, that a shift to a much fuller and comprehensive conceptualization of security has emerged (Peoples and Vaughan-Williams 2014).

*The State: Captive or Autonomous?*

To exist as a distinct agent, the state must be able to act autonomously. To be rational, it must be able to develop foreign policy objectives that are independent of its internal domestic political processes. By autonomy, I mean the ability to act in the interest of the state as a whole, reflecting policies and actions that are not merely the interest of a powerful faction. The state's independence is predicated on its capacity to be representative of, but not reducible to, the social system from which it emerges.

When the state becomes an institution of a specific set of elites, it inherently becomes maladaptive. It cannot respond to the challenges of the international system, precisely because it no longer acts in the service of its interests as a state.

To those who would argue against such idealism, I respond that it represents the foundation of realism, not idealism. The realm of high politics, of realpolitik, argues precisely for the existence of fundamental interests that are distinct, and, at times, even contradictory to the rhetoric and values that animate popular politics.

International relations, however, in conceiving of the state as a unitary actor with a set of interests necessarily assumes—but cannot explain—how a state can acquire a core set of interests that are not simply the private interests of a few social agents. Government policies must correspond to the needs and the security of the state in order for its acts to be considered rational and intelligible.

In practical terms, are we not already there? Do we not already accept these claims are real, if only with a half accepting nod? This leaves its own set of problems and unanswered questions. If something like the national interest is real, we have to ask how

it is that a state is able to make such an assessment. If states do have interests, how are these interests recognized? This brings us to social and cognitive processes, that I believe, highlight the central element of human cognitive processing, namely the capacity of individuals to reason on the basis of social agents and general interests. The state emerges as a concretized and objectified communal structure, given life by its subjects; it is a mechanism that can—though it rarely does—act to secure the interest of the community as a whole.

The state emerges as an expression of a wider set of social forces and interests, with its operation, function, and limitations being embodied in the way the social order is collectively constituted and self-understood. The state is realized by a set of interlinked, but distinct, forces. There are important differences between the economic, the social, and the military dimensions that operate within the state, and the function of the state as a framework within these processes. The state is distinct; it is not subsumed by the mechanisms that aid its function because of its role as both a mechanism of social coordination and a symbol of orientation. The state exists as a critical nexus, a central mechanism through which a set of often overlapping social processes are embedded, and, at times, can be coordinated toward common interests. This description points to the unique quality of the state in the modern world. It is, however, broadly ignored by IR.

*International Relations: A Theory of the State as an Impossibility*

International relations theory has developed a large body of theoretical approaches. This has neither displaced neorealism as the dominant theoretical paradigm

nor offered truly distinct accounts. What is operating in the theoretical assumptions of neorealism and what forms its basis is not the character of the state, but rather its motivational orientation: namely, the preservation of the state as a unit.

For neorealism, the state must be rational, and it must be agential. These characteristics are primary because they allow realism to explain and to predict interstate behavior. At the same time, this is precisely why realism delinks itself from any categorical definition of the state as a complex social institution. Microeconomics does not require a theory of the firm, but collective goods do require the elaboration of formal institutions.

Though neorealism lacks a theory of the state, it has provided the central criteria of the field: namely, that a state pursues its own survival and act in its own interest. To meet this criterion, however, requires that states—acting as social institutions—are public and that they act for common and collective interests.

As examined in the last chapter, the limitations of international relations express broader problems within social science generally on questions of human rationality and the relationship of individuals to society, as well as on how institutions like the state are constituted and maintained.

*Free-Riders, Public Goods: State's Don't Just Die, They Can't Even Be Born*

Collective action and cooperation, as well as social institutions and collective social agents are common features of our lives. The question rests, therefore, on whether the mechanism at work allows institutions to function. Is there a single logic, reducible to



and accounted for, by rational egoism? Are public and private institutions distinct? Are the firm and the state, though different in form, merely defined by and reducible to, their members. Is a state merely an aggregate of individuals?

The social sciences are built upon using these examples to express the limits of social cooperation. The tragedy of the commons, the free-rider problem, the security dilemma, and the prisoner's dilemma are among its most well-known examples. The 'tragic nature' of these outcomes are related to the limits of human rationality, because when brought to bear on wider social goods, it undermines their operation. As a result, individual rationality negates the function of socially productive institutions by its own self-regarding rationality. It creates outcomes that are determinant of the interest of all participants (Hardin 2009).

The model of rational, utility-maximizing egoists is used to describe both individuals in the state of nature and the way states act as units. However, a critical interrogation of these assumptions demonstrates that the states can never come to exist as autonomous institutions. By this logic, no true realm of state-centered international theory can truly develop. The collective action problem, the problem of free-riding, argues against any form of collective social action or being able to maintain the state as a public institution (Elster 1985, 231-38).

I will briefly examine how different theoretical schools of international relations have basic conceptual descriptions of the 'state,' each with a theoretical model of what the state is, even if it never is formalized in a specific description.

### *Classical Realism*

Hans Morgenthau's six principles of political realism are instructive in the way they do not bridge arguments about human nature directly with respect to how the state can pursue rational policies. Morgenthau identifies politics as independent of human activity and distinct from economics, ethics, aesthetics, etc. (Morgenthau 1978, 7-14).

Rather than a clear set of principles, Morgenthau's entire platform rests on 1) the rational pursuit of national interests, 2) the requirement of a statesman to think in terms of the state's interests—even when such interests require the violation of moral or legalistic codes, and 3) the elaboration of the state—in its action in the world and as a source of decision making—as a distinct realm.

Morgenthau's definition of political realism rests on “interest defined as power” (Morgenthau 1978, 7). Morgenthau's definition of interest, however, is underdeveloped and contradictory. For instance, he draws clear parallels between domestic and international politics since both are dominated by the interest of agents. Therefore, he sees the separation of powers, domestically, and the balance of power, internationally, as functioning with the same basic mechanism.

Indeed, for Morgenthau, the balance of power functioned as a mechanism that preserved the peace in early modern Europe. It did so because it represented a wider ethos within an aristocratic system, in which the politics among states were guided by a set of values, practices, and expectations that were common to all participants (Morgenthau 1978, 225-26).

At the same time, Morgenthau articulates a view of human nature as predicated in the desire for domination over others (Morgenthau 1978, 32-35). What is important, I feel, is that, in describing politics as an autonomous sphere of activity, Morgenthau must find ways to reconcile the contradictions between his characterization of human nature and the necessities of statecraft, particularly when the ‘interest’ of individuals might benefit from undermining or altering the state.

Realism’s emphasis on state behavior is characterized solely by its power-maximizing nature. For classical realists, power is pursued for its own sake because of human nature’s desire for domination.

### *Structural Realism*

For neorealism, power is pursued to guarantee survival and to mitigate danger. Structural realism’s focus on anarchy is central, precisely because the survival of the state rests solely on its own capacity to maintain its preservation. Unlike Morgenthau, human nature plays no role in describing the state. State behavior arises from the goal of the state to secure its safety and to maintain its independence. Neorealists develop accounts that this motive arises from the nature of anarchy. It is, however, an attribute of the state to remain free from the coercion, conquest, and usurpation of others.

In both cases, rationality is framed by and works from a set of presuppositions. As an attribute of the agent, the behavior is always understood in reference to its own goals and motives.

Structural realism does not have a theory of the state. Many states in the world system could not fit the criteria of the state, as they do not pursue the interest of the state. The kind of state it describes, namely a state capable of acting in its own interest and highly resistant to conquest by others, is best applied to republican and representative states, who are the agents most likely to be able to respond to the dictates of anarchy (Waltz 1979, 128). That is, they are states that are public institutions which pursue policies that are distinct from merely the private benefit and interest of its members. I argue that structural realism is really a description appropriate to a certain kind of state.

This is a state in which communal debate can center around questions that assess actions and choices on the basis of what is of interest to the state as a whole. In other words, the particularities of the factional interests within the state can be transcended by a process that shifts perspective and analysis towards a collective interest that both encompasses and overcomes the, at times, contradictory interest of the society it constitutes.

### *Liberal and Marxist Theories of the State*

The limits and problems between individual and group action is exemplified in the contradictions in liberal and Marxist social theory. The limits of rational models, as well as the unexamined ways that standard theories incorporate rational utility assumptions, is exemplified by liberal and Marxist theories of the state.

Mancur Olson attacks the theoretical assumptions that privilege the state as an independent and unique institution that provides general goods. Can the state be

distinguished from other institutions that help provide collective goods? For Mancur Olson, it cannot. Further, the function for which the state is distinguished from other institutions, its capacity to provide public goods, is limited and subject to being undermined. Public goods—defined as non-exclusionary social goods that are not diminished in their enjoyment—are never realized by ‘public acts.’ Any service that is enjoyed as a public good highlights the problem of free-riders and the limits of collective action. There are tensions between individual rationality and the capacity of common interest among social agents that will not allow them to join together to solve collective action problems (Olson 2002, 98-103).

Liberalism is contradicted by the ways that the state must act as a universal institution for healthy governance, and Marxism is contradicted by the limits of collective action as it relates to its conceptualization of the state in relation to class as an analytical category.

For liberal capitalism as first articulated by Smith, self-interest, rather than being considered a problem to be overcome, can operate as the mechanism by which broad social goods and services are produced. Individual actions, undertaken to meet individual needs, can produce benefits for all parties. We depend on others in society to provide us with goods and services. These are not produced by overcoming others’ self-interest, but depend on each person acting from self-interest for their production.

For liberalism, the state is the fundamental mechanism for the development of wealth, industry, and learning. The origins of the state are based on its development as a mechanism to overcome problems of collective action in the state of nature. The state of

nature inhibits security, wealth, and peace for all members because none of its members want to bear the cost of providing those services. The state can overcome the suboptimal outcomes attendant to living in the state of nature. The state is, seemingly, the answer to the free-rider problem. It is a public institution with the coercive power and authority to maintain order and the flowering of 'individual' development.

For liberalism, however, the state also represents a source of danger from tyranny, expropriation, and violence. Therefore, the state has only a minimal and administrative role to play for the classic liberal, but it must function as an enforcer of agreements, administering justice, and preserving peace and private property (Smith 1937, 862).

How can the state function as a public good, when it is the inherent logic of the individual parties in 'anarchy' that prevents the state from developing in the first place? The state must be able to function free of the coercive influence of specific interests, so that its policies are not merely reduced to the interest of a self-interested group that uses the coercive apparatus of the state as a mechanism to protect its interest and to seek unproductive and disadvantageous privileges (Smith 1937, 118-43). Tariffs are an obvious example of this. Adam Smith's theory of capitalism is not an argument against the state, but against mercantilism. Mercantilism can manipulate law, and, thus, subvert the state from a public institution organized for the common benefit, into an enforcer of private interests.

Liberalism depends on the function of the state as a provider of public goods. As a rational institution, the state is also seeking to maximize its interest. The state develops a monopoly on a specific set of services, principally security, and collects revenue in the

form of taxes. As it seeks to maximize its revenue, the state helps expand economic production in ways that aid the growth of wealth and, therefore, increase its own revenue. Government emerges as a way to produce public goods and to overcome free-riders. Upon examination, however, the same inherent problem of free-rider's functions just as much in the state as outside of the state. Furthermore, the state is a coercive institution. It produces an additional set of incentives for cheating, a central target to be controlled by private interest which can shape society to rent seek without increasing the economic well-being of the citizens (North 1979, 249-51).

Therefore, for the liberal state to function, it must maintain independence from the political and economic system it governs, allowing it to shape actions that are in the interest of the social order as a whole; nevertheless, its capacity to preserve its public function cannot be sustained by the rationalist logic that produces the state.

Douglas North's application of neoclassical theory to the state highlights this problem. However, the free-rider problem persists because of the unwillingness and inability of large groups to act collectively. This intransigence, for North, leaves states open to being captured by private interests. In fact, it guarantees that they will be. In addition, the stability of states and the rarity of revolution result from the lack of desire by individuals to act for collective goods. For North, it is only ideology that can act as a counterweight against the capture of the state by private interests (North 1979, 252-53).

Liberalism, therefore, does not have a functional theory of the state—if considered solely from the perspective of the individual egoist. The largely unexamined

element, however, is in the recognition of a form of common interest and public institution, if only articulated in terms of negative powers.

### *Marxist Theory of Class and State*

Olson discusses the contradictions of collective action and the state as an institution by examining Marx's theory of the state. Marx's assessment of Marxism is incorrect, but the logic of his argument exemplifies the limits of the rational-actor model in explaining social phenomena. Olson argues that there are two contradictory theories at work within Marx's social theory. Marx's theory of the state is not actually a theory of the state. Instead, he argues that the state acts as an instrument of class power; it is organized by the dominant class against its subordinate elements. Marx's theory is organized around class. Class is the social and economic embodiment of the economic mode of production. It embodies distinct and oppositional interests. Marx advances a material argument because ideational beliefs at work in the society are produced by and serve its economic mode of production (Olson 2002, 103-05).

Marx's theory operates on the capacity of social classes to act as cohesive units. To do so, Olson argues, Marx's theory functions on the assumption that individuals not only orient themselves in terms of class, but they are also conscious of their social position, identify with their class, and are willing to act on its behalf (Olson 2002, 104).

Marx believes the capitalist class can act as a cohesive social unit. It is, however, the predatory and opportunistic nature of individual capitalists, which Marx fully recognizes in their focus on the accumulation of wealth, that drives capitalism as an



economic system. Capitalist predation as a class rests on its ruthless exercise among, between, and against individual capitalists in the furtherance of capital accumulation (Olson 2002, 104).

The benefits of class, since they are available to all members, are public goods. All members of the class benefit from them, irrespective of their input. Public goods cannot be produced by classes or social groups as a whole because individuals within each group will act as free-riders. As public goods, individuals have no incentive to bear the cost and risk of acting for collective ends. They are, however, highly incentivized to free-ride on any rewards such action produces. For Olson, that is precisely why Marxist class revolution did not occur, but just as importantly, why the bourgeoisie never act as a class. This is because of the predominance of rational utilitarian behavior. “*For class-oriented action will not occur if the individuals that make up class act rationally..... So the rational thing for a member...is to ignore his class interests and to spend his energies on his personal interests*” (Olson 2002, 105-06).

For Olson, what is problematic in Marx’s social theory is his deployment of a narrow economic rationality in many realms of explanation: the logic behind the historical evolution of material forms of production, the rationality of an individual capitalist, and the basis for the collective nature of class struggle. For Olson, the logic cannot function with integrity in its application to a theory of class—specifically, as an articulation of classes as cohesive social groupings capable of acting in common solidarity.

What matters here is the application of a specific definition of egoistic rationality-  
-that there are certain behaviors that it can explain and a multitude that it cannot.  
Therefore, Olson argues, Marx's argument of class can function from "irrational,  
emotional, and psychological theory of class action in mind, rather than the rational,  
economic, and utilitarian theory of class action that is normally ascribed to him" (Olson  
2002, 108).

Membership to groups does not inherently require that one act in their name,  
particularly when any benefits produced for the group are public and can be enjoyed by  
all its members. The coordinated actions of the masses did not achieve the Bolshevik  
revolution; a small and highly focused revolutionary party did (Olson 2002, 107).

Olson's assessment of the limits of utilitarian models of collective behavior are  
correct. For positivist models, by the impoverished articulation of human social behavior,  
actions that cannot be explained by the model of the rational egoist are categorized as  
irrational and 'other.' It also requires that we broaden our capacity to account for why  
many examples of 'irrational' socially positive behaviors appear.

Olson error, however, is in attributing to Marx a highly deterministic theory. In  
fact, Marx was actively involved in the organization of workers into a common political  
body. He recognized that change from the exploitative system of industrial capitalism  
would only be brought about through mass movements of solidarity (Gilbert 1989).  
Further, the Russian revolution was a mass movement, involving millions of people. It  
was not achieved by a small cadre of conspirators in a silent coup. Revolution are  
revolutionary because they involve transformations of the social order. Popular

revolutions are achieved by engaging the masses in active revolt against exploitative systems. They are not, therefore, simply the work of a 'small' elite.

Marx's theory of the state is based on his theory of class. As succinctly described by Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*, the state is the executive committee of the bourgeoisie (Marx and Engels 1977). The state always remains an institutional tool in service to the wealthy. Marx, however, recognizes that the governance of power does not have to be direct, as described in Marx's *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (Marx 1969, 476-78). Further, Marx was actively engaged in organizing workers into political parties. Marx's view of the state is, therefore, far more nuanced than its limited description by Olson.

Since Marx, the state has only increased as the central objective of revolutionary action; the forces of revolutionary change were to be in political terms. Marxists have increasingly focused on the state. That is, there is an appreciation of the state as more than just a bourgeois institution. The autonomy of the state, most famously articulated by Poulantzas, recognizes that the power of the state arises from its ability to dynamically intervene to regulate the social and economic system (Poulantzas 1987). The question of the capitalist state has centered around arguments that it act autonomously. That is, contra Olson, the capitalist state can act as a general instrument of capitalist governance. This assumes that the state can act for and in the name of general (capitalist class) interests. In order to secure and protect general capitalist class interests, to ensure the perpetuation of the capitalist system, the state requires the ability of the state to mitigate the

contradictions of the social and economic system, mitigating the fissures, and perpetuating its own dominance (Jessop 1977, 353-72).

Theories of governance and collective action, therefore, must develop that are distinct from the positivist model. Though the autonomous liberal or capitalist state does not represent a universal social institution, it seemingly must function on the basis of something other than 'individual interest.'

### *Hegemonic Stability Theory*

Much as would be expected, the assumptions within theories of individual-state relations are reproduced within international relations. In this way, hegemonic stability theory operates from the basic theoretical arguments and assumptions of the liberal theory of the state.

By organizing security, a hegemon provides stability to the system as a whole and allows other states to shift toward long term interest. Cooperation within the international system is produced by the hegemonic concentration of power and rule as an enforcer of security. The hegemon (state) allows other states (individuals) to shift from short term concerns based on security to long term economic interests. The hegemon addresses many of the central security concerns of the subordinate states and provides a public good, security, allowing states to free up and direct capital to industrial and economic investments.

The British in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the United States after World War II both played the role of liberal hegemon. The power of the United States had peaked by the end

of the 1970s. The critical question was what would be the nature of the international system, not merely in its distribution of power, but in the role of institutions that the United States had established after the Second World War.

Robert Gilpin's *War and Change in World Politics* identifies the central role that the state makes in adapting to international anarchy. It also presents a theory by which power transitions take place within the international system as a whole. States must adapt to the international system. States' ability to adapt is challenged by both domestic and international fetters. Economic, social, and technical innovations emerge within states. These innovations afford certain states military and economic benefits (Gilpin 1981, 80-84).

There are also shifts in power from one hegemon to the next, brought about by changes in economic growth, based in technological innovations in extraction and production. A state grows wealthy when it organizes the most innovative and effective economic system, becoming a hegemon. Hegemonic powers place an increasing amount of money on military expenditures at the cost of their own domestic economy. This drains their own economy as well as subsidizes rival states which are able to take advantage of the security services provided by the hegemon. Over time, these same technologies become entrenched in industries and interest groups. The rate of innovation markedly declines, with other states becoming the center of technological development and integration and replacing the hegemon as the dominant state in the system. (Gilpin 1975, 88-97).

Hegemony is lost as the most powerful nations become fixed and unable to adapt. They are controlled by industries that privilege their position over the strength of the state as a whole.

Realists recognize the difference between national and private interest, between a state that is able to creatively utilize economic systems to increase in wealth, and states that are instrumentalized into coercive protectors of private privilege. Stephen Krasner points out, in *Defending the National Interest*, how the policies of the United States have become the captive of private interests. The state does not respond to challenges abroad because the nature of its domestic, economic and political arrangement hampers it; nevertheless, it still defends the use of 'national interest' as a general descriptor of state behavior, never using the contradictions to develop a better theory (Krasner 1978, 84-90).

#### *Postmodernism: Realism by Other Means*

Postmodernist theoretical assumptions are linked closely with the modern state. The function of power, as an instrument of coercion but also of regulation, is central. However, as a theoretical praxis, it is always focused on power. The socialization of individuals is precisely the expression of power as an ideological system of domination. Governmentality was developed by Foucault as a way to describe the technical practices developed by the state to produce its citizens. The cultural, ethical, and educational mechanisms of the state are developed as ways to regulate, discipline, and shape the individuals of the state to act on behalf of the state. The discourse of governmentality sees the state as produced by the state, naturalizing a process that is inherently unnatural.

Between postmodernist and constructivist accounts, there are important differences. Both recognize the ideological function of social systems, the role of authority, and ways to articulate and legitimate power. The role of social agents act on the basis of the structures of society and act through them. They cannot merely act independently of these considerations.

Postmodernist are realists by other means. They believe that the normative beliefs of the state are an important element of its function and operation. The realization of power functions in authority, in norms, and in justification. They recognize that social relations are organized by norms and values, but that these norms and values are expressions of power. The role of culture is highlighted, but the role of culture as an ordering principle is structured in the hierarchy and power dynamics within society as a whole. Culture does not constitute a different form of explanation, but rather it is a theoretical distinction about the mechanisms based on the way that power is exercised and expressed (Campbell 1993).

#### *Constructivism: Onuf's State*

For constructivists, however, this is a central feature of human social life. Constructivism recognizes a shift away from purely utilitarian logic, because society and its agents come to organize themselves into a system of self-referential and mutually-interdependent agents. There is a constitutive aspect to norms. They not only establish a system of rewards and penalties as regulative, but they also act as a form of life, an orientation that both forms the basis of the social system as well as the point of reference

for its development. The constitutive aspect of norms is the central point of constructivism.

Identity and interests are closely tied together, and changes in identity shift the way that states understand, calculate, and pursue their interests. There are also often shifts in the ways that states calculate their interests and in the actions they seek to achieve in the international system.

In place of a system regulated by a monocausal logic, constructivists recognize that the international system is socially constructed and maintained by a set of intersubjective normative beliefs and practices. Norms come into the center of constructivism, but they do so in ways that are neither structural nor agential. Since they are intersubjective, they are constitutive of the interrelationship that social agents share—a common set of beliefs, practices, and behaviors that are accepted as appropriate forms of conduct.

The logic of appropriateness rests on the inherently normative quality of the kind of rule-following behavior to which social members adhere. The appropriateness of the behavior is embedded in a sense of ‘rightness’, of ‘duty,’ and of expectation. It is not merely one of opportunity and advantage. All of this points to the ways that agents’ actions are guided by the socially-shared beliefs and expectations of the broader social order as a whole.

Onuf devises a constructivist theory of international relations in which the behavior of agents is understood in relation to a wider schema of rules, practices, institutions, and structures. Rules form the central, regulative nexus that dictate the



behavior of agents, their interaction among each other, and wider social structures. Rules form the nexus between individuals and social practices—with the social practices themselves being an elaborate set of rules that stipulate how people should act. Rules not only prescribe the consequences for those who fail to adhere to stipulations, they also provide a set of moral justifications for why these rules should be observed. To opt for the traditional method of dividing rules into constitutive and regulative ones is to lose sight of the fact that all rules are both constitutive and regulative. This is arguably the strongest central claim of constructivism (Onuf 1998, 59-61). Agents develop social agency through the observation of rules. Rules do more than allow agents to have mutual expectations and to coordinate their behaviors. It is through rules that these forms of interaction are made possible. Rules not only form agents, they also present agents with goals and choices. Because rules are social, by observing them, the choices which agents make and the actions they take compel them, wittingly or unwittingly, to act on behalf of and to perpetuate a wider set of interests, institutions, and beliefs. If rules form the basis by which people cooperate socially, Onuf defines social practice as the dynamic and dialectical relationship which society has to the rules which engender it. One such social arrangement is the nation state. Regarding the nation state, Onuf observes:

When a very large number of people collectively operate as an agent, when they have agents acting for them, when they have some considerable measure of identity (including some place identified as theirs), and when they are free to act within very wide limits, these people constitute a country (Onuf 1998, 65).

No doubt the definition of the nation state in such terms is problematic because, without its parameters, a large number of additional phenomena could constitute a state. What is lacking in constructivism is a way to link descriptions of the social world with well-grounded theory, specifically based on group formation and group action. References to speech acts alone will not suffice. What characterizes all groups as social institution is precisely their dual capacity for acting as both agents and structures.

Currently, constructivists provide general descriptions of the social world, but there is a need for a more developed theory of the social world, particularly one based on collective agency. The normative, agential, and social nature of human beings must have a general explanation for their function; it is not sufficient to merely have an account of their specific expression within a given society. What is needed specifically in international relations is a theory where collective action is based on normative principles and on the realization of social goods—in other words, a theory of the state, distinct from theories of the utilitarian egoist.

To do so, however, an account of the cognitive and normative dimensions that link individuals to each other and the world, that underpins group formation and organization, is needed to contextualize the organization of social cooperation and the exercise of social agency based on mutual beliefs and values.

## Conclusion

In Chapter 2, I examined the concept of the state as a distinct actor with interests. I maintained that not all of a state's actions are rational, but, in order to have a theory of

international relations, that the concept of national interest and the pursuit of common benefits must be embraced. This offers IR the opportunity to develop a dynamic praxis, although, as yet, the field lacks the toolkit to actively involve itself with state interests. Nevertheless, progress has been made in the area of critical security studies which has managed to expand the concept of security beyond military power.

I argued that the state must be able to act autonomously and in the interest of society, not in the interest of a ruling elite. When the state becomes the captive of a minority, it can no longer function properly internationally. I observed that IR is at a loss to explain how the state can acquire interests that are not those of only a limited set of individuals; policies must correspond to the needs and the security of the state to be considered rational.

I asked if states do have interests, how are these interests recognized? This brought us to social and cognitive processes, that I believe, highlight the central element of human cognitive processing, namely the capacity of individuals to reason on the basis of social agents and general interests. According to this conceptualization, the state emerges as a concretized and objectified communal structure, given life by its subjects; it is a mechanism that can—though it rarely does—act to secure the interest of the community as a whole.

I saw that the state exists as a critical nexus, a central mechanism through which a set of often overlapping social processes are embedded, and, at times, can be coordinated toward common interests. This description points to the unique quality of the state in the modern world. It is, however, broadly ignored by IR. To meet this criteria, however,

requires that states—acting as social institutions—are public and that they act for common and collective interests.

I examined how the theories to date all have a neorealist basis and view the state as a rational actor concerned with its preservation. The social sciences are built upon using these examples to express the limits of social cooperation. The tragedy of the commons, the free-rider problem, the security dilemma, and the prisoner's dilemma are among its most well-known examples. The model of rational, utility-maximizing egoists is used to describe both individuals in the state of nature and the way states act as units, making it impossible for state-centered international relations theory to develop.

I showed how different theoretical schools all have unacknowledged theories of the state. In classical realism as defined by Morgenthau, human nature has the desire for domination over others, but he finds it difficult to reconcile this view with the needs of statecraft. In structural realism, human nature plays no role. The state must maintain its own survival. This type of state is capable of acting in its own interest and is highly resistant to conquest by others. The description is best applied to republican and representative states, as they are states that are public institutions which pursue policies that are distinct from merely the private benefit and interest of its members. I argued that structural realism is really a description appropriate only to a certain kind of state.

I observed how, according to liberal and Marxist theories of the state, there is a tension between the state's provision of public goods, the problem of free riders, and the limits of collective action.

I noted how liberalism is contradicted by the ways that the state must act as a universal institution for healthy governance, and Marxism is contradicted by the limits of collective action as it relates to its conceptualization of the state in relation to class as an analytical category. I commented that self-interest, nevertheless, plays a vital role in the production of goods.

I explained how, for liberalism, the state is, seemingly, the answer to the free-rider problem. It is a public institution with the coercive power and authority to maintain order and the flowering of 'individual' development, but there is the danger of tyranny. The state must act to enforce agreements, administer justice, preserve the peace, and protect private property.

I noted that, although the state is a provider of public goods, it seeks to maximize its interest through the collection of taxes, thus creating another incentive to free ride. but liberalism does acknowledge the concepts of common interest and public institution.

I observed how Marx sees the state as the instrument of class power although there is no theory of the state *per se*, and examined Olson's criticism of Marx's social theory for his deployment of a narrow economic rationality in many realms of explanation: the logic behind the historical evolution of material forms of production, the rationality of an individual capitalist, and the basis for the collective nature of class struggle.

Despite the emphasis on the rational in IR, I asserted that we need to broaden our capacity to account for why so many examples of 'irrational' socially positive behaviors appear in the world.

I noted that, much as would be expected, the assumptions within theories of individual-state relations are reproduced within international relations. In this way, hegemonic stability theory operates from the basic theoretical arguments and assumptions of the liberal theory of the state. That is, the relationship of weaker states with the hegemon addresses many of the central security concerns of the subordinate states and provides a public good, security, allowing states to free up and direct capital to industrial and economic investments.

I observed how postmodernists examine how the state socializes its citizens through cultural, ethical, and educational mechanisms. Postmodernists recognize that social relations are organized by norms and values, but they view these norms and values as expressions of power.

I examined constructivism, especially as described by Onuf. In place of a system regulated by a monocausal logic, constructivists recognize that the international system is socially constructed and maintained by a set of intersubjective normative beliefs and practices. Since they are intersubjective, they are constitutive of the interrelationship that social agents share—a common set of beliefs, practices, and behaviors that are accepted as appropriate forms of conduct. According to Onuf's constructivist theory of international relations, the behavior of agents is understood in relation to a wider schema of rules, practices, institutions, and structures. Rules form the central, regulative nexus that dictate the behavior of agents, their interaction among each other, and wider social structures. Onuf's definition of a country, though useful, could be applied to many

groupings other than to nation states. Thus, constructivism lacks a well-grounded theory that links group formation and group action.

I concluded asserting that there is still a need for a theory distinct from the utilitarian egoist in IR. To have one, however, an account of the cognitive and normative dimensions that link individuals to each other and to the world, that underpins group formation and organization, is needed to contextualize the organization of social cooperation and the exercise of social agency based on mutual beliefs and values.

## CHAPTER 3: AGENTS, STRUCTURES, AND SOCIAL ONTOLOGY

### Overview

In chapter 3, I will explore the way international relations theories understand the relationship between agents and structures, working of the typology developed by Patrick Jackson. I will then focus on social ontological questions in international relations, particularly on how they are treated within critical realism.

#### *The Three Problematiques of Social Analysis*

Social inquiry has been dominated by three central problematiques. The first is mind-body dualism. This theory seeks to establish the relationship between the body and the mind and between thought and the natural world. It arises from the inherent subjective and self-conscious way in which individuals relate internally to themselves. The conscious subject acts with intention, with the source of his actions grounded in meaning, goals, and desires. In contrast, the external world is governed by objective forces, and by natural and social structures that inhibit the freedom of actors as well as condition and restrain the kinds of choices they make. The objective world, both natural and social, is explained and studied by using Newton's model of physics. For positivists,



social systems seemingly operate on inherently universal laws that can be discovered through the gathering and testing of data.

The second problematique for social inquiry centers on the question of free will and determinism. Though the subject is rarely addressed directly by social science, the logic that underpins the deductive nomological method that dominates positivist social science posits the existence of universal laws. Universal laws by definition are deterministic. Second, determinism is finding wide support within neuroscience. Together, these developments have direct implications on the potential of social science to account for social behavior and to positively affect social practices.

The third problematique of social inquiry-- the relationship between agents and structures--emerges from an obvious but seemingly ineluctable truth. Societies are made up of individual agents. Societies are organized by structures that are objectified in practice, tradition, and law. Social institutions are the products of human artifice, but they take on a seemingly independent reality irrespective of the wills and interests of the actors who create and perpetuate their existence. The question then become whether or not societies are more than the aggregation of individuals. Implicitly, most social theories treat a social structure as possessing its own ontological reality.

Finally, in light of these questions, I offer a critique of Alexander Wendt's constructivism. Wendt's efforts to establish a *via media*, most clearly articulated within his *Social Theory of International Relations*, is still realizable. Wendt's use of science, however, is not coherent. Wendt's positivism is wedded to Newtonian physics as the ultimate standard of reality. Wendt grounds many of his arguments in intellectual

developments within the philosophy of mind. Subsequently, having argued against reductivism within the *Social Theory*, he abandons supervient constructivism for a reductivist quantum mechanics. This shift is a consequence of the closed, deterministic models of all material systems within Newtonian physics, including neurobiology. Seemingly, free will can only be rescued by locating thought within quantum indeterminacy. Wendt uses evolutionary theory throughout *Social Theory*, but he does so in opportunistic ways that are either highly contradictory or simply introduced as a metaphor for state socialization. He then offers an alternative argument that grounds constructivism within evolutionary theory while recognizing culture is the evolutionary adaptation *sine qua non* of our species. A rich appreciation of our evolutionary past as social, intentional agents who organize social activities around normative beliefs and practices offers the most comprehensive perspective from which to approach social theory. Furthermore, it is through evolutionary theory that the seeming dichotomy between 'explaining' and 'understanding' can be treated as mutually supportive forms, rather than as distinct forms of explanation. By centering constructivism in an evolutionary account of the origin and developmental history of human sociability--in its cooperative as much as in its conflictual dimensions-- we give a fuller account of how international relations operates. In addition, in so doing, we do not marginalize culture, but rather we recognize culture's centrality to all aspects of human activity.

### *Mind-Body Problem*

Patrick Thaddeus Jackson's *The Conduct of Inquiry in International Relations* clearly delineates the central relationship between philosophy of science and philosophy of mind. Following in the wake of Wendt's constructivism, Jackson confronts the 'Cartesian anxiety' that shadows all claims of knowledge (Jackson 2011, 47). For Jackson, the philosophy of science centers on a systematic investigation of how knowledge is produced. The divisions that plague international relations are ontological. Philosophical ontologies are foundational; they are grounded in a set of presuppositions on how we relate to the world. Scientific ontologies establish a methodological criteria by which researchers conduct investigations, but they only emerge as a consequence of this first intellectual step. Distinct ontologies create distinct methodologies, which, by their differences, produce 'knowledge' according to a different set of logics. For Jackson, there are two interrelated controversies that establish a practitioner's philosophical ontology. These form the philosophical 'wagers' which all researchers must make when selecting the methodology to employ in their research.

The first wager deals with the position researchers take on the kind of relationship they have to the phenomena under investigation; this divides the field between ontological dualists and monists. For dualists, the external world exists as an objective, independent reality. Dualists seek to find theories that best approximate and explain the world according to a set of scientific criteria. Dualists believe that theories about the world are distinct from the world under investigation, and their validity is measured by their capacity to accurately explain and to predict its operation. Our knowledge and

beliefs about the world are not simple reflections of the world, nor do they create it. Mind-world dualism establishes the order of the world through empirical inquiry; it maintains that we can build factual knowledge of the world. For the mind-world dualist, the world exists; we must employ tools by which to measure the objects of the world and to establish their behavior, often by employing statistical measurements.

Monists, in contrast, reject the validity of presumed objectivity in which the researcher is separated from the world. Monists believe that scholars must recognize themselves as agents embedded in social institutions. As part of the world they are hoping to understand, to critique, and to transform, they cannot treat their research as an objective, neutral, fact-gathering enterprise distinct from social practice (Jackson 2011, 31-36).

The second wager centers on a question of what kind of knowledge about the world is possible. Phenomenalists believe that our only source of knowledge is rooted in experience. They reject the possibility that an investigator could seemingly observe the world from a tower beyond the phenomenal realm. Transfactualists, in contrast, believe that we can transcend experience to discover the underlying forces beyond what can be directly perceived and measured. These forces that constitute and create the world are the central generative structures that critical realists hope to identify in order to give the fullest account of the world possible (Jackson 2011, 34-37).

From these two wagers Jackson argues that four distinct approaches to international relations have emerged: Critical realism (Dualism/Transfactualism), Neopositivism (Dualism/Phenomenalism), Analyticism (Monism/Phenomenalism), and Reflexivism (Monism/Transfactualism).

Jackson dichotomizes neopositivism and analyticism to delineate the distinct philosophical ontologies that are deployed by schools of international relations. Neopositivism is the dominant method within international relations. It focuses on what can be empirically observed, tested, and measured. It is premised on conducting research by framing investigations within the deductive-nomological framework and by testing hypotheses about the social world against general laws. For neopositivists, this model applies equally well to large N statistical studies or to qualitative case studies; they view it as the most valid way of producing and accumulating knowledge about the world. Founded in experience, it seeks to uncover law-like relationships through the identification of recurrent patterns (Jackson 2011, 64-68). Monistic Analyticism employs ideal models of the world to explain its operations and the logical consistency and integrity of the models. It does not, however, believe that the models can represent a real, external existing reality which human beings can access as all-knowing observers (Waltz 1979, 6-17). Jackson argues that Waltz's structuralism is not trying to advance an empirically grounded argument about a specific, historically existing international system. Instead, Waltz's structural realism is a monistic, ideal-type Weberian model of the international system. It is a theoretical, parsimonious model that can act as a paradigmatic example of how international systems function. Jackson's point is apt but does little to rectify the central problem inherent to the neopositivist accounts of international relations: that scholars fail to draw distinctions between their 'models' of the world' and the world itself. Constructivists caution that theories about the world act as

self-fulfilling prophecies; there is but one criticism that can be drawn from this approach to international relations.

Intellectually, two models underpin standard neopositivist/analyticist theories. First, there is a belief in the existence of deterministic laws that create the logic of the international system. Second, there is the model of the agents of the system as rational utility maximizers which serves as a modern iteration of the classical, sophisticated description of human nature.

Structural realism takes the assumptions that classical realists ascribe to human nature and imposes them on the identity of states. States, like men in the state of nature, operate in a world of anarchy. States prioritize survival, orienting their policies in the world by focusing on the acquisition of power.

Neoliberal international relations theory develops out a response to structural realism. It takes many of structural realism's assumptions-- such as the centrality of states and the anarchic environment—as givens. It seeks to expand the field's understanding of the ways that states calculate benefits. Neorealism is focused on power. For neorealists, power is a scarce resource. If one state increases in power, it necessarily diminishes the power of other states. Therefore, neorealists are concerned with relative gains and losses with respect to other nations (Grieco 1993, 123). Neoliberalism seeks to answer how nations cooperate by broadening the interest of the states to economics. Neoliberal theories are largely dependent on its importation of economic models of interaction (Keohane and Martin 1995, 43-46). More specifically, it tries to create rigorous models that explain how and why nations cooperate in reference to absolute gains. According to

neoliberals, two nations can both grow wealthier through trade. For example, if two nations with the same GDP start to trade with each other, over time one nation may quadruple its wealth, while the other nation only doubles its wealth. Now, one nation is much wealthier than the other. It can employ that wealth to invest in its military, and it now has the ability to threaten the other state in a way that it didn't have before.

Neoliberalism studies the ways that Realism and Liberalism both see states as rational actors which try to maximize their interests; the former privileges security and the latter, material well-being. The interests of actors are taken for granted. It is rational to pursue power; it is rational to pursue wealth. These premises create their own conclusions, eroding into a tautology; it is the inevitable prescription of what actors must, therefore, focus on: seeking power and/or wealth.

Returning to Jackson's Neopositivism/Analyticism divide, we find that realism is best understood as a set of political maxims about how states should act rather than as a universal claim as to how they really do behave. We are, however, constantly faced with the fact that analytic models are instantiated in social practice. Neoliberal economic models were adopted into markets, guiding how financial markets should be regulated. For a time, monetarism shifted from analyticism to a measurable, neopositivist phenomena in the real world.

Critical realism and reflexivism have very distinct philosophical ontologies. Critical realism is dualistic while reflexivism is monistic. In this way, they embody the same ironic position of neopositivism and analyticism that are premised on alternative

ontologies but are, nevertheless, frequently collapsed and used complementarily by scholars. That said, both critical realism and reflexivism share a belief in transfactualism.

Critical realism has emerged over the past decades as a scientific alternative to the dominant neopositivist methodology. Jackson's critique of the approach is apt. Grounded in a set of ontological presuppositions, it, nevertheless, too readily fails to make critical distinctions between its philosophical and scientific ontology. Its philosophical ontology is dualist and grounded in the assertion that an external, factual world exists independent of the investigator. This claim is too often treated as nearly indistinguishable from its scientific ontology that seeks to identify the actual objects and structures of the independently existing world. In addition, Jackson faults critical realist ontology for not establishing a correspondingly elaborated epistemology to deploy in gathering facts about the world. (Jackson 75). Critical realists are transfactualists in that they seek to move beyond the neopositivist focus on constant conjunction and statistical regularity and to identify the underlying reality that generates observable behaviors.

Critical realism's affirmation of the existence of an independent reality is heavily dependent on the use of abductive inference. Abductive inference posits a causal relationship between empirically verifiable relationships. It advances science by moving beyond the methods of formal induction and deduction that draw conclusions between relationships in order to posit hypotheses that can be further investigated. When applied to the investigation of social practices, however, its employment is problematic. The difficulty with critical realism rests on the claim that the social world is formed by real objects. The institutions and practices that govern the social world cannot be located in



the world. International relations speaks of the state, but the state has never been observed. The state, nevertheless, generates all the data that neopositivists catalog and correlate. For Wendt, guided by scientific realism, this leaves only one logical alternative: states are real objects in the world. If states are not 'real,' the way that we study their actions becomes overly complicated and jeopardizes international relations as a field. Critical realists such as Wight, even when they disagree with Wendt on the reality of the state, nevertheless do posit that social structures are real, existing objects in the world (Jackson 2011, 88-91).

The social world is not dependent on the beliefs of any one individual, but it does depend on the collective beliefs and assent of its members. Therefore, while independent of a single mind for its operation, it is nevertheless dependent on minds for its recognition, observation, and continued existence (Jackson 2011, 94).

Critical realism does have much to offer, however. Critical realists investigate the powers that produce causal relations. Observable patterns and relationships should not be taken as representing the totality of the powers resident within the structures being investigated. They represent merely its immediately observable capacities. Often these forces have additional properties or latent powers beyond empirical measurement. This is also where critical realism believes that it can function as an emancipatory project because the existing actions of social structures do not represent the totality of the possible social world they are capable of generating (Jackson 2011, 101-105).

Critical realism's central focus is ontological. It believes in the external reality of the objects it investigates. It seeks to go beyond neopositivism that simply identifies the

external causal relationships that exist in nature to try to explain the nature of the phenomena that produce effects. Against this ontological realism, it treats epistemology as relative. That is, critical realists recognize that the epistemology deployed in investigating phenomena is always a set of tools constrained by knowledge and application and subject to revision. Therefore, unlike positivists, critical realists do not reduce scientific investigation with conformity to a single method. For critical realists, science is science by virtue of its aims: to explain something (Wight 2006, 61). That said, ontological realism, when treated as the theoretical premise underpinning social reality, can lead to a very problematic set of claims. Dessler and Wendt are focused on ontology, but they treat it as a real ontology, when, in fact, social structures are always shifting, transforming, and being destroyed. Taken to its logical conclusions, critical realism can be used to argue for the reality of such things as God or the state, by virtue of the effects those beliefs have upon social agents. In fact, that is precisely what we find. So, for instance, Margaret Archer, a prominent critical realist widely cited within international relations circles, co-authored a book that does not argue for or against the existence of God, but asks how that question might be investigated by critical realism. In this light, when we find Wendt coming to argue for the reality of states as 'people,' the claims become rather modest. This is the product of critical realists' commitment to treating social institutions and practices as ontologically real.

Colin Wight, who has since become one of the most active IR theorists using critical realism, struggles with the same problems as Wendt but does not bring the field into a new theoretical plan nor does he provide a new paradigm.

How this relates to the study of society, however, is not entirely clear. As Wight himself admits, though society has emergent properties that are not reducible to individual agents, social power is only manifest through the actions of individual agents (Wight 2006, 46). The actions of individuals, however, are always defined within structures that not only give individuals their identities and roles, but also allow for their actions and capabilities, and their own set of powers to express and effect social structures. A social act is intelligible and meaningful in that it is already understood to embody a particular social activity. To speak, one needs words; to have words, one requires language; to have language, one will have to have learned it already. It is a communal phenomenon. Structures existing prior to agents and possessing causal power are an independent reality that cannot be reduced to the actions of agents alone. In this way, society exists as its own independent phenomenon. Therefore, for Wight, this "...can be seen as arguments for the reality of social forms that are not explainable solely in terms of individuals" (Wight 2006, 46).

Wight is still left with the task of establishing the point of contact between human agents and structures and delineating the relationship between them. Borrowing from Bourdieu's *habitus*, Wight recognizes that social structures exist as habits, customs, and practices that are so widely accepted as normal that they are almost entirely treated as givens by agents. From early childhood, these norms are internalized as valid, and actions that conform to this early socialization reproduce the structure that first lead to their inculcation.

There is no doubt that social structures have causal power. If they did not, they would not exist. Though social structures are not dependent on any single individual for their existence, they are still entirely dependent on individuals' collective recognition of their existence to be perpetuated. This perpetuation, however, is not dependent on the agents making constant choices that reaffirm the structures' existence; it only must act within the structures that are the social structure. Therefore, as Wight points out:

Contrary to individualist theories, these relations, rules and roles are not dependent upon either knowledge of them by particular individuals, or the existence of actions by particular individuals; that is, their explanation cannot be reduced to consciousness or to the attributes of individuals (Wight 2006, 49).

#### *International Relations and Social Ontology*

Social structures do not have a capacity to act independently of individuals, but they provide reasons and context to human actions. Practice embodies this relationship, as it emerges from agencies whose actions are formed and made intelligible by structures (Wight 2006,47).

The reality of social structures is established by virtue of what they can do, the behaviors they can establish, and those that are manifest, even if we can never actually locate their 'existence' or 'reality' as we would a natural phenomenon. A rock is not a state, but both of them are 'real.'

However, it is equally important to note that roles, rules and relations structure behaviour in ways that are sometimes opaque to consciousness, decisions or choices. Hence the conceptual aspects of society do not provide an exhaustive social ontology (Wight 2006, 50).

By identifying the unconscious elements of social structures that we take for granted, we can allow social science to play an emancipatory role that helps sociality create novel forms of social organization that increase the wellbeing of all of its members (Wight 2006, 51).

This is true in significant ways, but it also belies a deeper set of issues. The central question of social science does not rest on the particular form any social structure might take. Instead, it asks why human beings depend on social structures as central to the way they act within the world. In making social structures, its members come to treat these practices as real, internalizing their rules as a set of norms that guide their behavior.

Wight treats society like other kinds of natural phenomena such as gravity and magnetism that cannot be identified but which exist and can be studied, but only through the effects they induce and not through the direct experience of either phenomenon. To treat societies as 'real' and, therefore, subject to investigation really does not get us that far. Societies do not exist as closed ecosystems in which the forces at work create predictable patterns of behavior. Sciences cannot establish inviolable laws when the elements that constitute the system are subject to alteration and are never closed. Wight, therefore, believes that the scientific effort to study society must be focused on explanation (Wight 2006, 52-55).

The claims of any argument rest on its capacity to establish real causes of any particular set of phenomena. Causes and consequences, however, are not to be confused. Moreover, the order of causality has multiple dimensions, with some causes being inherent and others merely contingent. Any particular war is the product of both inherent

and contingent causes, but no particular manifestation of the war by itself could be understood if it were not integrated into a wider set of actions that are categorically recognized as being of a specific type. As our sense of causality shifts, so do the ways that we organize the world and the ways that we behave in the world. We react differently to the plague if we think it is the result of witchcraft or unsanitary water, etc. Therefore, the limits of a merely interpretive alteration, that makes no reference to the actual causes, inherently strengthens arguments that seek to answer problems scientifically, through the steady accumulation of facts, than merely a shifting in allegories without reference to the actual world. (Wight 2006, 58). The domains are distinct; the phenomena are distinct; thus, those distinctions will necessitate different forms of explanation and investigation, but both are inherently embodied in science. Equally, Patomäki depicts critical realism as being able to uncover the underlying structures in the following ways: by delving deeper into the conceptual and linguistic elements of discourse that underpin the behavior, by situating the events and agents within the rules that constitute the relationship and dictate their options, and by seeing the systemic effect that is produced, often unintentionally, as the relationship among actors takes on an independent, 'emergent' element (Patomäki 2002, 179).

The social world is a product of human agency, but it is one that is conditioned by the material and conceptual structures of the world. Therefore, the question of how to conduct a truly scientific investigation of social practice becomes both necessary and highly contentious. If we treat the world as embedded with meaning and privilege (the reasons given by agents), we risk either treating the narrative of the society as a whole as

being the best account of actions or privileging the individual and his stated reasons; that again can often simply reproduce society or ignore important elements of which agents themselves are often unaware. Even under such terms, we still require a way to judge the statements and beliefs of the agent and the society that produces them. The effectiveness of those beliefs, their causal powers, and the corresponding capacities with which they endow agents is one that acts as a valuable means of testing (Patomäki 2002, 151).

The emancipatory view of knowledge is critical, but the question is: Emancipation for what and towards what ends? The knowledge/power perspective of Foucault, by itself, does not really state much. To reiterate what Cox said, theory is always for something (Wight 2006, 56-60). The true effects of structures are not to be understood in their behaviors, but in the biological ends they come to serve. That is not the only scientific question to study in social structures, but it is the primary one. It is one that is in conformity with the ends established in investigating the organizing forms of other social animals as well as entire ecosystems.

Critical realism requires a much more nuanced conception of ontological realism and epistemological relativism when applied to social theory. In fact, social sciences generally deal with the reverse set of problems: that is, many aspects of the social world are *epistemologically objective*—law and money, for example—but they are created from a *subjective social ontology*. John Searle recognizes that we must treat social reality as ontologically subjective, but, when it is objectified in social practices, it can be identified as an epistemologically objective fact which is imbedded in the operation of the social world (Searle 2005, 8-17, 31-44).

Just as critical realism correctly identifies the epistemological relativism of the sciences as produced within a historical context, it must also treat its social institutions as another set of tools by which human beings navigate in the world and coordinate their behaviors. In other words, if theories of science are to be understood as produced within the limits of the knowledge, technological, and material resources that produce them, their relativism must be correlated to the general relativism of the social instantiations of any historical period.

Critical realism's critique of reflectivism is among the strongest contributions it has made to the social sciences generally. Roy Bhaskar has been the most influential intellectual within critical realism. Bhaskar's criticism of the hermeneutic and the linguistic theories of social science are that they treat meaning as encompassing the totality of what can be known or studied within society. Intentional meaning is critical, but it does not represent the sum of what a social order's function or constitution potentially could be (Bhaskar 1998, 149). Hermeneutics is weakened by accepting the positivist method of hypothesis formulation. It accepts that the discovery of laws is the authentic model for science generally, and, therefore, it treat social science as a separate, non-scientific field of investigations (Bhaskar 1998, 150).

The positivists employ a rather erroneous model of science to the study of human social life, while the interpretavists locate human action in terms of meaning and intentionality, but they never explain their origin or function.

Bhaskar's criticism of Winch's Wittgenstein-inspired social science is entirely correct. To treat the social world as conforming to rules--with behaviors as



manifestations of rules--depicts human beings as 'overly socialized.' Not all behaviors are done because of our inconformity to norms (Bhaskar 1998, 156).

Wittgenstein's intersubjectivity leaves little room for subjectivity, spontaneity, and independent acts of creation. Society creates constitutive rules to shape behavior. These behaviors, in turn, are regulated, but these are not so vast and expansive that they can adequately guide each facet of our lives or choices. Our lives have rituals, but our lives are not simply rituals. Social behavior when defined as rule-governed is problematic and limiting. The 'games' articulated by Wittgenstein, therefore, lack any true agents; they are simply, as with Durkheim, the products of the internalization of the regulative rules that govern and shape their interactions (Bhaskar 1998, 158).

Beyond failing to make distinctions from conscious and unconscious behaviors, compulsions and explicit formal ceremony, Bhaskar criticizes Winch for failing to account for:

(a) what explains the rules themselves?; (b) what explains the agent's rule-observance on any particular occasion?; and (c) what explains the acquisition of the rules by the social individual in the first place? (a) must lead Winch in the direction of either an infinite regress or an asocial explanation of rules, so he must refuse it by positing rules as explanatorily ultimate givens. (b) is more difficult for Winch to evade (Bhaskar 1998, 159).

Rule-governed behavior requires an explanation of not only how we formulate rules, but why we recognize and abide by them. In the words of Bhaskar "*rule-following is not its own explanation*" (Bhaskar 1998,159), but Bhaskar warns that the other alternative is to fall into infinite regression. He does not, however, offer an alternative foundation from which to ground social explanation. Winch explains behavior according

to rules in the same order as the positivists, but his explanation takes the meaning and intentions of the agents as the causal force that propels actions within the constituted system (Bhaskar 1998, 162). Society exists beyond its objectification in specific rules and behaviors in a wider set of dimensions than are encompassed in traditional social theory.

Language is not formed from the shared world of categories and concepts alone. Language articulates the experiences, concepts, and presumptions that exist among intersubjectively-constituted agents with a shared category of experiences, beliefs, and expectations that make communication intelligible. That said, language is required because these shared ideas and experiences do not suffice to coordinate the actions of agents. Instead, there are distinctions, ambiguities, and disagreements. Language is constituted as much by disjuncture as by its shared mental beliefs. Both must act together. It is through this that language expands. Further, agents are distinct, with a range of alternative potential thoughts. The language 'life-world' is not uniform. (Bhaskar 1998,163).

For nations, Deutsch's model of learning is simply an extension of the complex, adaptive processes that all organisms must undertake if they are to successfully interact with their environment. Conditions that narrow the ability of nations to fruitfully interact, learn, and adapt to their environments are pathological, hindering the growth and future survivability of the state (Patomäki 2002, 152).

The dynamic nature of human social arrangements, the fluidity with which we order, alter, and add to practices, habits, and beliefs runs against the fixity of social institutions that are treated as unalterable, really-existing essences. Agency,

furthermore, is instantiated in biological organisms since even the material forces of the social world depend on human beings for their construction and function. As will be examined in more detail below, Wendt's desire to find a meaningful boundary between the material and ideational properties of the social world fails to identify distinct boundaries. Critical realism, furthermore, treats the properties of the social world as autonomous from its true agents, human beings. Human beings-- the truly generative unit of the social world--are under-theorized and neglected by critical realism.

If there is to be a true science of society, it must rest on the appreciation of our evolutionary history. It is worth meditating on the contributions of hunter gatherers to the development and maintenance of our species for nearly the entirety of its history.

The underlying causal mechanisms, in their origin, operation, and consequences that allow us to obtain a sense of consciousness and morality and to participate in complex social interactions are largely taken as givens. It is from these capacities, however, that human social organization and evolution spring. It is from this basic capacity that humans are able to continuously alter their social world. We must, therefore, understand the origins of human sociality not only in its most simplistic form, but also how it has been able to engender increasingly complex social organizations to adapt to changing ends. In fact, we are able to use certain evolutionary endowments in rather novel ways, with our greatest plasticity springing from our capacity to think in the form of symbolic representation and to alter those symbols to achieve different ends. Consciousness, however, should not be taken as the great mark of human knowledge and, therefore, placed on a pedestal. Consciousness is, in fact, the most problematic issue in

the study of human beings. It is also at this point that the tricky problem of how to understand values, purposeful actions, and intentions becomes much harder to assess.

If researchers were to center their investigations on human beings by focusing their actions within a single matrix in which the mind, the body, and the social realm were not clearly separated, a dualism that treated reason as standing outside of temporal and physical constraints, and a distinction between the world and the researcher would be forbidden. In maintaining such an untenable boundary, the critical realism project becomes a victim of a Cartesian ‘anxiety’ that radically undermines its potential.

Reflexivism is both monistic and transfactualist. These seemingly contradictory positions by which researchers are situated within a world but can transcend the boundaries of the present are predicated on the capacity of human reason to interrogate the world. Researchers undergo a dialectical relationship with their society and themselves. The capacity to objectify both the self and society emerged from man’s capacity for self-consciousness. The presumptions of a researcher are objectified as products of a specific cultural-temporal dimension which is informed by the position of the researcher within the society to which he or she is a member. In so doing, we can envision alternatives. The validity of a concept-- its set of affirmed properties--can be tested against the truth of the claims; it is the measure to which the norms of a society are realized in the practices of its subjects. The way that we organize the social world does not reflect natural, timeless realities. Beliefs, practices, and designations are creative acts giving rise to relations among agents. By interrogating the ideology, institutional practice, and social relations of the world, we historicize the present and see how society

emerged. The seemingly natural unquestioning properties of the social world can be viewed in a new light, exposing the disjuncture and shifting nature of our beliefs and practices; thus, they are subject to revision.

The challenge of reflexivism is to be able to conduct social research that is distinct from partisan pamphleteering and does not simply advocate and explain the world from any single perspective. Reflexivism encompasses a wide range of traditions--hermeneutics, post structuralism, and feminism being just a few examples.

I divide reflexivism into two distinct intellectual positions. The divide is prompted by the diverse ways that reflexivists treat questions of power and morality. Following Nietzsche and Foucault, many post-modernists treat power as an all-encompassing force. Foucault extends the investigation of power beyond the politically-delineated legal rights of the state. Instead, he focuses on the elaborate mechanisms of social control that disciplines and ritualizes power in all social institutions--as much in the school as in the prison system. For Foucault and many postmodernists who follow in his wake, the union of power and knowledge offers no way of solving the problem of power, no distinct realm of morality, or progressive reform. Investigators can research power by focusing on its applications at the margins of society, its critical function, and its extra-political dimensions. In so doing, while not presenting an alternative, the postmodernists can provide a counterhegemonic discourse. Others, such as critical theorists, still believe in the capacity of reason to transform human social arrangements to increase the well-being and freedom of individuals.

From this, I want to briefly highlight the interrelated nature of mind, history, and culture. Jackson, like Onuf, sees Kant as a social constructivist. Kant shifts questions of the world from experience in the world to the a priori mental categories we use to bring order to experience, making it intelligible. Though we never know the world in itself, we, nevertheless, use our mind to act on the world. Our actions in the world are possible through our mental categories, but our mind can also affect the world, instantiating itself on the world around it. Kant shifts the emphasis from questions of experience of the external world to the structure of the mind in shaping experience. Like Hume, Kant believes that we can never know the reality of the forces that govern the world in their essential properties. For both men, causality was a product of the mind and not of the world. Kant's Copernican Revolution, then, rests on centering human knowledge not on the sensory experiences obtained in the world but on the form and composition of the mind. The mind functions through a priori faculties such as time and space that order experience and make it intelligible. We could not imagine living in a world without them -not because the world would not exist, but because no act of experience would be possible for human beings within such a world (Kant 2002, 170-182).

Central to Kant's awakening from his dogmatic slumber is his focus on the moral consequences of Hume's arguments which threaten the very possibility of free will and moral action. Hume posits a compatibilist argument, advancing a claim that human beings both possess free will and are determined. Such an argument, however, is a contradiction in terms. Hume's compatibilist account of free will, furthermore, is strictly utilitarian. This highlights the often-neglected dimension of Hume's theory. All human

actions, including inductive inference, spring from human nature. Hume's account of human nature is the foundation of all his theoretical claims. Human nature is a general set of tendencies universal among mankind, unchanged throughout time that allows us to understand the motives of those who lived long ago as well as to comprehend the desires of other members of our society. Hume's compatibilism subordinates reason to desires. It treats actions as grounded in calculations of interest that will always produce the same outcome among agents. When presented with three alternatives, agents will always choose the course that most benefits them. In other words, their choices are predictable and spring from the inevitable operation of self-interest (Hume 2006, 274). Human choice, under such descriptions, becomes as deterministic as any other property. Most significantly, since Hume roots human actions in individual interests and passions, there is no space left for a distinct set of moral beliefs and behaviors.

Hume believes human actions are the product of our desires. Social 'facts' in the world are not based on any objective description of events; they are based on their moral characterization by which we attach the label of virtue to those actions that elicit positive sentiments and the name of vices to those that elicit negative emotions. Hume's moral theory, like his argument for free will, is an argument against the possibility of morality. Language rests on a system of logically-related sentences, whereas knowledge is formed from our observation of the world. No true moral statements about the world can be known or made.

Kant's answer to Hume is based on the way that human beings relate to each other and organize themselves socially. Humans hold others responsible for their actions

because they presume that they, and others, are capable of acting freely. This is not simply a matter of convention, but a universal assumption shared by all members of society. Actions that draw social opprobrium have deeply moral dimensions that transcend mere legal violations. Further, the legal and normative morality on which governments organize and rule communities is not the foundation of morality. Human beings have an innate moral faculty. If they lacked this, no socially-imposed set of moral and legal beliefs and practices could have or would have developed. Kant recognizes that moral judgments profoundly arouse moral sentiments, but he believes that morals are not and cannot merely be the instrument of the passions. Morality is founded on reason. Importantly, reason can alter the preferences and desires of human beings. Reason can make a better world-- indeed it is making one, as evidenced in the progressive nature of human history toward more democratic and pacific ends. Reason, however, is a distinct faculty, standing as an independent power that can be employed in the social and physical world.

Moral actions exist in the realm of intentionality. Morality is deontological, not merely because the sources of actions define the end which an action is supposed to serve, but also because of the limited ability of agents to ascertain the full consequences of their actions. Deontologically, actions can be appraised and distinguished irrespective of their outcomes. Actions are understood by reference to their intentions and not by their consequences. Those who engage in actions based in malice and undertaken with the intention of harming others are not absolved of their responsibility nor freed from moral censure if they produce desirable outcomes. To be moral, our actions must not



simply be based on self-interest. Kant argues that reason can guide actions. Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* introduces space and time as the foundational mental categories that mediate humans' relationship with the external world. The book does not advance an argument for free will. By the publication of the *Critique of Practical Reason*, however, Kant has raised morality to a universal law, a mental property on the order of space and time that exists naturally within human beings and that guides our actions.

Kant cannot resolve the seeming distinction between the physical world of impersonal, causally-determined forces and the realm of free will, morality, choice, and responsibility.

I propose that this Kantian antinomy, and not the Cartesian anxiety, poses the most fundamental dilemma for the social sciences.

### Conclusion

In chapter 3, I argued that the central question of the social sciences rests on the relationship of agents and structures. Current approaches to this problem, however, are not sufficient to explain the way the state gains social agency. I argue that Kant's awakening to the categories of the mind, specifically space and time, is the primary mechanism by which we encounter the world as the most central point of inquiry in explaining the relationship of agency and structure.

## **CHAPTER 4: WENDT, INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, AND THE KANTIAN ANTINOMY**

### Overview

In Chapter 4, I will examine Wendt's work in detail including his belief that humans can alter their social world through the application of reason and how his constructivism centers first on the malleability of human rationality to be transformed by culture and by the historical process. I will examine how evolutionary theory pervades Wendt's social constructivism, and how it is utilized mostly as an explanatory model of the state. I will note that evolutionary theory is never treated systematically. Instead, evolutionary theory is utilized at the wrong level of explanation and critically fails to capture the two distinct logics of all social behavior. States, communities, and institutions exist by virtue of the cooperative relations forged by their members.

I will examine two inherent problems with the way that Wendt constructs the agential nature of the state and examine the incoherence of Wendt's evolutionary account as evident in his reiteration and affirmation of the altruism paradox.

I will investigate the limitations of Wendt. Our evolutionary development, its environment, and the capabilities that emerged from it are all treated as seemingly

irrelevant. To argue that human beings are unconstrained by a specific 'spatial-temporal context' is not only incoherent, it limits a deeper understanding of the dynamic, transformative faculties that have allowed our species to evolve both biologically and culturally. I will examine Wendt's argument that the state possesses the same attributes as individuals, and, therefore, has an independent reality and agency. I will examine Mead's work and her assertion that the emergence of the self not only allowed human beings to create complex societies. The reflexive nature of the self permitted human society to undergo alteration and transformation through time, creating social forms that are distinct from what predated them. I will also examine Mead's emphasis on the role of language, noting that even people who have the most basic forms of life have complex language systems. We are socially constituted selves before we are individual, autonomous selves. Societies produce individuals and not the reverse. We will investigate how self-consciousness is a mediating bridge between the individual and society, constituted by his capacity to empathically understand others as well as to judge all interactions by reference to the generalized other, what Mead rightly terms the key to human intelligence.

I will examine how Wendt utilizes debates within the philosophy of mind to argue that the state is its own agent by virtue of supervenience and multiple realizability.

I will indicate that thought and language, for Wendt, therefore, are identical. I will examine how language and meanings are properties of society. They are external elements of the social reality that shapes actors not merely in their behaviors, but also in their beliefs and self-conceptualization. I will also examine Wendt's identification of

three theories on the potential personhood of states and its implications and define and contrast collective knowledge and common knowledge.

Finally, I will examine the defects of Wendt's panpsychism, for providing no paradigm for social science, serving simply as a form of mystification.

I will assert that if we are to take social science seriously, we are bound to adopt an evolutionary paradigm as foundational and that evolutionary theory offers the foundational scientific ontology that should ground the analysis of an international relations scholar.

I will explain why before we can have a theory of international relations, we must first have a theory of the state that is premised on our capacity to associate into cooperative, complex social bodies. The past five thousand years of 'civilization' or the past five hundred years of the 'state-system' are the liminal markers from which history springs. This is an error that prevents us from recognizing the anomalous character of the past five thousand years when placed against our species's evolutionary history that spans 200,000 years.

I will argue that we must recognize that states are neither organisms nor super-organisms; they are tools whose function is understood as a critical element that is produced by our native biological tendency to organize into cooperative communities. The dimension of our cooperative, social biological terms are the true foundation of social science.

### *Wendtian Constructivism*

Wendt's *Social Theory* follows directly and consciously in the tradition of Kant. Wendt's central claim rests on his belief that human beings have the capacity to meaningfully alter their social world through the operation of reason. Reason is not and cannot be treated simply as a tool that we use to satisfy our passions. Wendt seeks to overcome this by stating that our beliefs can influence what we desire. Therefore, Wendt criticizes Axelrod's work on cooperation as having limited applicability in explaining human cooperation. Axelrod demonstrates how, through repeated interactions, a simple reciprocal strategy can be the dominant strategy. Rational choice theories that can treat "humans, rats, (and) pigeons as equally rational" fail to appreciate the distinct mental and cultural properties of human agents (Wendt 2003, 117-119).

Wendt, in criticizing a theory that can be applied independently of context or species, highlights the narrow and simplistic way rationality is formulated and employed by social science models. Wendt's account of socialization rests on how distinct social relations can develop and, with them, alternative rationalities within the system. Wendt desires to deepen game theory so it can take account of how complex learning, employing verbal communication to create and reinforce mutual cooperation, rests on a shift in the moral beliefs and commitments of the states. In other words, it is based upon human passions and not upon a calculative reason that treats a threat to other states solely on the basis of its security (Wendt 1999, 344-346).

Wendt's constructivism centers first on the malleability of human rationality to be transformed by culture and by the historical process in the post-Westphalian system. Over time, this system has produced more cooperative and pacific relations among nations states. Wendt's constructivism is a liberal account of how interests can be altered from a Hobbesian, to a Lockean, to a Kantian world (Wendt 1999, 126).

The failures of Wendt's constructivism rest on an inappropriate, contradictory use of evolutionary theory. Evolutionary theory pervades Wendt's social constructivism. It is clear that he wrestled and played with the implications of using evolutionary theory in IR, but its deployment was utilized mostly as an explanatory model of the state. Evolutionary theory is never treated systematically. Instead, evolutionary theory is utilized at the wrong level of explanation and critically fails to capture the two distinct logics of all social behavior. States, communities, and institutions exist by virtue of the cooperative relations forged by their members. Intrastate relations, in contrast, can often be conflictual and deeply antagonistic. This is not only true of Wendt but of political science generally.

### *Wendt Two Essences*

Wendt's *Social Theory* rests on treating individuals and states as comparable units. This parallels realism's shift from its classical to its structural perspective. The reality of state level units, their personhood, the reality and the utility of the international system as a discrete unit of analysis independent of foreign policy analysis depends, as Wendt rightly points out, on the capacity of the state to be treated as an agent with its

own particular 'interests', 'needs', and 'responsibility'. There are two inherent problems with the way that Wendt has constructed the agential nature of the state. First, he gives the state human agency, but never gives a coherent account of human beings. What is missing from Wendt is perhaps the most essential account of all: how and why human beings relate to the world, not only in interacting with the natural world, but also in using the social world as a means to transform the natural world as well as using the social world to become the most coherent, totalizing reality that human beings experience. Wendt's arguments on interests, identities, and social consciousness, however, do not delve into human nature, but simply allow it to be treated as inherently good or bad (Wendt 1999, 23-24). Wendt defines human nature in distinct ways. He establishes a 'rump materialism' on the basic needs inherent to human nature. Human beings have requirements, material and psychological, that are universal. Furthermore, Wendt admits that we are a product of evolutionary processes (Wendt 1999, 130). The basic needs are described as follows: 1) physical security, 2) ontological security, with a basic fixity to the social world they inhabit, 3) social living, 4) self-esteem, recognition, and validation from society "including ``needs" for honor, glory, achievement, recognition (again), power, group membership (again), and so on," and 5) transcendence; that is, they should never stand in conformity with their environment, but should alter it (Wendt 1999, 131-132). At times he defines human nature as a product of our self-consciousness. Human beings are self-conscious because they possess identities, act with intention, are guided by beliefs about their world, and can make strategic calculations (Wendt 2004, 295). This depiction of human nature, its agential function, is then used as the model to argue for

the ontological reality of the state. Broadly speaking, the state possesses these same attributes, argues Wendt, and, therefore, has an independent reality and agency. Wendt's argument for states being persons revolves on three points. First, states possess intentionality. Second, they are organisms, possessing qualities analogous to life. Third, they "...might have *collective consciousness*, understood as subjective experience" (Wendt 2004, 291).

Wendt establishes two distinct structural theories, micro and macro structures. The micro-structures deal with the interaction among and between agents. The interaction of agents, the way they coordinate and compete, produces interactions that are structural. The interactions are cumulative, but the agents within these interactions weigh their interests and take actions on the basis of individual assessments of costs, benefits, and interests. (Wendt 1999, 144-147). Two models of interaction, micro-economic and game theoretic, produce distinct logics. The economic model treats the market as the determinant of the potential coordination of the buyer and seller at a price both find amenable. Game theoretic models focus on the strategic interaction of agents in which each agent not only must take other agents into account, but distinct outcomes are possible on the basis of how behavior is coordinated. The beliefs, desires, identities, and relationships among agents within a game theoretic model are required to predict their interactions.

Agents are in relationships. These relationships form a distinct micro structure upon which the systemic macro-structural theories of international relations operate. (Wendt 1999, 147-149).



The macro structure creates a set of systemic pressures that rewards certain behaviors as well as eliminates agents who fail to adhere to and adapt to its logic. The macro level structures are distinct from and not dependent upon each micro-structure. They have a logical reality that is distinct from its aggregate inputs. They are, in effect, the product of multiple and distinct lower level processes, and, therefore, they are not dependent upon any single one for their production and operation.

One of the great errors of international relations rests precisely on its failure to recognize that the state and individuals cannot be treated as analogous. Wendt's account of the socialization of the states is Hobbesian, tracing how the direction of intrastate relations can shift from hostile, to amicable, and even to communal interactions. These, however, are completely at odds with how individuals are socialized within communities. Human beings are born into communities. They are cooperative by nature and of necessity from childhood onward and are heavily socialized to adhere to community norms. Subjects have internalized the norms of the state and act on its perceived interests (Wendt 1999, 219-220). They have achieved this, as Wendt correctly perceives, by meeting the 'collective action problem' so that cooperation is the expectation.

The incoherence of Wendt's evolutionary account is most evident in his reiteration and affirmation of the altruism paradox. Briefly summarized, the argument rests on the inability of altruism to remain a fixed feature of social interactions. Over time, even in societies in which altruists initially outnumber egotists, they will be outcompeted by self-regarding individuals. Wendt accepts that "in a pre-institutional anarchy, the population of identities and interests will be dragged down to the level of the

most self-interested actors, because there is ‘nothing to prevent it’” (Wendt 1999, 323). If that is the case, the shift from self-regarding agents to individuals who are invested in collective forms of cooperation is impossible.

This is true, first, for individuals and, secondly, even among states, Wendt affirms the appropriateness of a Hobbesian realism in the absence of an institutional enforcement mechanism and as an adequate way of summarizing the international relations of states over the past millennia (Wendt 1999, 323).

Wendt reiterates this by admitting that self-interested individuals, who by definition place their needs first, would inherently be selected for within evolution, and that self-interested states would be even more strongly institutionalized within the international system. (Wendt 1999, 306).

At times Wendt makes reference to human evolution, while, at other times, he treats human beings as trans-historical. Our evolutionary development, its environment, and the capabilities that emerged from it are all treated as seemingly irrelevant. In the words of Wendt, we “could have emerged anywhere or anytime and still have been humans” (Wendt 1999, 69). To argue that human beings are unconstrained by a specific ‘spatial-temporal context’ is not only incoherent, it limits a deeper understanding of the dynamic, transformative faculties that have allowed our species to evolve both biologically and culturally. The distinction between causal and constitutive questions, like those between explanation and understanding, are deeply connected when applied to social phenomena. Clearly, distinct arguments can be made. Causal theories, however,

cannot be divorced from constitutive questions, nor the reverse. Inherently, they are connected, and their interrelationship requires clear elaboration.

In addition, Wendt accepts the logic of the simplistic interpretation often employed by sociobiologists that equates fitness in the modern world with economic resources. By virtue of aiding the weak, institutions prevent the kind of natural selection pressures in nature from being applied (Wendt 1999, 324). Wendt draws a distinction between biological evolution and cultural evolution. The transition, however, is broken by a chasm that Wendt creates through the biological account of evolution that he accepts. If Wendt's assertion is correct that highly self-regarding individuals are preferentially selected for in nature, then the direction of our biological evolution would run counter to our capacity to create more complex forms of communal cooperation and socialization. Human beings have always lived communally, sharing common interests and identities. The state, as one particularly complex form of social organization, exists by virtue of its citizens' ability to collectively service and protect their interests. If the altruism paradox were valid, no form of collective interest that commands the loyalty and sacrifice of citizens would survive long term.

The problem with this transition--from genetic to cultural forms of adaptation--rests on a number of critical omissions. First, no account of how culture emerged as an inherent element of our biology is provided. Second, the cultural, scientific, and moral innovations of human history have been critical to man's capacity to succeed as a biological species. In outlining the biological forces that endowed man with culture, a

deeper and more powerful account of political society and international transitions at the international level can be developed.

Wendt attempts to address the unbalanced theories of international relations that privilege agency or structure (Wendt 1987, 348-349). Originally, Wendt argued that no solution to the agency-structure problem can be advanced that privileges one account over the other. Instead, Wendt affirms that agency and structure are interdependent and mutually constituting. Both form distinct 'units of analysis,' but they cannot be treated without reference to each other. Wendt's advance of structuration is foundational to constructivism. Social theories that focus on the relationship of agency and structure, without defining either as static or monolithic, allow researchers to recognize dynamism in which agents and structures are both reproduced, resisted, and altered (Wendt 1987, 365).

The balance between agent and structures depends on a fundamental question concerning the potential for autonomy by agent's relative to the structures that govern their lives and actions. If agents are created by the structure and they are also the means for the structure to reproduce itself, then agents lack autonomy. Therefore, structures cannot be totalizing. Human beings engage dynamically with structures. They do not merely passively perpetuate them (Wendt 1987, 355). Marxist or post-modernist accounts that treat structure as all-encompassing -- in either material or ideational terms-- preclude the capacity of agents to act as independent, self-conscious actors. Agents form a relationship with culture, but they are not solely understood in terms of culture. If they were, they would not have the capacity to act, interpret, reject, and reformulate culture in

a dynamic way. (Wendt 1999, 167). Agents are, therefore, given ontological priority over structures. Individuals require bodies; the international system is dependent on states. Individuals can exist in the absence of a society; a hidden kingdom unknown to other states can still be sovereign and exercise authority (Wendt 1999,181-183). In other words, Wendt's own ontological commitments require a greater articulation with the dimensions of human agency. The individualistic nature of his argument, however, fits into the established depiction of autonomous individuals who encounter each other fully formed.

For example, Wendt affirms that all agents, personal or corporate, possess an identity that establishes their existence in the world, but it is not dependent on social recognition. Upon entering into social relations, different identities become socially constituted and relational. Identities are instantiated in performance; they are embodied in acts and practices that are given meaning by social definitions. The self is no longer autonomous. It is dependent on the recognition of others for its capacity to function.

Wendt continues his account of socialization from the perspective of an autonomous individual who only later establishes social relations as a fully formed adult. Wendt metaphorically describes this shift as the interaction of "the Self" and "the Other." "The Self" can come to see that "the Other" does not want to conquer or destroy it. By respecting "the Other's" right to exist, "the Self" can demonstrate self-restraint, self-binding, and goodwill, providing the space from which a distinct relationship can develop. By emphatically understanding the fears and needs of "the Other", the actions that the state takes in initiating the security dilemma can be mitigated. Over time, the

distinction between “Self” and “Other” can expand into a collective 'We' (Wendt 1999, 359).

Though Wendt draws on Mead, he reproduces a form of socialization that runs counter to Mead’s intellectual project. A brief review of Mead’s work illustrates both a more nuanced theory of socialization as well as one grounded in consciousness as a property of our evolutionary history.

For Mead, society is constituted by symbols. The most important of these symbolic systems is language. Even in its simplest form, words act as a device that creates a mental correspondence between the speaker and the listener. Words can trigger a conceptual unity by which the symbolic stimulus evokes the same symbolic response in the hearer. Human beings are inherently social. Many species possess forms of community. Citing Darwin's work on the emotions, Mead seeks to understand the unique properties of human communication. Although focused on language in its vocal dimensions, Mead is keenly aware that language is simply one system of gestural communication. Acts represent intentions (Mead 1972, 14-17).

Though we communicate through symbols, this faculty is reflected in the evolutionary emergence of the self. Society emerges from human beings’ metacognitive ability to understand the perspective of other agents; it is not used exclusively as a means of calculating strategically. This is not done from a single, inter-personal perspective. Instead, the self allows human beings by the perspective of other agents but also to encompass the totality of their and others’ interactions within a more broadly defined

'game' to which all the agents are participants, thus, objectifying behaviors according to the standards and expectations of society itself (Mead 1972, 89-94).

Through language, we not only are able to communicate and to question others. We are also able to interrogate ourselves. The mind emerges through the process of action, retrospection, and interpretation. We do not simply act in the world; we also reflect on our activity, altering our relationship with the past, the present, and ourselves in ways that allow us to transform the future. Thought is not passive. The mind is distinct from the brain by virtue of the fact that the brain develops within a wider ecology of thoughts, practices, and beliefs that make the society in which it forms unique (Mead 1972, 253-259).

The social reality that conditions us embodies traditions and beliefs that are accepted as natural. Although most of the social rituals that guide our lives are arbitrary and invented, only a very limited number will ever be consciously questioned and/or challenged. Mead is among the first to recognize that the self, as self-conscious agent, does not represent the totality of the individual. Instead, the self represents the consciousness of an individual within a wider matrix of social relations. It gives individuals the cognitive resource to situate their place within a network of relationships constituted as roles. Social interactions are structured; they carry expectations among participants. Individuals understand their place within these interactions by their capacity to understand the behavior of other social agents as well as the meaning these interactions embody. In other words, they can understand their behavior from the perspective of the rules and standards that underpin the sociality to which they are members. Judgments,

therefore, are not simply a product of the whimsy or desire of an individual. They can be objectified within the normative categories of their communities. Mead terms this metacognitive perspective as the 'generalized other.' It constitutes the wider expectations, ethical or bureaucratic, by which all forms of social behavior are created and regulated. Since individuals belong to a plurality of communities, each community has its own 'generalized other' that places a set of expectations on its members (Mead 1972, 149-163).

Mead's theory centers on the distinction between the subjectivity centered on the 'I,' by virtue of personal beliefs and interpretations of self. The concrete self was constituted by society, that objectified it into the 'Me' that constitutes the self into prescribed roles, expectations, and requirements. We cannot access a 'true self' by introspection, but our actions never simply reproduce expectations. They are dynamic, and this always points to an element of ourselves that is distinct from our social roles and acts inventively. Novel behavior, when successful, can be incorporated into the repertoire of the social 'Me' as well as become ritualized more broadly by the society as a whole. Through this, society is constantly being stocked with novel behaviors and methods that not only add to the existing social forms but transform them (Mead 1972, 173-178).

Finally, Mead develops this theory within an evolutionary schema. Consciousness itself is conditioned and produced by the interactions of organisms with their environment. The evolution of self-consciousness among human beings is critical to our



species, but itself is only representative of the kind of dynamic interactions that have always been produced by the pressures of species to survive within their environments.

Self-consciousness emerges in early childhood, first in imitative play and later in games. Games, though seemingly the diversions of childhood, represent the critical metacognitive faculty of our species. In such games, individuals must role play, taking on the perspective of other social agents, building expectations between and among players. The doctor and the patient both have roles that must be performed distinctly. The 'games' of children are the foundation upon which social reality, with its rules and roles, develops. (Mead 1932, 167-172; 1972, 149-159). The emergence of the self not only allowed human beings to create complex societies, the reflexive nature of the self permitted human society to undergo alteration and transformation through time, creating social forms that are distinct from what predated them (Mead 1972, 238-244).

We are inherently social beings. We communicate to share concepts and feelings, but these are neither produced nor originated from the simple desire to exchange information but rather from the need to live communally. Even people who have the most basic forms of life have complex language systems. We are socially constituted selves before we are individual, autonomous selves. Societies produce individuals and not the reverse (Mead 1972, 233). In this way, Mead states:

...human nature involves the assumption that the human individual belongs to an organized social community, and derives his human nature from his social interactions and relations with that community as a whole and with the other individual members of it (Mead 1972, 229).

Self-consciousness, therefore, is a mediating bridge between the individual and society, constituted by his capacity to empathically understand others as well as to judge all interactions by reference to the generalized other (Mead 1932, 172). This is what Mead rightly terms the key to human intelligence.

In addition, though it is no doubt the physically constituted properties of human beings that allow them to act socially, a true understanding of the skills and capacities of our species could not be understood if reduced to the functioning of the nervous system. Instead, it is only in tracing the behavior of human beings evolutionarily that we can truly understand their capacity (Mead 1932, 184-185). Nature is constituted by emergent properties whose existence exist at many distinct levels of reality (Mead 1932, 96-98). Social cooperation is the product of the self, allowing society to develop and take on its own emergent reality (Mead 1932, 192).

Mead, as Wendt would later do, stresses the inability of states to enter into communities with a general moral principle that guides their behavior. But, again, the capacity of societies to do so is distinct from those of individuals, however much Wendt or Mead seek to ignore it (Mead 1932, 195).

The shift from the “I” of the experiential agent to the socially constituted “me” is a critical element of socialization. The 'me' allows agents to objectify themselves and to judge themselves through the eyes and norms of society. In society, the self is not only categorized according to “the Other,” it is also subsumed under the collective identity of the group of “the Other,” or of the whole. Wendt uses Mead’s symbolic interaction theory to establish the sense of the self in society. Mead articulates the mediated relationship we

have with ourselves. Through this, we not only objectify the world, but we also objectify and analyze ourselves from the perspective of society and that of other social agents. This establishes the “social aspects of individuality” (Wendt 1999, 182). The interdependent nature of social agents establishes individuals as a point in a web of actions and relationships. It also provides them with their individuality, their concrete point of action (Wendt 1999, 225-229).

Wendt’s account of culture focuses on its transformative capacities not only to regulate the behavior of agents but also to alter their beliefs, interests, and identities. Wendt’s social theory rests on how social structures exist outside of legal-bureaucratic mechanisms. Instead, norms act as a form of structure that alters agents’ behaviors. Identities are central to the preferences which individual agents have, and, thus, affect how and in what ways they behave. Identities are formed by societies in relation to others and are themselves understood by reference to how societies are embodied.

Additionally, Wendt rests his argument on group selection theories that, while useful as analogical models of social evolution, are biologically incoherent and are not widely accepted as valid by the majority of evolutionary biologists (Wendt 1999, 350; Wendt 2004 312).

By writing the *Social Theory of International Relations*, Wendt rejects Giddens’ structuration to explain the mutuality of agency and structure. Instead, he utilizes debates within the philosophy of mind to argue that the state is its own agent by virtue of its supervenience and multiple realizability. Supervenience argues that brain states can be shared. Two people can have an identical state of mind. Two states with similar

intentions could create the same intentions within its members. (Wendt 2004, 300).

Supervenience within philosophy of mind is used to argue against a reductive physicalism that reduces mental states to specific brain patterns. Therefore, pain is reduced to the firing of c-fibers in a localized region of the brain. In the absence of c-fiber firing, consequently, pain cannot be present. Jerry Fodor argued that the same mental states were capable of being achieved in different ways. The material structure of the brain, like the hardware of the computer, is able to run many distinct software programs (Fodor 1987, 43-70).

Wendt's use of philosophy of mind, like his use of evolutionary theory, is not coherent. Therefore, within the *Social Theory*, Wendt spends a great deal of time defending a folk psychological explanation of social actions. Again, this defense is rooted against the reductivist physicalists who seek to reduce mental states to specific brain activities. Wendt reinforces this argument by reference to philosophy of mind. Internalism explains individual behavior by privileging the beliefs and intentions of individuals. Thoughts are formed by brains. Brains are self-generating phenomena. Therefore, the individual is central and determinative in explaining action. Further, the individual is treated as prior to, and the condition upon which, social action takes place. Individual agents can be influenced by ideas and become enculturated by the norms of their society, but the reality of the world is reducible to the brains of social agents (Wendt 1999, 173). Internalism, in fact, is the simply unadulterated Cartesian theory with few proponents. Wendt believes that his *Social Theory* is Cartesian, when, in its rejection of internalism, it manifestly is not.

Externalism, in contrast, treats individual agents as dependent on the conceptual matrix of existing social categories in order for individual thought to operate. Culture imposes meaning on the world. Meaning does not reside wholly in the internal beliefs of agents, whether in questions of the natural world or the social world (Wendt 1999, 302).

Wendt's externalism is founded on the fact that our words and concepts refer to elements of the external world. Our words, as conceptual propositions, articulate concepts about the natural world. Humans interact with the world through thought. Thought is mediated by language; therefore, language frames and shapes our world. Thought and language, for Wendt, therefore, are identical. Language and meanings are properties of society. They are external elements of the social reality that shapes actors, not merely in their behaviors, but also in their beliefs and self-conceptualization. Meaning, in other words, is constituted in society. Meaning, furthermore, is central to the intentionality of individual social agents.

The truth value of a thought, even if the thought is produced in identical terms by agents, is not dependent on the internal consistency of the beliefs but on their capacity to correctly describe the external environment. Putnam concludes that meaning is not a matter of internal mental categories that can be separated from the physical world which an agent inhabits (Putnam 1975, 215-271; Wendt 1999, 53-55).

To Putnam's natural externalism, Wendt also affirms Tyler Burge's social externalism (Burge 1986). Burge's example, however, can be treated as distinct and, in an important sense, even in contradiction to Putnam's natural externalism. For Burge, the exact same set of actions can be ascribed distinct meanings depending on the cultural

prism used to interpret them. Therefore, a physical ailment, such as arthritis, can be associated with a different set of symptoms on the basis of how it is defined within a culture (Wendt 1999, 174-176; Wendt 2006, 198-199).

In both cases, language is central to the world of the subject. Putnam's example, the falsity or truth of the proposition for the members of twin earth, depends on the truth condition which the agents seek to satisfy. It is only if we want to test the meaning of water against its truth condition, *vis a vis* its chemical composition, that we can treat the earth-based agent as correct and the member of twin earth as wrong. If, however, we define water by its phenomenological or behavioral category, both would be true, not merely in their own conceptual reference, but as possessing an externally defined belief (Putnam 1975, 268-271).

Where, then, are we to locate meaning? As has already been stated, externalism is deployed to refer to the broader physical reality existing in nature as well as to a secondary constituted reality that is created by social practices. Inevitably, we are left in the same place of trying to reconcile the mental and the physical. Even the most eminent philosophers, such as Donald Davidson, continue to treat mental and physical properties as distinct. Therefore, Davidson articulates a theory of anomalous monism that treats mental states, in the end, within the traditional Kantian categories that see 'freedom' as a contradiction to the determinism of the universal, physical laws which govern nature (Donaldson 1980, 207-225). All organisms endowed with life, however, interact with their environment. They are not passive. The mental is a critical component of agency for

all complex life forms. Even the simplest organisms have a diverse set of alternative choices from which to respond and adapt to their shifting ecology.

In place of this, Wendt's first intellectual step is to defend social life as an emergent property by arguing for the real existence of the state. Wendt identifies three theories on the potential personhood of states. State behavior is intentional, and the actions manifest a set of meanings that motivate the policies of the state. When the behaviors that motivate the state are comprehensible to other agents, when the intention behind the actions can be perceived and understood, the behavior of agents forms a common knowledge. States understand each other; they grow to recognize the needs, desires, and practices of other states. In essence, they become comprehensible to each other. This does not mean that they necessarily adhere to the same beliefs, but they are capable of assessing other states, adopting their perspective, and recognizing the intentions of acts. Analysis that is limited to the behavior of others is limited and can often lead to the wrong set of conclusions (Wendt 1999, 158).

As agents interact, common knowledge can become increasingly fixed in conventions. The interactions are ritualized, underpinned by a set of expectations on the behavior of the agents. These are intersubjectively constituted practices, not reducible to the individual agents that increasingly become treated as social facts that exist independently of the will of any particular agent and are underpinned by a normative quality that legitimates their existence and function (Wendt 1999, 160).

Collective knowledge is treated as a distinct phenomenon that has a distinct macro-level existence. Common knowledge is reducible to the beliefs held by

individuals. Collective knowledge, for Wendt, is distinct in that it exists only collectively and shapes the behavior of individual agents. Where common knowledge is treated as a product of individual exchanges, collective knowledge operates from the system to affect agents. Collective knowledge molds agents by shaping their beliefs. Agents produce common knowledge. In contrast, collective knowledge produces agents in its totality. Its cultural dimensions transcend any particular set of institutions or isolated beliefs. Social beliefs and practices that are treated as fundamental to a community in its identity and way of life provide the dimensions of collective knowledge. Collective knowledge is constitutive in its properties. It constitutes the social space in which agents operate in their practices and beliefs. In stating this point, however, Wendt subverts his attempts to treat agents as necessary prior to institutions (Wendt 1999, 161-166).

Socialization produces agents, interests, and roles among agents. (Wendt 1999, 170). The constitutive nature of these intersubjective forms of collective knowledge provide the logic of the society that binds the agents into coherent and cooperative agents.

In the end, Wendt recognizes the failure of his attempts to reconcile the 'mental' and the 'physical.' Instead of grounding his basic ontology in evolutionary theory, however, he escapes to quantum physics to account for consciousness. He commits the error that is so clearly pointed out by Bhaskar: treating the positivist model of science as the only true method. Therefore, in advocating a quantum theory of consciousness, he explains:



But it follows from the above discussion that all such models—whether *homo economicus*’ or *homo sociologicus*’—must somehow be informed by the classical worldview, since what else could their basis be? Metaphysically we have only the two choices, and an explicitly quantum social science does not exist. Thus, despite their many important differences, contemporary models of man in social science must at least implicitly share certain basic classical assumptions: that human beings are ultimately material objects, that we have determinate properties, that our behavior is caused by processes in the brain, and that we do not have free will. A quantum approach calls all four into question (Wendt 2006, 194).

Wendt’s focus centers on consciousness. Human are, according to Wendt, distinct by virtue of “consciousness and meaning” (Wendt 2006, 182). Human consciousness is treated as a 'subjective' experience that cannot be understood or accounted for by standard explanations of the operation of matter. Though this is the standard definition of consciousness within the philosophy of mind, it is a fallacious critique used to treat consciousness as somehow outside the capacity of science to understand or explain. Critical to this antiquated argument is the dichotomization of the 'mind' from the 'brain.' The mind, by a seemingly miraculous occurrence, emerges from the base matter of the brain. Wendt’s criticism is a result of the scholarship on which he relies within the philosophy of mind: Fodor, Nagel, and Chalmers. Wendt increasingly draws from scholars in the philosophy of mind that eschew evolutionary theory. Therefore, he draws from Nagel to find new grounds for privileging internal subjectivity. The experimental dimensions of any organism’s existence are seemingly qualitative. They cannot be explained by physical processes. In a word, such a world exists as a distinct mental realm with '*subjective facts*,' beyond the capacity of science to explain. Subjectivity, by its very

definition, is qualitative and not a realm of facts. States have 'subjectivity' for Wendt; therefore, consciousness resides as a distinct, non-physical property.

Consciousness, therefore, becomes increasingly decoupled from any element of the natural world. Instead, in the indeterminacy of the quantum, we can find an explanation of 'free will.' At the same time, however, consciousness can be possessed by states--which lack brains and bodies--because consciousness cannot be physically accounted for. David Chalmers, to whom Wendt seems particularly indebted, also argues that consciousness cannot be reduced to bodies, even if all of the scientific accounts are able to trace its appearance completely. The mind must be something non-physical. To add to this, Chalmers treats consciousness as a complete property that can seemingly not be accounted for in evolutionary terms. Chalmers argues that evolution would never have produced consciousness because it would seemingly be superfluous (Chalmers 2008).

Granted, all of these men have achieved a very prominent place within the field. Uniting all of them, however, one finds a deep antipathy to evolutionary theory. Nagel argues that subjective experience, the qualia of existence, cannot be accounted for according to science at all. Most recently, he has come to endorse scientific models that are highly sympathetic to intelligent design (Nagel, 2012). Fodor's most recent book is a direct attack on the validity of natural selection (Fodor and Piattelli-Palmarini, 2010). Chalmers, who is best known for articulating the 'hard problem of consciousness,' does not believe that consciousness could have arisen by natural selection at all. Instead, consciousness is seemingly superfluous to the basic task of reproduction and, therefore, would never have arisen by evolution. Some of the arguments postdate Wendt's work and

are not inherently representative of the views that Wendt holds. Nevertheless, they speak to the dichotomization that the 'mind-body problem' continues to exert on intellectual discourse. In another light, many elements of their criticism are targeted against the evolutionary psychologists who want to reduce human behavior to a set of predetermined genes and against the eliminativist physicalists who want to reduce all mental functions to their most basic level. For example, eliminativists treat consciousness as illusory. Not only do they want to reduce the brain to a set of limited, highly specific brain processes, but they want to reduce intellectual discourse based on what science can say about the brain at any given moment. Against this critique, critical realism has an important voice that does not rush to present the latest scientific data as an infallible truth about the brain nor about any other element of science.

Eliminativists not only try to explain away consciousness, they also make claims that are so simplistic that they border on the childish. This judgment might seem overly harsh or inappropriate, but I stand by the characterization. A brief review of Paul Churchland's *Eliminative Materialism and the Propositional Attitudes* will illustrate my point. Churchland argues that the greatest barrier to materialism has shifted from subjectivity to intentionality. Manifest behaviors cannot produce a sufficient or total account of human actions (Churchland 1960, 67-68). Churchland's argument centers on a criticism of folk psychology. There are two dimensions to this criticism. The first is an attack on folk psychology as an explanatory model in cognitive psychology. The second criticism is an attack on folk psychology as providing a useful way of explaining behavioral generally.

Churchland first defines folk psychology as merely a theory by which we ascribe mental states, desires, and beliefs to others. Though it does have a general predictive power, it frequently fails to predict the behavior of others. It is also incapable of making a wide number of predictions. Folk theory cannot explain the function of sleep nor the occurrence of mental illness (Churchland 1960, 68-70). If this were the extent of Churchland's criticism, there might be little to which one might object. However, Churchland has already committed a gross error in terming folk psychology a theory. By treating it as a theory, he believes that it must conform to scientific principles and rest on a set of laws:

Not only is folk psychology a theory, it is so obviously a theory that it must be held a major mystery why it has taken until the last half of the twentieth century for philosophers to realize it. The structural features of folk psychology parallel perfectly those of mathematical physics; the only difference lies in the respective domain of abstract entities; they exploit numbers in the case of physics, and propositions in the case of psychology (Churchland 1960, 72).

In fact, folk theory is not primarily a theory, any more than empathy could be designated a theory. It is not grounded in a set of abstract, universal laws. Instead, it is an evolutionary endowment that has given us the means to function as social beings. We have access to our own self-consciousness mental states, and, by virtue of understanding our own intentions, desires, and beliefs, we are able to not only attribute but understand the mental states and intentions of other agents. In the absence of this faculty, the very sociality on which our species' success, fecundity, and power rests would be virtually impossible. Individuals who suffer from autism, for instance, have an impoverished

ability to communicate with others because they lack an intuitive folk psychological model of the minds of others.

The ability to intuit the thoughts and feelings of others is as critical a capacity for human beings as any other. Indeed, there are few skills so singularly important to human beings as a species. All of this is lost on Churchland. Instead, he treats folk psychology as merely a degenerative research paradigm. Indeed, to him, folk psychology is modern alchemy (1960, 67-75). He believes that this is so because individual human beings often lack true knowledge of their own intentions; therefore, Churchland concludes that they could not possibly have access to those of others:

Accordingly, one's *introspective* certainty that one's mind is the seat of beliefs and desires may be as badly misplaced as was the classical man's *visual* certainty that the star-flecked sphere of the heavens turns daily (Churchland 1960, 70).

The brain, for Churchland, is a closed system that is founded on the same universal laws that dominate physics. Therefore, in response to the defenders of folk psychology who emphasize its normative dimensions, Churchland's answer is to analogize norms to the gas law in physics; the former is constituted by the logical relationship among propositions while the latter is based on the arithmetic relationship between numbers (Churchland 1960, 82-83). Norms, however, are not constituted by a strict logic. They are general axioms, but their relationship to each other and their application to circumstances is always subject to interpretation.

Wendt, despite his previous adherence to critical realism, adopts the physics model of science, and, with it, the argument that the physical laws that govern the behavior of neutrons necessarily, *certis paribus*, govern all material objects including the brain. From that fatal assumption, Wendt's research project degrades into a flight of intellectual fancy. The indeterminacy present at the quantum, subatomic level of physics does not by itself answer the Newtonian model since they both operate at distinct levels. Quantum indeterminacy, ipso facto, becomes Newtonian determinacy at the atomic level. The problem rests not on the relationship of the subatomic to the atomic, but on the blind faith we ascribe to physics. The most critical element of quantum mechanics is the discovery that Newtonian laws are themselves emergent. Newtonian physics cannot be explained simply by reference to quantum mechanics. Equally, Newtonian physics consist of only a few laws. It cannot account for many actions and processes. In effect, Newtonian physics cannot give a full account of even atomic level reality. Finally, we come to Wendt's panpsychism which treats consciousness as a product of all elements of nature, from man to sub-atomic particles (Wendt 193). Wendt provides no paradigm for social science; for him, it is a form of mystification.

In contrast, I assert that if we are to take social science seriously, we are bound to adopt an evolutionary paradigm as foundational. All living organisms have mechanisms by which to interact with their environment. Over time, these adaptations expand from instincts to forms of learning. Culture, the great emphasis of all interpretative accounts, can be located not only among human beings but among many species. For example, distinct pods of orcas have unique forms of communication as well as highly-developed

hunting techniques that are taught and passed on. Many other species are social, but within their sociality, comes a cultural dimension that creates and transmits knowledge. Culture, therefore, is not simply the domain of the human species, though it is the most rich, varied, and diverse manifestation of culture. I highlight this simply to demonstrate that adaptation is not necessarily limited to genetically-encoded behavior, not only among humans, but also within the wider animal kingdom.

Wendt's account of group agency raises pertinent questions. We must recognize the complexity of social life today. Wendt, however, misses the point. For instance, it is true that we undertake activities within widely disseminated networks, with distinct components of any task distributed amongst them. In a sense, these cooperative undertakings are evident that a distinct group level form of collective cognition exists, with forms of learning and research that can be aggregated (Wendt 1999, 303). However, that level is one of the human race itself. The process, moreover, is not novel. It is inherent to how all innovations, be they technical, religious, political, or economic, have disseminated between and among human communities for the entirety of our existence. We share information; we improve existing methods, and we pass on our knowledge to the next generation.

There is nothing superfluous about consciousness and self-consciousness, and it has given human beings enormous rewards in terms of fecundity and power over our environment. To dismiss its appearance in evolutionary terms is simply naive. Such theories have not only distracted from advancement in the field, they have also left scientific accounts to the domain of radical eliminativists who want to reduce human

beings to predetermined automatons. These eliminativists attack the validity of folk theory giving us any real insight into our own consciousness or the operation of others' mental states. Instead, we simply confabulate stories about our actions and intentions after the fact. More seriously, individuals like Patricia Churchland, are now trying to treat criminals as victims of their own brain wiring. Though much of the early argument for these determinists is in the form of 'advocacy,' no doubt the shadow of a new eugenics movement, similarly based on a distorted and grotesque claim that treats people as born with certain 'density, will become a serious issue in the social sciences in the coming decade (for example, see Churchland, 2006).

Wendt fails to explain consciousness, collective intentionality, or how societies organize themselves internally. These failures are compounded by increasingly implausible arguments, such as are really wave-like particles in a hologram that, even if true, do little to give insight into the social dimensions of human life.

I am in deep sympathy with those who fear introducing evolutionary theory into social science. Critics of evolutionary theory, such as Duncan Bell (2006, 493-510), worry that it can be used to justify racism and hierarchy. Though we must be vigilant against such arguments, science is the best weapon to be used against the crude idols of 'race'. One does not argue against racism simply because it is immoral, but also because it is not true. I do not believe that evolutionary theory can and should explain all behavior. Instead, it offers the foundational scientific ontology that should ground the analysis of an international relations scholar. The great problem, as I have already argued, in the social sciences is not competition. Instead, it is the absence of theories that can explain the



extraordinary amount of cooperation among human beings. Before we can have a theory of international relations, we must have a theory of the state that is premised on our capacity to associate into cooperative, complex social bodies. Secondly, evolutionary theory would enrich the historical dimensions of international relations. The past five thousand years of 'civilization' or the past five hundred years of the 'state-system' are the liminal markers from which history springs. This is an error that prevents us from recognizing the anomalous character of the past five thousand years when placed against our species's evolutionary history that spans 200,000 years. Civilizations have developed progressively through the following: collaboration: the institutionalization of knowledge and practices, the development of educational systems, and successive technological innovations that are truly global in origin and influence. They are not the product of a single people, place, or period, but speak to the cumulative and mutually beneficial forms of knowledge that have developed.

At present, the discipline focuses and legitimates interstate violence. It is not only myopic and journalistic, but it acts as an auxiliary for such violence. Critiques of the practice are content to simply deconstruct the established theories without advancing a new paradigm.

The latest developments in neuroscience and genetics do not provide simplistic answers to the source of human behaviors. Instead, they highlight the incredibly adaptive and responsive nature of human beings to their environment. The brain constantly alters its internal organization based on external stimulus. Equally, epigenetics has revealed the

critical role of the environment in switching on the expression of an individual's genes depending on their environment and diet.

Therefore, we must recognize that states are neither organisms nor super-organisms; they are tools whose function is understood as a critical element that is produced by our native biological tendency to organize into cooperative communities. The dimension of our cooperative, social biological terms are the true foundation of social science. The problem is simple: we fetishize the individual and the state, neither of which is by itself meaningful to a proper account of the biological processes on earth. Our biological evolution is not reducible to a single person, tribe, or nation, but must encompass our species.

### Conclusion

In Chapter 4, I examined how Wendt believes that humans can alter their social world through the application of reason.

I pointed out how Wendt's constructivism centers first on the malleability of human rationality to be transformed by culture and by the historical process in the post-Westphalian system. Over time, this system has produced more cooperative and pacific relations among nations states. Wendt's constructivism is a liberal account of how interests can be altered from a Hobbesian, to a Lockean, to a Kantian world.

I examined how evolutionary theory pervades Wendt's social constructivism, and it is utilized mostly as an explanatory model of the state. Evolutionary theory is never

treated systematically, however. Instead, evolutionary theory is utilized at the wrong level of explanation and critically fails to capture the two distinct logics of all social behavior. States, communities, and institutions exist by virtue of the cooperative relations forged by their members.

I saw how there are two inherent problems with the way that Wendt constructs the agential nature of the state. First, he gives the state human agency, but never gives a coherent account of human beings. What is missing from Wendt is perhaps the most essential account of all: how and why human beings relate to the world, not only in interacting with the natural world, but also in using the social world as a means to transform the natural world as well as using the social world to become the most coherent, totalizing reality that human beings experience.

I examined how the incoherence of Wendt's evolutionary account is most evident in his reiteration and affirmation of the altruism paradox. Briefly summarized, the argument rests on the inability of altruism to remain a fixed feature of social interactions. Over time, even in societies in which altruists initially outnumber egotists, they will be outcompeted by self-regarding individuals. Also, the same is true for individuals and for states.

I pointed out the limitations of Wendt. Our evolutionary development, its environment, and the capabilities that emerged from it are all treated as seemingly irrelevant. To argue that human beings are unconstrained by a specific 'spatial-temporal context' is not only incoherent, it limits a deeper understanding of the dynamic,

transformative faculties that have allowed our species to evolve both biologically and culturally.

I looked at how Wendt argues that the state possesses the same attributes as individuals, and, therefore, has an independent reality and agency. Wendt's argument for states being persons revolves on three points. First, states possess intentionality. Second, they are organisms, possessing qualities analogous to life. Third, they 'might' have 'collective consciousness, understood as subjective experience. To argue that human beings are unconstrained by a specific 'spatial-temporal context' is not only incoherent, it limits a deeper understanding of the dynamic, transformative faculties that have allowed our species to evolve both biologically and culturally.

I noted how we communicate through symbols; this faculty is reflected in the evolutionary emergence of the self. Society emerges from human beings' metacognitive ability to understand the perspective of other agents; it is not used exclusively as a means of calculating strategically. This is not done from a single, inter-personal perspective. Instead, the self allows human beings to see the perspective of other agents but also to encompass the totality of their and others' interactions within a more broadly defined 'game' to which all the agents are participants, thus, objectifying behaviors according to the standards and expectations of society itself

I examined Mead's work and her assertion that the emergence of the self not only allowed human beings to create complex societies. The reflexive nature of the self permitted human society to undergo alteration and transformation through time, creating social forms that are distinct from what predated them

I examined how Mead also emphasized the role of language, noting that even people who have the most basic forms of life have complex language systems. We are socially constituted selves before we are individual, autonomous selves. Societies produce individuals and not the reverse.

I looked at how self-consciousness is a mediating bridge between the individual and society, constituted by his capacity to empathically understand others as well as to judge all interactions by reference to the generalized other, what Mead rightly terms the key to human intelligence.

I observed how Wendt rejects Giddens' structuration to explain the mutuality of agency and structure. Instead, he utilizes debates within the philosophy of mind to argue that the state is its own agent by virtue of its supereminence and multiple reliability. Supervenience argues that brain states can be shared. Two people can have an identical state of mind. Two states with similar intentions could create the same intentions within its members.

I pointed out how, for Wendt, thought and language are identical. Language and meanings are properties of society. They are external elements of the social reality that shapes actors, not merely in their behaviors, but also in their beliefs and self-conceptualization. Meaning, in other words, is constituted in society. Meaning, furthermore, is central to the intentionality of individual social agents.

I examined how Wendt's first intellectual step is to defend social life as an emergent property by arguing for the real existence of the state and how Wendt identifies three theories on the potential personhood of states. State behavior is intentional, and the

actions manifest a set of meanings that motivate the policies of the state. When the behaviors that motivate the state are comprehensible to other agents, when the intention behind the actions can be perceived and understood, the behavior of agents forms a common knowledge. States understand each other; they grow to recognize the needs, desires, and practices of other states. In essence, they become comprehensible to each other. This does not mean that they necessarily adhere to the same beliefs, but they are capable of assessing other states, adopting their perspective, and recognizing the intentions of acts.

I concluded that where common knowledge is treated as a product of individual exchanges, collective knowledge operates from the system to affect agents. Collective knowledge molds agents by shaping their beliefs. Agents produce common knowledge. In contrast, collective knowledge produces agents in its totality.

Finally, I examined the defects of Wendt's panpsychism which treats consciousness as a product of all elements of nature, from man to sub-atomic particles. I observed how Wendt provides no paradigm for social science; for him, it is a form of mystification.

I asserted that if we are to take social science seriously, we are bound to adopt an evolutionary paradigm as foundational. All living organisms have mechanisms by which to interact with their environment. Over time, these adaptations expand from instincts to forms of learning. Culture, the great emphasis of all interpretative accounts, can be located not only among human beings but among many species.

I concluded that Wendt fails to explain consciousness, collective intentionality, or how societies organize themselves internally. These failures are compounded by increasingly implausible arguments that do little to give insight into the social dimensions of human life.

I maintained that evolutionary theory offers the foundational scientific ontology that should ground the analysis of an international relations scholar. The great problem in the social sciences is not competition. Instead, it is the absence of theories that can explain the extraordinary amount of cooperation among human beings.

I concluded that before we can have a theory of international relations, we must have a theory of the state that is premised on our capacity to associate into cooperative, complex social bodies. Evolutionary theory would enrich the historical dimensions of international relations. The past five thousand years of 'civilization' or the past five hundred years of the 'state-system' are the liminal markers from which history springs. This is an error that prevents us from recognizing the anomalous character of the past five thousand years when placed against our specie's evolutionary history that spans 200,000 years. Civilizations have developed progressively through the following: collaboration: the institutionalization of knowledge and practices, the development of educational systems, and successive technological innovations that are truly global in origin and influence. They are not the product of a single people, place, or period, but speak to the cumulative and mutually beneficial forms of knowledge that have developed.

I argued that we must recognize that states are neither organisms nor super-organisms; they are tools whose function is understood as a critical element that is

produced by our native biological tendency to organize into cooperative communities.

The dimension of our cooperative, social biological terms are the true foundation of social science. The problem is simple: we fetishize the individual and the state, neither of which is by itself meaningful to a proper account of the biological processes on earth. Our biological evolution is not reducible to a single person, tribe, or nation, but must encompass our species.



## **CHAPTER 5: THE EMERGENCE OF THE PROTO-STATE IN HUNTER-GATHERER BANDS**

### Overview

In Chapter 5, I will identify the evolutionary precursors that allowed for the development of human social institutions and the emergence of complex societies.

I will discuss how the power of states is located in their capacity to shape their social and economic order and explain why, in order to understand how states function, we require better theoretical models of individuals, the state, and society.

I will examine the seminal role of prehistory and posit how complex forms of social organization arose. This required moving away from the early modern model of human beings in a state of nature, identifying the unique social unit, the hunter-gatherer band, from which we evolved as a species and the nature and function of cognitive processes that underpin human social cognition. I will explain why the value of incorporating evolutionary theory rests on its ability to ground social and cultural theories of international relations within a scientific framework.

I will cover how evolutionary theory has transcended the traditional Darwinian analysis that focused at the level of a single organism, to recognize that selection

pressures occur at the genetic, cellular, individual, and group levels, allowing us to understand reproduction in complex ways by treating agents as enmeshed within a wider set of social, ecological, and biological processes.

I will point out that there are clear limits on the use of evolutionary theory in IR. The presumptive aggressive egoism of popular Darwinism cannot simply be lifted from evolutionary literature and related to theoretical claims in international relations. This approach simply perpetuates a long series of established conventional realist tropes on the nature of 'mankind. The largest problem, however, is that it strikingly fails to identify the true evolutionary mechanisms at work within human society.

I will contrast the behavior of chimps and gorillas who evolved along realist lines with limited cooperation and dominance hierarchy with ours. While their agents are seen as both self-conscious and rational, it is a very instrumental rationality, always focused on the means-ends relationship and cannot explain the dynamic at work in human social interaction.

I will explain why language by itself is not the true expression of the quality that makes humanity unique. While other species communicate in non-functional and not egotistically-motivated ways, there is something inherently lacking in both their ability and desire to provide each other with mutual aid. They simply do not exhibit altruism.

In contrast, I will maintain that altruism developed in humans as the best survival strategy given repeated interactions. I will show how, in the prisoner's dilemma, selfishness is only the best strategy if there will be just one interaction. An equitable Nash equilibrium seems intuitively right for so many of us because, over time, any population

that favored more than 50 percent or demanded less than 50 percent was replaced by those who played the 50/50 strategy. The 50//50 Nash equilibrium seems just. It appears to us as a moral insight, but its origin is rooted in our evolutionary adaptation as a species.

I will emphasize the need to recognize the anomalous character of the past five thousand years when placed against our species' evolutionary history that spans 200,000 years. The development of civilization, the transformation of human social communities, and the growth of complex systems of government and economic production are distinct from the pattern of life that defined nearly the entirety of human existence.

I will explain how hunter-gatherer bands were egalitarian and non-coercive communities and contrast them with agricultural civilizations. They established hierarchies and institutional mechanisms for social regulation. This began with the incipient domestication of plants and animals 10, 000 years ago and with the organization of states 5, 000 years ago.

I will argue that the mechanisms that facilitated the appearance of the first governmental authority and complex social systems emerged directly from the processes evident within prehistoric bands. The 'birth' of civilizations was dependent on, and built from, critical adaptations forged in early human history. Evolutionarily, human beings stand out in sharp contrast to all other primates. The structure of hunter-gatherer bands is unique among biological species. Hunter-gatherer bands lacked a dominance hierarchy. Members were formed on the basis of equality and organized their society on forms of cooperative labor and resource distribution. Human intelligence was the result of its

organization into a new social body. The fluidity of human social organization was its most critical adaptive innovation. Precisely by virtue of its social flexibility, man was increasingly able to thrive across a wide and diverse set of ecosystems.

I will argue that what underpinned this transition and allowed for its emergence was the capacity of individuals to develop forms of group agency: the capacity to coordinate and act together and members' ability to understand and orient their behavior in reference to the band. I will conclude that group selection cannot be understood as a biological process, but as a mechanism that selected for individuals who were highly cooperative and also innovative. Since the growth of the population was minimal, any adaptive advantages, both individually and between groups, had a very large impact on the population as a whole. The fluidity of human social organization was its most critical adaptive innovation. A set of biological and cognitive skills emerged through evolutionary adaptation and mutation. A second process was cultural.

The question remains, however; where did human beings and culture meet? This question will remain for Chapter 6 where I will develop an account of how group agency functioned and how it allowed for the emergence the distinct plane of social ontology. Through this, I will seek to provide a cognitive account of the 'state.'

### *Human Evolution*

This chapter seeks to identify the evolutionary precursors that allowed for the development of human social institutions and the emergence of complex societies. For international relations, the system of states is treated as a static system produced by the

force of anarchy, yet it also uses evolutionary metaphors to describe the competitive struggle among states for survival and supremacy.

As stated earlier, many of the most salient characteristics of states are the ways states are organized internally. The power of states is located in their capacity to shape their social and economic order. To understand how states function, we require better theoretical models of individuals, the state, and society. It does not suffice to simply recognize that agents and structures are co-constitutive; we need to explain how and why this is so.

Prehistory should be recognized as a seminal point in our evolutionary development, while the emergence of complex forms of social organization, 'civilization', should be problematized. I treat the emergence of civilization, not as the point from which social inquiry can uncritically begin, but as a deeply puzzling phenomenon that must be explained. The prehistoric is critical for a number of reasons. First, it defined our development as a species. Second, it was a form of human sociality that heavily regulated behavior, but without the need for explicitly coercive institutions. Cooperation emerges but is not dependent on government or formal coercive institutions to function (Boehm 2012).

I believe by directly studying the evolutionary dynamics at work in the development of the human species, better forms of social scientific explanation can emerge.

By examining our evolutionary development, the social and cooperative elements of our species become salient. We must recognize that, as a social species, we emerged

from a unique evolutionary process: specifically, the development of egalitarian hunter-gatherer bands. In so doing, we can abandon the caricature of the utility of evolutionary theory that is maintained within the social sciences: specifically, a view of evolutionary explanations described as ‘red in tooth and claw.’ Indeed, evolutionary accounts of our own biological evolution highlight the central role of cooperation.

Evolutionary theory cannot be used as a major theoretical paradigm within international relations to provide predictive explanations. The value of incorporating evolutionary accounts rests on its ability to ground social and cultural theories of international relations within a scientific framework.

Behavioral economics has impacted the way we understand human rationality, providing us with empirical data as well as with a model that is more accurate than the dominant utilitarian model. After testing how human beings make decisions and calculate risk against the standard utility maximizing model, Kahneman and Tversky developed prospect theory. Prospect theory demonstrated that risk-taking calculations are not perfectly logical; the calculation of risk depends on the ways agents frame expectations and evaluate alternatives. Risks are calculated according to individual reference points. In addition, agents consistently error by overvaluing possessions and undervaluing potential gains. The fear of loss is greater than the fear of gain (Kahneman and Tversky, 1979).

In international relations, prospect theory has been used as a way to explain the nature of territorial disputes. Prospect theory identifies the psychological mechanisms that make irredentist claims, some of the most intractable conflicts of international relations (Levy 1997).

In evolutionary biology, there is a growing appreciation of the complex ways adaptation and selection function. Evolutionary theory has transcended traditional Darwinian analysis that focused at the level of a single organism, to recognize that selection pressures occur at the genetic, cellular, individual, and group levels.

This new framework allows us to understand reproduction in complex ways because it treats agents as enmeshed within a wider set of social, ecological, and biological processes. Individuals and groups both face differential forms of reproduction, and both individual and group reproduction are tied together in the kinds of agents that evolve and the relationships and strategies they form.

In the place of cultural accounts of specific human societies, we require a basic ethology. Anthropology highlights the different ways human beings organize their lives. Ethology, in contrast, recognizes species-specific characteristics.

*Non-Kissing Cousins: Are Chimps On Their Way to Becoming Us?*

There have been clear limitations on the use of evolutionary theory in international relations. In most works, the presumptive aggressive egoism of popular Darwinism is simply lifted from evolutionary literature and related to theoretical claims in international relations. This is problematic since it simply perpetuates a long series of established conventional realist tropes on the nature of 'mankind. The largest problem, however, is that it strikingly fails to identify the true evolutionary mechanisms at work within human society.

Most of the features of human nature that are treated as givens by realism are not particularly human. Instead, they are features widely distributed across the animal world. To the degree that they resonate with human actions, they do so at the cost of being a theory that can distinguish human actions, individually and collectively, from the activities of many other species. At some level, this is appropriate.

To illustrate the point, I will briefly examine the difference between humans and chimpanzees on three central points: social organization, territoriality and communication.

#### *Social Organization, Territoriality, and Communication*

Chimpanzees have complex and dynamic social systems. Chimpanzee bands are internally organized into strategic alliances and coalitions. Chimps are very focused on tracking social relationships among group members. Indeed, this is perhaps the issue on which they spend the preponderance of their mental energy (Whiten 2000, 139-150). To function in this environment, chimpanzees must be able to plan ahead, make alliances, and distinguish among individuals based on ingroup and outgroup membership, as well as by status and kin relation.

Chimpanzees are highly territorial as well as expansionistic (Mitani et al. 2010). Chimps are also economically rational. In testing, they have performed in line with the utility maximizing model (Jensen et al. 2007, 107-109).

In the case of chimpanzees, realism seems to provide an excellent theory to explain and predict their behavior. Chimpanzees, for instance, carry out intra troop warfare on this basis regularly. Though they track the social dynamic among the



individuals in their social group, they are not able to transform its basic logic. The pattern of breeding, hierarchy, and territoriality seems to remain as the basic logic on which chimpanzee society as evolved.

Chimpanzees truly live in a Hobbesian world, however. To contextualize the difference, it is worth noting the population of chimpanzees, our closest living relatives, inhabits a very limited geographic range in Africa.

In contrast, by the emergence of homo erectus, the archeological records clearly show that hominids had spread across the Eurasian landmass.

What accounts for this difference? First, chimpanzees are ordered hierarchically, with access to resources dependent on an individual's position within the social order. To be able to continuously engage in this social dynamic, chimpanzees have to understand that other members of their community have perspectives, goals, and desires that are distinct and separate from their own. They possess are capable of complex interactions, but there are hard limits on the degree to which chimpanzees can behave cooperatively, particularly in ways that might shift their social order. Indeed, even among captive chimpanzees, where access to food is no longer a concern, chimpanzees create the same basic dominance hierarchies (De Waal 2007).

Biologically, the evolutionarily logic of the intragroup relationships dictates that a male seek to control the band with a small coalition of allies to maximize his fertility. Female reproductive logic dictates that she find the strongest male with whom to procreate because this will endow her offspring with a competitive advantage. Furthermore, she requires a strong male to provide protection for her offspring from rival

males within the band as well as for protection from raiding parties comprised of other males. These relationships generate violent conflicts, both from other males within the band, with neighboring bands, and with roaming groups of ostracized males in a self-reinforcing mechanism. In a sense, chimpanzees are the perfect example of rational actors. Chimpanzees seek to maximize their individual preferences in an environment of other, self-interested chimpanzees. Agents are seen as both self-conscious and rational, but it is a very instrumental rationality, always focused on the means-ends relationship. Such a rationality is inherently bound to achieve outcomes that are at times against the interest of the agents as a whole. Such activity does not prevent conflict. It actively encourages and rewards the outbreak of violence because the winner significantly increases the fertility of the most aggressive males. The logic of the system constrains agents' actions. Agents are rational to the degree that they conform to the rules of the game, avoid penalties, and accrue rewards. The system is closed and deterministic, since there are strict limits on the extent and on the type of cooperative relationships chimpanzees can have (Wrangham and Peterson 1996).

In highlighting the differences between chimpanzees and humans, we can see just how erroneous the assumptions of realism and of economic rationality are in explaining the dynamic at work in human social interaction.

#### *Aggression, Territoriality, Warfare, Expansion of Territory, and Resources*

Many species are territorial. Human beings, like other species, exhibit highly territorial behavior. Almost every mechanism that human beings have, such as

territoriality, is rooted in a deeper biological past, yet human beings don't express territoriality functionally. Territoriality is not an expression of the finite carrying capacity of a designated territory to provide a designated group with sustenance.

Language, above all other elements, is treated as the exclusive domain of human beings. In fact, it is under the banner of the 'unique' quality of language that many social constructivists build their theories of the contingent nature of the social world. More evidence is accumulating, however, that there are other species that engage in important forms of communication and possess at least a rudimentary language. Even more important perhaps than the question of what kind of language is found in other animals, comes the odd fact that, at a fundamental level, many animal species possess the *capacity* for language, even if only minimally expressed in their natural setting. Cognitively, the capacity of language exists. It can be elicited under the proper conditions (Savage-Rumbaugh 1986, Patterson and Cohn 1990).

This is not an argument against the critical role of language in creating, maintaining, and transforming the social realm of our species. It does demand, however, that we see that language by itself is not the true expression of the quality that makes humanity unique.

Within the last few decades, attempts to teach language to great apes through sign and symbolic languages have yielded surprising success. Indeed, Alex, the African grey parrot, has yielded language skills far greater than would have been expected (Pepperberg 2009).

Apes who are taught to employ sign language are narrowly restricted to functional signs. Chimpanzees in captivity learn to point. They utilize pointing, but only with humans when requesting food. Even in experimental conditions that seek to foster cooperative help among chimps to obtain a prize, chimps do not point.

Individuals who learn these skills do not deploy these skills with other apes nor do they seek to alter the basic structure of their social order. The essential difference rests with the inability of these species to communicate in non-functional and not egotistically-motivated ways. There is something inherently lacking in both their ability and desire to provide each other with mutual aid.

Michael Tommasello, a researcher at the Max Planck Institute, developed a series of tests that illustrate the fundamental distinction between how apes and humans communicate. An ape, an observer, and the tester perform the object choice task. The ape is shown food that is located in one of three bowls. A wall is erected that prevents the ape from seeing how the tester alters the position of the bowl with food. The observer is able to monitor these changes and points helpfully to the location of the hidden bowl.

Apes do not understand the pointing of the observer as a helpful form of information-sharing and ignore it when making their selection. Ape communication is not altruistic and, therefore, their capacity to understand helpful information that was being imparted by the observer is beyond their comprehension (Tommasello 2009, 39-41).

Apes are able to recognize the intentions of other agents, observe their behavior, and predict outcomes. They know that the perceptual state of others is distinct from their own, learn a wide variety of gestures, and can solicit help. They cannot, however,

understand communication that is cooperative in any true sense. This is not because there is an inherent inability to bridge this gap. It is actually seen within some animals--but only in their interactions with human beings. They do not behave that way with members of their own species. As Tomasello states “This kind of practical reasoning about others—in terms of the psychological predicates of *want*, *see*, and *do*—is foundational to all kinds of primate and human social interaction...”( Tomasello 2009, 49).

If we look to nature, we are able to see that chimpanzees possess the capacity to clearly communicate desires and intentions as well as to engage in deception. Provided that individual needs are met, however, they are unable to act collectively. These elements, so rarified by social constructivists, do not transform chimpanzees by a set of arbitrary rules in which culture is totalizing.

In contrast, unlike most species on earth, over millions of years in their shift from hominoids to homosapiens, human beings have overcome Malthusian limitations. They have done so .by such innovations as having a more diverse diet than other primates and by developing more effective forms of hunting and foraging. This eventually culminated in the emergence of agriculture and food preservation.

Reciprocal altruism, though based on biological traits, does not require that actors be related. Instead, reciprocal altruism can emerge among unrelated agents and, indeed, between unrelated species. The relationship between human beings and dogs is a perfect example. Though unrelated, both species can forge a beneficial relationships that enhances the safety and fertility of both.

### *Altruism and the Limits of Cooperation*

Chimpanzees work together, but they are not altruists. This should surprise no one, given that altruism is understood as an irrational long term strategy. Despite all of the evidence we have for the benefit of cooperation, there should be strict limits on the nature and extent that cooperation would develop. Self-interested organisms can cooperate to meet their interests; biologically; however, organisms that regularly act out of altruism--that is, that sacrifice their self-interest for others-- should be strongly selected against, outcompeted, and outbred by more selfish organisms. Theoretically, if altruistic traits arose, they would inevitably be extinguished over time as those organisms that exhibit such tendencies were outcompeted.

Acts of altruism, nevertheless, are observed in nature. Much of the field of evolutionary biology has focused on explaining the 'paradox of altruism.' The paradox arises precisely because evolution was focused on the survival and reproductive strategy of individual organisms. As such, any behavior that is taken on behalf of another and which diminishes or extinguishes the organism's life is inherently irrational.

The first step in identifying the operational logic that facilitated the emergence of altruism required that the field of evolutionary biology see an organism not as a total unity, but as a bundle of genes. Genes are what count in evolution since it is genes which are passed on. At its basic level, explanations of the evolutionary fitness of altruism could be explained directly from kin selection. Even when an organism loses its life in defense of its close kin, it can benefit from such actions genetically. Altruistic behavior that helps the perpetuation of one's genes is, strictly, not altruistic, however.

Robert Trivers explored how altruism can develop among non-related kin, finding that the greatest requirement for the emergence of reciprocal altruism is that agents interact repeatedly. Repeated interactions require that agents possess a memory that could track interactions and interact in environments that facilitated repeated interactions. Over time, this set of mutually-beneficial interactions would emerge, and the process of reciprocal altruism would be self-reinforcing (Trivers 1971, 35-63).

Repeated interactions are the largest and most important factors in determining a winning strategy. David Axelrod validated the evolutionary benefits of indirect reciprocity as a strategy when applied as the winning strategy for prisoner's dilemma over multiple rounds. An entirely selfish strategy is the beneficial one when the game is only played once. Selfishness is also among the worst strategies when playing over multiple iterations. The winning strategy, developed by Anatol Rapoport, was simple but highly effective. Rapoport developed a 'tit for tat strategy,' that started off cooperatively and retaliated against defection. Beyond the initial cooperation, the strategy was just to repeat the choice from the previous round. Indeed, the 'tit-for-tat' strategy of Rapoport embodies something like the golden rule since it is principally cooperative, ceases to cooperate with defectors, but responds to cooperation with cooperation (Axelrod 2006).

Cooperation is only the best strategy when working in association with other cooperators, but it is risky in games with mixed agents. Both direct and indirect reciprocity are observed in chimp interactions. What is unique about human beings is the way that cooperation is structured.

### *The Problem of Justice*

Brian Skyrms contrasts the logic of rational, agent-based social contract theories with evolutionary theory. Because evolutionary theories are based on differential reproduction, and replicator dynamics, they give an account of social evolution that is distinct from the logic of traditional game theory. Traditional game theory lacks the 'veil of ignorance' imposed by nature. Agents know their own interest. As game theory widened the scope of its application, the limits of the kinds of 'rational' strategies it formulated were becoming obvious. The kinds of strategies and assumptions that game theoretical models make, and the way they can develop optimal strategies, were dependent on the number of interactions and the strategies of other agents. The most 'rational' strategy at one point in the game could become very detrimental at a later stage. When dealing with a Nash equilibrium, it is assumed that an agent will make the best choice for himself, if he is also given the set preferences and if the strategies of the other players are established, not subject to change, and known.

In game theory, a stable solution/Nash equilibria can be established by a rational, a self-interested agent, assuming the agent knows the preferences and strategies of the other players. Nash equilibriums offer the equitable distribution of goods in the game. Why is that, and why does it seem such a natural and obvious solution? There can be many potential Nash equilibria. Divisions could be ordered in many ways, from 20/80 to 90/10. There is only one division, the 50/50 division, that could be considered just (Skyrms 2004, 5-8). Why does the equitable Nash equilibrium seem intuitively right for



so many? Skyrms wanted to see if he could find a way to understand the evolutionary process that gave us a sense of 'justice.'

Skyrms modeled evolutionary game theoretical interactions, developing two personal games within a mixed population. Within the population, agents had distinct preferences. Skyrms developed a schema of the ways that resources and agreements could be reached within this mixed population. In allotting how they share resources, each would have to reach an agreement on how to divide a 'cake.' If their totals didn't equal 100, they would not be allowed to share it. Over time, any population that favored more than 50 percent or demanded less than 50 percent would be replaced by those who played the 50 percent strategy (Skyrms 2004,10).

Skyrms investigated if computational evolutionary models would develop Nash equilibria that were 'just.' For example, he'd have agents with distinct polymorphism, divided within a mixed population, interact. One group was made up of greedy individuals who demand 2/3rds of the pie and the other group was made up of modest individuals who only demand 1/3rd. He observed that, whenever two greedy individuals meet, their demands equal more than 100, and they get nothing. On the other hand, when individuals who are modest meet greedy or modest agents, they always get 1/3rd of the cake; but this also means that when modest agents interact with each other, 1/3rd of the pie is left to spoil.

Overtime, the modest strategy, and its accumulation of 'pie' translates into greater reproduction by the modest population, though it produces a lot of waste. If another polymorphism suddenly appears--a 'mutant' who always asks for 50 percent, neither more

nor less--a new dynamism is introduced into the population. Skyrms ran numerous computer scenarios in which interactions were repeated 10,000 times. The fair 'mutant' population eliminated both the greedy and the modest polymorphisms 62 percent of the time. In other cases, less efficient equilibria developed. (Skyrms 15, 16) The fair polymorphism's success occurred despite the fact that each polymorph interacted with another randomly. When Skyrms allowed for positively-correlated units to select each other for their interactions 20 percent of the time, the fair polymorphism achieved complete domination. By introducing this small selection bias among otherwise random interactions, no other strategy survived. Moreover, fairness became stable (Skyrms 2004, 18-19).

The central question for 'justice' that Skyrms wants to investigate is why it might have developed and how it might become stable. To help illuminate this phenomenon, Skyrms demonstrates how a 50/50 sex ratio within a population became an evolutionary stable strategy. In an environment in which it becomes biologically effective to preferentially produce male offspring, the gains in fitness over the subsequent generations turn from a benefit into a biological penalty. Running to an extreme, it would now be favorable to produce female offspring. At some point, this counter-strategy would also become detrimental.

Over time, the best biological strategy is a roughly 50/50 sex ratio between males and females. We arrive at a Nash equilibrium in which there is no benefit for deviation by either party; it becomes evolutionarily stable. This stability is a Nash equilibrium that is shared by all mammals, even species that are polygamous (Skyrms 2004,7-8); 50/50

Nash equilibria exist in nature as evolutionary strategies. The computational models of Skyrms demonstrated how they can appear and become dominant in theoretical environments. But what remains is to understand how we've come to see the 50//50 Nash equilibrium as just. It appears to us as a moral insight, but its origin is rooted in our evolutionary adaptation as a species.

*Back to the Start: Prehistory and Civilization as a Puzzle*

The past five thousand years of 'civilization' are understood as the 'beginnings' of human history, but our past extends well before the emergence of a single blade of half domesticated grass. We need to recognize the anomalous character of the past five thousand years when placed against our species' evolutionary history that spans 200,000 years.

Since the advent of agriculture, we've progressively created more complex forms of social organization. These systems are highly unequal, hierarchical, and regulated.

The development of civilization, the transformation of human social communities and the growth of complex systems of government and economic production are distinct from the pattern of life that defined nearly the entirety of human existence. Michael Mann's work on social power overlooks nearly 99 percent of human history (Mann 1986, 34).

Human evolution is divided by two distinct forms of social organization and resource acquisition. Hunter-gatherer bands were egalitarian and non-coercive communities.

Agricultural civilizations established hierarchies and institutional mechanisms for social regulation. The development took place in two phases, with the incipient domestication of plants and animals 10, 000 years ago and with the organization of states 5, 000 years ago.

Human history is understood precisely in terms of social evolution, in the ways that social relations have been maintained or altered, how novel forms of living have been introduced, how communities are formed and traditions maintained through generations. The subject is considered from the vantage point of states as social objects. We gain new insights by altering the temporal framework under investigation. I argue that the mechanisms that have facilitated the first governmental authority and complex social systems emerged directly from the processes evident within prehistoric bands. Civilizations' 'birth' was dependent on, and builds from, critical adaptations forged in early human history.

### *The Band*

Evolutionarily, human beings diverged from chimps and apes as a result of the increasingly important role of meat in our ancestral diet. For instance, gorillas are entirely vegetarian. Chimpanzees only consume meat on occasion, depending largely on a vegetarian diet to meet their nutritional needs.

The ancestral population of humans, starting perhaps as far back as early australopithecus, organized their societies around the acquisition of meat. The diet of

early hominids was very diverse, with archeologists finding a wide range of animal bones at sites dating back nearly two million years (Teaford and Ungar 2000).

Hominids increasingly depended on meat sources to achieve their dietary needs. Over time, some began to hunt for meat instead of scavenging. Hunting was a calorically rewarding strategy, but only when one focused on large game, sufficient in fat and protein to satisfy the expenditure in calories required to hunt. The process by which early man shifted into big game hunting and how it became his most important source of nutrition is, obviously, less than clear. There is little doubt of its benefits, nevertheless (Speth 1989, 329-343)

*Human Bands: Egalitarian, Non-Hierarchical, and Highly Cooperative*

Evolutionarily, human beings stand out in sharp contrast to all other primates. The structure of hunter-gatherer bands is unique among biological species. Hunter-gatherer bands lacked a dominance hierarchy. Members were formed on the basis of equality and organized their society on forms of cooperative labor and resource distribution.

The central activity of the band was hunting. To effectively and reliably secure prey, the males of the group had to hunt in very complex and coordinated ways. The success of the hunt depended on how well the group worked together. No single individual could dominate the group. Having meat was the result of shared effort and distributed equitably as a common resource of members.

Forms of social collaboration emerged. Women foraged cooperatively and shared the burden of childrearing. The band represented the totality of a human being's world. The life of the individual depended on his or her capacity to function within the band. Among the greatest punishments that could be imposed on hunter-gatherers, save for outright murder, was being expelled from the band. For hunter-gatherers, such a judgment was nearly equal to death itself, since it was only through the band that individuals could meet their needs (Hrdy 2007, 39-68).

Human intelligence was the result of its organization into a new social body. The fluidity of human social organization was its most critical adaptive innovation. Precisely by virtue of its social flexibility, man was increasingly able to thrive across a wide and diverse set of ecosystems from the deserts of Africa to the tundra of Siberia. Whatever the distinct requirements of each location in terms of diet and shelter, all placed great demands on individuals to come together and to cooperate in supportive communities.

Hunter-gatherers were remarkable because the social unit of the band became distinct and salient for the first time. Bands were not reducible to their agents. Hunter-gatherer bands were egalitarian. As a result, the strongest evolutionary selection pressures at work were able to shift from the agent to the group level (Boehm 2012). That is, they went from the intragroup competition for status and hierarchy to the social unit as the dominant unit of selection at the level of the group. I say this for two reasons. First, it was with the development of egalitarian bands that the social group as a unit emerged as a distinct agent. In other primates, the social unit does not have its own existence; it is merely an expression of the hierarchical relationships among its members. The band

constitutes both a mechanism for reproduction and for the survival of individual agents, but the band also represents a distinct level of selection, with selection operating at the level of individuals within groups and selection among groups (Gintis 2000, 169-179).

What underpinned this transition and allowed for its emergence was the capacity of individuals to develop forms of group agency. There were two elements to group agency. The first was the capacity to coordinate and act together. The other central feature of group agency was a mode of social and normative evaluation that functions as an expression of the social unit as a whole.

### *Group Selection*

Altruism can emerge within groups when there is positive assortment by altruists. For the group level of selection to evolve, however, it requires mechanisms to be introduced that mitigate and police against individual level selection becoming dominant, as selfishness can reassert itself in a group of altruists and become the dominant reproductive strategy.

First, it was with the development of egalitarian bands that the social group as a unit emerged as a distinct level of selection. In other primates, the social unit is merely an expression of the hierarchical relationships among its members. As egalitarian groups, however, the intragroup competition for status, hierarchy, and reproductive success (with the alpha males maintaining a harem) were shifted to the mechanisms that facilitated group cooperation. Evolutionarily speaking, individuals who were able to understand and orient their behavior in reference to the band had the highest evolutionary fitness.

Mechanisms that helped the expansion of cooperation and increased levels of intragroup social supports had enormous impacts on reproductive success. Cooperation allowed for increased resource acquisition, such as large-scale hunting, and greater fertility with the rearing of offspring within supportive communities (Boehm 2012).

In humans, hunter-gatherer bands constitute both a mechanism for reproduction of individual agents but also for a distinct level of selection. The existence of group level selection is controversial in evolutionary biology. Some biologists deny that there can be group level selection. Group level selection is hotly debated, and a belief in its existence is only held by a minority of evolutionary biologists (Wilson and Sobel 1994; Reeve and Keller 1999). In terms of human biology, however, what is central is the relationship between selection at the level of individual and group level selection.

Hunter-gatherers were remarkable because the social unit of the band became distinct and salient for the first time. Bands were not reducible to their agents. Hunter gatherer bands were egalitarian. As a result, the strongest evolutionary selection pressures at work were able to shift from the agent to the group level. This was true because of the dynamic ways that individuals could enhance cooperation and were dependent on dynamic processes within the group itself. Group selection, therefore, cannot be understood as a biological process, but as a mechanism that selected for individuals that were highly cooperative and also innovative.

The cognitive adaptations that facilitate cooperation became important drivers of evolution for the species. This is even more true when dealing with a generally stable population rate. Since the growth of the population was minimal, any adaptive



advantages, both individually and between groups, had a very large impact on the population as a whole.

Selection operated at the level of individuals within groups and selection also operated among groups, as group cooperation within bands was critical to their success in violent conflict with others bands. Individual selection focused on cognitive adaptations as well as on general capacities, such as learning. Social mechanisms for monitoring and controlling behavior are critical. Social punishment, ostracism, censure, and even murder are the mechanisms that human beings use against those they feel 'cheat'; hunter-gatherers overcame the problem of freeriding through the myriad social enforcement/policing mechanisms that existed (Price et al. 2002, 203-213). To be a member of the community, one had to contribute to its perpetuation, and the efforts that were made were evident to other members of the community. In such small groups, cheating was easily recognized and, therefore, effectively and swiftly penalized.

Choi and Bowles argue that altruism and parochialism worked together. Forms of mutual recognition and reciprocation within the group were important. They required differentiation and discrimination towards those who were not part of the group (Choi and Bowles 2007, 636-640). What underpinned this transition and allowed for its emergence was the capacity of individuals to develop forms of group agency. There were two elements to group agency. The first was the capacity to coordinate and act together. The other central feature of group agency was a mode of social and normative evaluation that functions as an expression of the social unit as a whole. Collective action was

important, but even more important was the development of a form of collective reasoning.

These are done among members of the group, such as punishing bad actors, but also through the internalization of norms. Constraints become transformed into objections to violations of rules, and social norms were becoming moral principles.

In this way, two central aspects of human sociality emerged. The first was a set of biological and cognitive skills that emerged through evolutionary adaptation and mutation. The second process was cultural. Together, this helped propel human evolution into a radically new trajectory than its evolutionary past. The fluidity of human social organization was its most critical adaptive innovation. Precisely by virtue of its social flexibility, man was increasingly able to thrive across a wide and diverse set of ecosystems from the deserts of Africa to the tundra of Siberia. Whatever the distinct requirements of each location in terms of diet and shelter, all placed great demands on individuals to come together and to cooperate in supportive communities.

The question remains, however, where human beings and culture meet. It is at this critical nexus that I next develop an account of how group agency functioned and how it allowed for the emergence the distinct plane of social ontology. Through this, I seek to provide a cognitive account of the ‘state.’

## Conclusion

In Chapter 5, I identified the evolutionary precursors that allowed for the development of human social institutions and the emergence of complex societies.

I discussed how the power of states is located in their capacity to shape their social and economic order. I explained why, in order to understand how states function, we require better theoretical models of individuals, the state, and society. It does not suffice to simply recognize that agents and structures are co-constitutive; we need to explain how and why this is so.

I examined the seminal role of prehistory and posited how complex forms of social organization arose. This required moving away from the early modern model of human beings in a state of nature, identifying the unique social unit, the hunter-gatherer band, from which we evolved as a species and the nature and function of cognitive processes that underpin human social cognition. I explained how evolutionary theory cannot be used as a major theoretical paradigm within international relations to provide predictive explanations. The value of incorporating evolutionary accounts rests on its ability to ground social and cultural theories of international relations within a scientific framework.

I covered how evolutionary theory has transcended the traditional Darwinian analysis that focused at the level of a single organism, to recognize that selection pressures occur at the genetic, cellular, individual, and group levels, allowing us to

understand reproduction in complex ways by treating agents as enmeshed within a wider set of social, ecological, and biological processes.

I pointed out that there are clear limits on the use of evolutionary theory in IR. The presumptive aggressive egoism of popular Darwinism cannot simply be lifted from evolutionary literature and related to theoretical claims in international relations. This approach simply perpetuates a long series of established conventional realist tropes on the nature of 'mankind. The largest problem, however, is that it strikingly fails to identify the true evolutionary mechanisms at work within human society.

I contrasted the behavior of chimps and gorillas who evolved along realist lines with limited cooperation and dominance hierarchy. While their agents are seen as both self-conscious and rational, it is a very instrumental rationality, always focused on the means-ends relationship and cannot explain the dynamic at work in human social interaction.

I explained why language by itself is not the true expression of the quality that makes humanity unique. While other species communicate in non-functional and not egotistically-motivated ways, there is something inherently lacking in both their ability and desire to provide each other with mutual aid. They simply do not exhibit altruism.

In contrast, I maintained that altruism developed in humans as the best survival strategy given repeated interactions. I showed how, in the prisoner's dilemma, selfishness is only the best strategy if there will be just one interaction. An equitable Nash equilibrium seems intuitively right for so many of us because, over time, any population that favored more than 50 percent or demanded less than 50 percent was replaced by

those who played the 50/50 strategy. The 50//50 Nash equilibrium seems just. It appears to us as a moral insight, but its origin is rooted in our evolutionary adaptation as a species.

I emphasized the need to recognize the anomalous character of the past five thousand years when placed against our species' evolutionary history that spans 200,000 years. The development of civilization, the transformation of human social communities, and the growth of complex systems of government and economic production are distinct from the pattern of life that defined nearly the entirety of human existence.

I explained how hunter-gatherer bands were egalitarian and non-coercive communities. I contrasted them with agricultural civilizations. They established hierarchies and institutional mechanisms for social regulation. This began with the incipient domestication of plants and animals 10, 000 years ago and with the organization of states 5, 000 years ago.

I argued that the mechanisms that facilitated the appearance of the first governmental authority and complex social systems emerged directly from the processes evident within prehistoric bands. The 'birth' of civilizations was dependent on, and built from, critical adaptations forged in early human history. Evolutionarily, human beings stand out in sharp contrast to all other primates. The structure of hunter-gatherer bands is unique among biological species. Hunter-gatherer bands lacked a dominance hierarchy. Members were formed on the basis of equality and organized their society on forms of cooperative labor and resource distribution. Human intelligence was the result of its organization into a new social body. The fluidity of human social organization was its

most critical adaptive innovation. Precisely by virtue of its social flexibility, man was increasingly able to thrive across a wide and diverse set of ecosystems

I argued that what underpinned this transition and allowed for its emergence was the capacity of individuals to develop forms of group agency: the capacity to coordinate and act together and members' ability to understand and orient their behavior in reference to the band. I concluded that group selection cannot be understood as a biological process, but as a mechanism that selected for individuals who were highly cooperative and also innovative. Since the growth of the population was minimal, any adaptive advantages, both individually and between groups, had a very large impact on the population as a whole. The fluidity of human social organization was its most critical adaptive innovation. A set of biological and cognitive skills emerged through evolutionary adaptation and mutation. A second process was cultural.

The question remains, however; where did human beings and culture meet? I explained that in the next chapter I will develop an account of how group agency functioned and how it allowed for the emergence the distinct plane of social ontology. Through this, I will seek to provide a cognitive account of the 'state.'

## **CHAPTER 6: COGNITIVE THEORY OF THE STATE**

### Overview

In this chapter, I will seek to establish a cognitive theory of the state. I will do so by tracing the evolution of consciousness among biological organisms and the way these have facilitated the emergence of a unique form of selfhood and intersubjectivity in human beings. My account of consciousness and the self will be phenomenological. I will argue that it is the phenomenological quality of human cognition and experience that allows human social life to link and unite individual subjectivity into an ostensibly objective, veridical social world. Social structures are created through the individuals. I will develop my account from traditional approaches to selfhood, particularly that of George Herbert Mead, but I will build on these approaches by incorporating the insights from the latest investigations in the field of language, psychology, and evolution. In this way, I will ground my account of selfhood and the state in a theory that explains the mechanisms that have evolved to allow human beings to create social agency and a social world of institutions and rules. In this way, I will explain the way that the social world becomes part of a shared, objective world of social meaning and significance for human beings. This account will seek to address a basic need within contemporary social science

and international relations that requires a way of explaining how states develop into social structures as well as how agents shape and regulate social life.

### *Self and Society*

As argued in a previous chapter, George Herbert Mead's symbolic interactionist sociology represents the best articulation of the relationship of the individual and the social order. Mead's theoretical value rests on the ways in which he understands the individual as a social agent. In this, the individual as a 'self' and the individual as a 'mind' are extensions of the brain that is rooted in its social ecology-- a means by which one can navigate its interdependent world. Symbols, as words or other forms of representation, function as a way to create a common set of meanings and beliefs that unite social members into a community.

The individual 'self' is a mechanism by which an individual learns to assess his own individual subjectivity as well as to understand the subjectivity and particularity of other social members. That is, through the capacity to understand that their social stance is a point of view rather than a neutral and unproblematically veridical description of the world, individuals can communicate in ways that bridge their individual points of view.

Mead's evolutionary and cognitive account of social interactions, though seemingly influential, has had only limited influence. This is nowhere clearer than in Wendt's *Social Theory of International Society* which, though seemingly inspired by Mead, depends on a view of agents that is simply a reiteration of the theoretical assumptions of the egoistic rational actor model applied to the state system.



*Agents Before Structures or Structures Through Agents*

Individuals are the foundation of the social world. Unlike the state, individuals are corporal, material beings. Are theoretical models and historical accounts of ‘state’ formation sufficient? No. I am not focused on answering how a particular state was ‘formed.’ Instead, I seek to explain how the state is ‘encountered,’ seen as ‘real’ and existent.’

As John Searle noted, the social sciences have a task that is directly opposite to that of a hard scientist. We must explain how social ontology can be transformed into an epistemic object system (Searle 2005, 31-44). We must recognize at once, both the contingent nature of the social world, and its objective reality.

Our experience of the world is framed by cognitive structures as well as by our sensory systems. I want to frame an evolutionary account of the state as phenomenological and embodied.

By the embodied nature of the human being, I mean one that sees our cognition and agentive nature as directly tied to our bodies, and to the way our bodies structure how we experience the world. By highlighting the corporeality from which thought arises, I hope to explain how and why individuals experience the social world and its fictive institutions and practices as real.

Individuals and the social world are not distinct ‘things’, but rather mutually dependent phenomena.

The body constitutes a form of material structure from which consciousness arises. The embodied nature of consciousness plays a significant role in how the individuals join together in the creation of the social reality (Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). Embodiment here focuses on 1) the basic way the body is constituted 2) the way the body acts as the zone of emotional and spatial engagement, 3) a place where the external are not only 'encountered', but made intelligible, and 4) the means by which individuals think through problems of the community and the state as a whole.

By emphasizing the body, I seek to abolish a view of cognition that is disembodied, that treats reason as a form of cold calculation. The self is constituted by our embodiment, and, through it, its relationship to others. By understanding the nature of human social cognition, I believe that the strong divisions between the self and the other, and between individuals and society can be overcome.

### *The Phenomenological State*

The phenomenological perspective might seem misplaced, inappropriate, or at odds with international relations, yet it seems perhaps the only logical place on which to establish the field. The way that the individual experiences him or herself and the social world is important since it shifts our focus from purely theoretical models towards the natural way we encounter the world and associate ourselves within relationships and social structures. We can only find the 'primordial state', the progenitor of all 'existing states', in the space in which the state is encountered unproblematically by individuals on

a daily basis. What is required is not formal theory, but an appreciation of 'a pre-theoretical attitude' people have towards the nature of reality.

After all, international relations describes a plan of reality that is never experienced externally, that never exists as a thing in itself, but rather exists as a set of concepts, institutions, and practices that are accepted, reproduced, and perpetuated through consent, affiliation, and experience. Louiza Odysseos, following Heidegger, recognizes that the ontology of being is only understood through the experience of being specifically, and that the phenomenological experience of being is the only way to ever arrive at ontology. In other words, ontology is conditioned by phenomenology (Odysseos 2007, 30-48).

If ontology is based on phenomenology, international relations must be an example of the ways individual subjectivity links to the state. It must explain how embodied agents form disembodied social actors.

It is in the tangible, emotional, and psychological qualities that link individuals to their social world that the state becomes a distinct symbol and an authoritative institution. This quality of the state is not directly tied to its daily operation. Instead, it embodies the way communities come to represent ends in themselves, communities to which individuals orient their lives.

### *Basic Consciousness*

All organisms, as they grow in complexity, must develop ways to regulate their internal biological states and monitor their external environment. Cooperation is a central

force of evolution. Cooperation at the macrolevel requires the emergence of cooperation at the microlevel. The capacity of an organism to act in the world arises as a result of its ability to function internally as a self-regulated and integrated whole. For multicellular organisms to survive, they must coordinate complex biological processes. Through this, cells can become differentiated and form specialized organs. This is only possible if cellular functions are coordinated by the body as a whole, allowing organisms to maintain homeostasis, repair injury, and act in unison (Valera and Maturana 1974, 187-196)

Externally, organisms needed to be able to interact with their environment and to distinguish among alternative stimuli. As a result, as life has developed, it has evolved a wide variety of ways to gather information and to integrate data.

### *The Body as a Representational Model*

The internal cellular processes within the body and the sensory information gathered from the external environment are integrated into a representational model of the body.

What is important about this process, beyond the central role it plays in biology, is that organisms build models as a way to process all sensory information. Sensory information is translated into representations, and these representations turn into conscious perceptions. When sitting in a room reading, all of our sensory systems are integrating their information into a single representation of our internal state, our environment, etc. Our perception unifies the senses into an experience. We do not see things in terms of ‘doors, windows, roof’ but instead as a ‘house,’ Smelling, hearing,

touching, tasting, etc, are all perceived at the same time. Humans have two eyes, and so our visual system is scattered, but it is unified as a single, smooth image.

From active feedback and coordination among sensory and motor systems, subtle differences in the kind of sensory data we receive allows us to develop very accurate representations about the world. For instance, a runner must have a model of his environment, a way of tracking his body in space, and ways to input them together so that he avoids tripping over a branch in the middle of the road (Blakeslee and Blakeslee 2007)

Sensory and motoric systems combine in organisms to produce active awareness and qualia, as the subjective experience of awareness. In more complex animals, internal and external sensory systems can combine to produce emotions, such as ‘fear’ as a distinct state of bodily arousal and awareness (Panksepp 1982, 407-422).

It is out of basic biological functions, the merger of distinct internal and external senses, within models of representation, that consciousness arises. As I will demonstrate shortly, this process of conceptual integration and representation for the body forms the basis for higher levels of cognitive processing.

For the purpose of gross simplification, let me argue that the brain has three kinds of representational systems: bodily representational systems, environmental representational models, and social representational models.

Oakley developed a model for the evolution of consciousness consisting of three stages: simple awareness, consciousness, and self-consciousness. In consciousness, an agent must organize information into schema. The environment must be organized as a map. This allows organisms to orient objects in time and space. An animal that hunts

must be able to anticipate where its prey will be as it runs. For Oakley, self-consciousness developed when human beings introduced themselves as part of the map: that is, when they could track themselves as another variable within the map. One could argue that this form of self-awareness already exists in the conscious hunter (Donald 1991, 142-144).

Self-consciousness represents an important advancement in cognition. The Gallup test, from this premise, has sought to identify when non-human species are able to recognize their own reflection.

### *What Forms the Basis of the Uniqueness of Human Cognition?*

For philosophy, self-consciousness has been understood as the defining quality of human beings. Descartes focused on our self-consciousness as the only thing to which we can be sure. In this tradition, consciousness forms as a kind of unbridgeable chasm between an individual and the world. For many developmental psychologists, self-consciousness, defined as metacognition, is a central element of human development and the basis of human social intelligence.

Peter Carruthers persuasively argues that the emergence of the self-consciousness developed out of need for early humans to interpret and understand the intentions of others. To successfully read the minds of other individuals, we required a representational model of human cognition (Carruthers 2009, 121-129).

Carruthers argues that the 'self' emerged because the brain required a basic template that modeled cognition to interpret others' mental states. To read others' 'minds' we had to simulate their states and infer their intentions. We did this by relating

their actions to our own basic drives, fears, and desires. Individual self-consciousness arose out of the need to understand, predict, and reason from the perspective of other members of the group (Carruthers 2009, 121-138).

Individuals always infer the mental states of others. This reflective habit today often errs, because we can easily make false assumptions and attribution errors. The ‘self’ and the ‘social’ world of early humans were born at the same time. Self-consciousness and social-consciousness acted as mutually dependent processes.

The critical point of this centers on the embodied quality of the self and how it shaped perception. The self emerges as a way for individuals to understand the mental states of others by running ‘simulations.’ The self, and its function as a tool of social analysis, were both organized around the basic sensory and motor processes that give rise to awareness. Because the self was used as the template for observation of others, the emotional state of other members could directly elicit emotional states in observers. Empathy allowed us to understand others’ intentions and emotional states. The evocative and experiential nature of social perception, therefore, also could link us into the emotional states of others and allow us to share in common emotional states. The discovery of mirror neurons demonstrated this well. The same brain networks are operant, whether the individual is engaged in an activity or watching an activity (Gallese 2005, 101-118).

The line between the self and the other blurred because those we perceive were able to alter our own emotional states. Perceptions were not pure observations; they were often rich in emotional content. The intentionality of others was inferred from the model

of the self, but perception also helped to link observers with the emotional states of others. It is precisely this dynamic aspect of the self, its intentional and intersubjective embodiment, that I believe forms the foundation of human social organization (Burkart, Hrdy, Schaik 2009, 175-181).

The shift from external behavior to internal intentions reflected a shift in the organization of social life for early humans. As human beings developed into egalitarian bands, behavior needed to be assessed on the basis of intention. Hunting parties needed to be able to work as a unified team, reacting in complementary ways in order to successfully capture prey. Interpersonal tensions needed to be mitigated, free riding sanctioned. In other primate groups, dominance reflects a natural right. Strength is the foundation of chimp society. Hunter gatherer bands were organized around relationship of equality and cooperation (Boehm et a. 1993, 227-254).

In egalitarian bands, though problems no doubt developed, the maintenance and survival of the individual depended on positive relationships with other members. Attempts at domination by any member of the group were heavily penalized and mechanism that increased cooperation immensely rewarded. To help secure cooperation, it required that there be a means by which to judge others. It is here that Carruthers's account of self-consciousness fits. We could anticipate and predict others' behavior by 'mind reading.' In addition, by understanding others' intentions, we could find ways to reduce or avoid conflict.

I go further than Carruthers, however. I argue that the 'self' as a cognitive model, evolved not only as a mechanism for assessing other intentions, for embedding individual



behavior within the ‘map’ of hunter-gatherer society. Society was mapped as a space of interactions, but it was also given agency that linked the individual to the group. In so doing, the brain did not invent entirely new ways of assessing the self, other individuals, and society. Instead, it employed approximately the same neural mechanisms to generate all three, linking them together in ways that would shape human social evolution. Self, other individuals, and society as a social agent were linked and blended cognitively as interlinking phenomena by individuals.

The shift towards intentionality was precipitated by the absence of formal rules within hunter-gatherer bands.

Self-consciousness did not develop merely to interpret the behavior of others, but also to understand individual behavior in relation to hunter-gatherer society. Individual actions were now assessed by the intentional state and not only by behavior, but the centrality of ‘intentions’ was significant because actions related to the health of the group as a whole (Bandura 2001, 1-26).

### *The First State*

This was a revolutionary moment in human evolution. The hunter-gatherer band, the social ‘body’ around which individuals organized their lives, took on an independent reality. The ‘band’ became the central criteria from which to assess individual actions and intentions. No individual could dominate the society or rule the band, so the band was never personalized into the property of a few members. As a common resource and good, the behavior and intentions of its members were judged by a common standard,

particularly on whether individual behaviors maintained or undermined the community and its practices (equality, sharing, and cooperation).

The linking of self, others, and society into agential and intentional agents helped to increase communication and cooperation. Individual self-consciousness arose as a mechanism of social evolution, and that required the conceptualization of social relations according to a collective agent.

Human consciousness is a form of awareness, but its functions arose from a need to help the species in a specific social environment.

### *The Fractured Self*

Furthermore, I argue against the view that selfhood should be seen solely in terms of 'reason' or conscious awareness. Even the triumvirate of the self as defined by intentions, desires, and beliefs misses the most important element. The truly 'magical' aspect of selfhood is the fluidity with which it operated.

Human self-consciousness is able to alternate between its subjectivity and its self objectification, seeing others through its own eyes, but also imagining how they are perceived by others. In objectifying the self, individuals can better control their behavior and plan their actions in ways that conform with other members of the group, subjectively, moving inward or fusing the self within a wider set of social relations, emotions, identities, and beliefs from the external world and making them a part of the self.

The self becomes a zone of experience and a mechanism of multidimensional perception. The self is not merely a point of conscious awareness, but an embodied and emotionally rich way of engaging with the world and with altered states of awareness.

Because of the neurological organization of the self as both an individual and social processor, individuals lack a defined line between themselves and the external world, between subjects and objects. Human identity emerges in relation to the social world, with individual subjectivity emerging as an expression of its social loyalties, relationships, and practices. Just as the self projects itself onto others, other social agents can project themselves into the self.

The social world, though incredibly complex, is organized in ways that are reflective of the broadly shared cognitive mechanisms that individual minds use to both understand, participate in, and construct the social world. The emergence of selfhood allowed for ‘mind reading’ as experiential empathy to help foster better forms of social understanding and communication (Gallese and Goldman 1998, 493-501).

It is central to stress that this is all the result of the embodied nature of the self. Linking the external world’s members into a common zone of sympathy and recognition, allowed us to link together in shared emotional states.

I see the development of social cooperation as grounded in the way our neural processes link our emotions, bodies, and identities with the outside world. For the moment, let me examine this in relation to the way language evolved.

## *Language*

There has been a great emphasis on ‘intentionality’ in the social sciences. The emphasis on shared intentionality has been too narrowly understood purely in terms of language. Linguistics has been dominated by a focus on identifying a common ‘grammar’ Such efforts saw language as a structure. In fact, languages are all artificial and conventional.

In place of a Chomskyan grammatical perspective, most evidence points to the Gricean conditions of language, placed on the two essentials of language as founded on “common ground” and “cooperatively structured” (Grice 1975, 41-58).

When examining this closely, however, the greatest surprise comes when we recognize how superfluous words are. Words are additions to an exchange that can often be understood simply by assessing the intentions of behaviors. We find that even if we remove words, we often lose none of the essential points of the interaction and, in fact, are able to capture it with greater brevity.

Language is convention. Human languages are so diverse and distinct precisely because the rules that govern them, while critical to the community of speakers to have a common form of communication, is secondary to the relationship that exists between speaker and receiver as a whole.

Tommasello identifies three basic forms of human communication: 1) requesting (often asking for a behavior rather than demanding it through direct intimidation), 2) informing, in terms of information sharing and information dissemination, 3) sharing, experiential forms of communication. All three have incredibly complex and unique ways

of being implemented. The last two are distinctly human. We share information with others often only for the purpose of informing them of an event or occurrence they would potentially benefit from learning about. The last is one that conveys emotional states, in which one individual who is experiencing an emotional state shares that state with another. (Tomasello 2009, 85-87). The preverbal gestural language of children shares the same set of characteristics (Tomasello 2009, 122-124). Even in simple experiments, children interpret pointing on the basis of the context in which it is employed. In other words, the gesture is inferred from the intentions that the child presumes the signaler has in using the signal. (14 months) (Tomasello 2009, 130-131).

When we break down these colloquial forms of communication, they can become recursive, because each assumption is based on at least two people making assumptions about the known beliefs, thoughts, and desires of the other, endlessly. However, we might analyze this, it does not revolve around a kind of strategic thinking. Instead, it rests on the simple assumption that we have a similar set of beliefs and we communicate with common intentions (Tomasello 2009, 94-95).

Because we inherently try to understand others by reference to their intentions, our communication always presumes that the information we receive can also be understood by reference to how it is produced. The recipients and the sender shift interchangeably during a single conversation. The way that this becomes formalized, in both social conventions and linguistic structures, is dependent on this basic capacity (Tomasello 2009, 102-103). As Tomasello notes:

If human cooperative communication had arisen initially to enable more complex forms of competition and deception, then we would not expect to see a common cognitive infrastructure with collaborative activity, nor would we expect to see as its most basic motivation the desire to help others by providing them with information they need (which, to repeat, is actually a prerequisite assumption if lying is to succeed in fooling the recipient) (191).

Stanley Greenspan and Stuart Shanker locate the origins of language in the nature of mother-child relationships. Infants and mothers don't communicate by words, but through emotions. Aligning emotions, smiling and having that smile acknowledged and returned not only validates the emotions of an individual, but also aligns those emotions together. A smile is both an emotional signal and an invitation to participate in a shared emotional state. The absence of reciprocal, mutually-reinforcing emotional states in infants has very detrimental effects on their development. It manifests itself not only in poor socialization, but Greenspan has also demonstrated that it impacts language and intelligence. Language is not hard-wired, nor does it emerge ex-nihilo. Children deprived of an emotionally responsive mother, for instance, grow up to have both cognitive and linguistic handicaps relative to other populations (Greenspan and Shanker 2006, 29-40).

I agree with Greenspan and Shanker's focus on the emotional co-regulation as being the most important element in the emergence of language, but I disagree with the premise that language evolved from mother-infant relationships. As noted by Tommasello, the assumptions that foreground human community must have emerged from a highly cooperative social environment, not simply from the dynamic of mothers and infants.

## *Play*

Most of childhood ‘play’ is the product of taking on the roles of other individuals, acting from their assumed motivations and perspectives. Children, through play, can transcend their surroundings. Children often take turns playing the villain or the hero. They give mental states not only to other people but also to objects. Children’s movies anthropomorphize the world, with talking cars, insects and lions. The strong tendency of people to anthropomorphize the non-human environment is often treated as an ‘error’ or ‘superstition.’ Its expression is indicative of the central role of intentionality in the evolution of our species.

These are no more ‘errors’ of childhood than the way a lion cub ‘errs’ for incessantly sparing with his siblings. Children are not making mistakes in pattern recognition; they invest great effort in mastering social mindreading (Rakoczy 2007, 53-66).

Even in early childhood, what is most important about shared intentionality, is the fact that two or more individuals enter into a collective ‘we’ in their interactions. These can function as dyadic ‘we’ groups, but also they can expand to a broader group. The general ‘we’ emerged as the band itself, in its capacity to transcend its members and to link them in relationship with past and future members.

What is critical about the development of the ‘we’ feeling, is that it is constituted by a shift in perspective from the individual to the unit level. In Tommaselo’s pioneering work:

Our interpretation is that human infants understand joint activity from a 'bird's-eye view,' with the joint goal and complementary roles all in a single representational format—which enables them to reverse roles as needed. In contrast, chimpanzees understand their own action from a first-person perspective and that of the partner from a third-person perspective, but they do not have a bird's-eye view of the interaction—and so there really are no roles, and so no sense in which they can reverse roles, in 'the same' activity (Tomasello 2009, 179).

Children are able to integrate themselves into a broader set of categorical social relationships at a very young age. Very young children can easily grasp the concept of 'God', but also the 'State' or 'family team.'

For the 'we' to develop, it had to have its own moral force. In fact, morality, as a form of reciprocation and fair treatment, is a natural, structural feature of how brains see social relationships. In innovative laboratory experiments, infants as young as six months old have been shown to make moral judgments. This inherent morality is enshrined in our capacity to understand ourselves in relationship to others. This is possible through, first, empathy, and second, through the ability to objectify ourselves and our actions from a third party, 'bird's eye' view. Much of this is inherently innate. For instance, infants when presented with puppets, both recognize who are the more cooperative players and go to lengths to 'punish' the one cheating. Source (Hamlin 2013, 186-190)

Anthropomorphism takes on many forms, from seeing forms in random patterns, to faces on the surface of Mars. By inputting intent into the world, we see events as the product of not only will, but of deliberate construction. We see the world not merely as



intentionally and agential, but teleological. At its most basic, we employ natural animism readily to infer human mental states to non-human entities, be they alive or dead, as well as to other species, objects, or forces of nature (Guthrie 1995, 62).

It is in the way that perception, cognition, and emotions can be arranged that forms dynamic shifts in evolution across species. For many species, to reproduce simply means laying eggs. The offspring hatch and care for themselves. For more complex forms of childrearing to form, an emotional bond between mother and offspring was what was important. Human beings can domesticate animals that were hierarchic because humans simply step in as the alpha. Shifts in anatomical adaptations or forms of reproduction have social implications. Therefore, the emergence of bipedalism and the movement of our ancestors from the trees required a new social structure for social support, cooperation, and survival. In an increased point of vulnerability, human beings had to compensate by finding alternative forms of defense. Even though there is no evidence for increased brain size in Australopithecines during this period—at least not a significant increase—inherently there were radical differences in the way the ancestral hominids organized their social order (Donald 1991, 105-106).

This is all driven by the way that cognition and emotions became interlocked in new ways. Emotions drive cognition. Emotions are among the most ancient features of the brain, originating in the brain stem. Emotions are linked with arousal and awareness. It is through the ways that memory and emotion are interlinked that all animals learn. Skinner developed behaviorism on the basic universality of stimulus-response systems in

all animals. Emotions help organisms to learn, but they do this because emotions are the primary driver of cognition.

As already discussed, self-consciousness developed through the way human cognition uses its own embodiment to try to interpret the intentions of others. Human turn from focusing on external behavior to intention evaluations. Emotion plays the central role, since it links observations about others with emotional and mental states. This allows us not only to understand others, but to become intersubjectively linked in shared emotional states. Language emerges as a byproduct of our ability to enter into shared states of emotional resonance. Self-consciousness was a point where we the self, others, and the social group as a whole were interlinked. It is also with emotions that intentionality, coupled with the egalitarian and cooperative nature of the band, and the basis of its function as a common social unit, transforms social relations into moral systems. Intentionality helped develop language and symbolism.

### *Morality*

In a narrow sense, intentionality merely seeks to identify the cause of a behavior. In hunter-gatherer societies, however, intentionality became evaluations against the principles of cooperation and equity among members of the group as well as the basic agreements and expectations internal to the group. Intentionality allowed us to positively sort for cooperators at the level of interpersonal relationships, reduce conflict, and overcome differences by seeing other agents' wants, needs, and desires. The basic structure of social relations, however, were collective and not dyadic. As such, the

relationship of individuals was organized around the group as a whole. Intentions allowed early human beings to assess others' behavior against the interest and rules that were held in common. That is, evaluations are made about others' behavior against general codes and expectations of the group as a whole. Acts that went against the basic principles that allowed the group to function were negative to group interest.

The band functioned because it satisfied the long term reproductive interest of its members. At the most basic level, the mechanisms by which social order was maintained were by direct acts of violence against free riders and individuals who violated the rules of conduct.

At the most primitive level, emotions, such as jealousy and envy, were pro-social emotions, because they acted as pressures that prevented domination of the group by an alpha male. Over time, our biological interests in maintaining hunter gatherer society and our use of intentionality to make social evaluations were abstracted into a broader set of normative principles. Transgressions against the rules of society were not only violations of contracts, they were moral wrongs. The intentionality of individuals revealed their character as 'good' or 'bad' (Green and Haidt 2002, 121-138)

The structure of the social order was not merely a reflection of agreement but represented a more transcendent set of rights and obligations. Through the exercise of empathy, antisocial behavior within the group that caused pain and suffering in others had affective impact on ourselves.

Reciprocity is reinforced, not by a utilitarian assessment of a mean-end relationship, but through its sacralization as a principle.

Human beings developed the 'primordial state', a distinct form of group social cognition that give society its own ontological reality, but the ways human relationships were maintained and structured developed out of the ways that cognition and emotional systems are linked.

Our perception and our emotions were connected in the world. Our basic emotions developed to form social emotions. In fact, much of our function as children is to allow our emotional responses to be ordered, shifted, and reassigned by our caregivers. Emotions emerge, but they are socialized.

Children are educated into modifying their emotions. Primary emotions are attached to values and practices. Second, individuals increasingly regulate the expression of emotions only at certain times or emotions are actively repressed.

Social rules designate how to act appropriately in terms of specific social roles, and affective systems act in ways that reinforce behaviors individually, through shame, guilt, praise, scorn, disgust, and censure (Keller and Otto 2009, 996-1011).

Our moral intuitions remain. Rousseau's articulation of the general will, Kant's categorical imperative, and Rawls 'veil of ignorance,' all operate from the ability of individuals to engage in reciprocal relationships and to act in the interest of the society as a whole. This echoes the kind of society in which our ancestors evolved.

As the social world and our actions became increasingly understood in moral terms, our relationship to the social order and our understanding of the natural world became increasingly understood in terms of abstractions. As causality became increasingly understood in moral terms, it expressed itself in the way nature was

interpreted. Individual actions carried consequences, but actions were understood in terms of the values that underpin social relations. As the normative quality of human society became increasingly central, the causal forces of right and wrong, justice and retribution, were linked to natural forces. This is not to say that the general theory of mind did not play a role in the anthropomorphization of the world, but the 'intentional' stance of spirits and gods gave them emotional and moral characteristics. At the same time, the 'state' did not arise from the concept of 'God.' It developed as a way to perceive the tribal unit as a whole.

### *The Emergence of Symbolism and Culture*

A gesture became a symbolic representation of intention. Intentions were no longer coupled solely to actions, nor understood only through direct behavior. Instead, the gesture became a means of representing emotional intention, and the reproduction of the gesture could communicate intention quickly and consistently. Over time, gestures were replaced by vocalizations (Tomasello 2009, 234).

The freeing of a symbol from its action not only allows it to become a general 'word', but, over time, it allows for the development of complex symbolic systems for communication that formed the basis of culture. The normative and intentional character of the social order of hunter-gatherers blended the natural and social world together. The world of the band was increasingly organized around concepts, and, importantly, the social relations become understood as roles.

The more emotions were turned into symbols, the more symbols grew into autonomous concepts with their own existence. These became principles. Ideas grew to have their own autonomy. The emotionally laden character of the ideas did not change, but the emotions were treated as broader moral definitions. The emotion generated the idea, but increasingly the idea generated the emotion. Moral systems emerged from emotive systems. The more the individual's actions conformed to symbolic actions, the more the individual was judged by his ability to live by the group's expectations (Deacon 1998).

*Emotion: Mechanism that Forms the Relationship of Self and Society*

Human reality is constructed and conditioned, on the relationship of the individual brain, its conscious emergence as the mind self, and the way the mind and the social order interact. These produce systemic relationships between the members of the group, but the process by which society is ordered is principally the result of the affective, affiliative, and symbolic mechanisms that make actors intelligible to each other, as well as tied to each other.

As a species, we are born with an underdetermined set of reflexive behaviors, but as a natural corollary, we have a more open capacity for learning and storing information. Given the fact that we are so underdetermined and highly adaptive for learning, it is only natural that the broad mechanisms of social organization can take such a plurality of forms.

The mechanisms of affiliation that endure are based on the group's ability to command the loyalty of its members. Culture is powerful, and its capacity to endure is why the world we encounter seems far more malleable.

The conceptual underpinnings of human society are produced when the elaborated social abstractions are palpable. These are truths whose evidence is in their impact. They elicit emotional responses from its members.

Culture becomes a way of shaping individual emotions to social values and beliefs, but cultures become forms of eliciting emotions. The social world becomes more fixed, as cultural norms become embedded and reproduced in social orders.

Primary emotions are combined to form new emotions. For instance, shame is a social emotion, formed from the combination of primary emotions of disgust and anger. Language is generated, as we combine new words, mixing categories and concepts in new ways.

Social learning no longer is a way to act rationally, but a means to understand the history and lessons of the past in ways that can be accepted and reproduced by individuals.

These senses are integrated, with external and internal sensory impressions, combining in new ways to create 'feelings' . :

The most powerful and evocative words we speak have no objective representation that can give them a clear definition. Instead, they exist as points of states of experience. "Love, Patriotism, Duty" "Wrong" "Guilt".

The salient features of culture, the enduring components, are found in those behaviors that are tied to meaning: that is, behaviors that have meanings that extend beyond the action itself. The action is neither understood nor produced for purely functional ends, but is understood as a representation of a cultural value. It means something more. Symbols become representations for concepts as well as objects in themselves. With the development of symbolism, communities linked their values and beliefs in the identity and values of its members. The critical link in this process is emotional.

Objects can come to stand for representations of others. Over time, we can come to fall in love with the object as the embodiment of our affection. This works out in terms of *Tiger Beat* magazine: teen idols that command the attention of teenage girls and affect them deeply emotionally

The voodoo doll and the American flag, for example, are objects that have come to represent an idea. Both those that are against and those that are for the U.S.A. center their attention on behavior towards the flag.

*The Social Group Becomes Personified, Gains Agency, And Develops a History*

Intentions are transformed into a teleological view of the world with meaning and purpose, not simply of our immediate actions and wants, but of the way that we can develop. The social band also comes to have teleology, a purpose to which it is moving, something both realized and also not completely formed.



We begin to develop a sense of our own relationship to the world with wider cosmic and historical dimensions. We are interlined in networks of meaning, history, and relations. The social world becomes the basic foundation of the self. It is from the world that our sense of moral order, ritual, customs, and behavior are organized. The external world becomes more fixed and natural as we become agents that reproduce behaviors. We are transformed into agents that reproduce and build on our cultural system. Abstractions become concrete in the way that they constitute the world. With enough fluidity, they can continue to grow.

*Culture Becomes Ritual, Custom, Habit.*

As culture increasingly organized human life, learning become tied to the ability to imitate and reproduce behaviors. Our experience of the world was no longer immediate or personal. We are able to imitate behavior, reproduce that behavior, and add and reinterpret behavior in novel ways. The capacity of human beings to imitate and innovate in equal measure, coupled with the ability to work with symbolic representation, creates a uniquely social environment that is based on ritualized ways of behaving.

The capacity for human beings to attribute agency to outside forces is the origin of religion; it also represents the way that we can conceptualize the state and other institutions as having agency. It becomes the means by which we can all play roles within a society in which we come to embody roles and the function of institutions. The seeming tragedy of the Milgram experiments is often found in the irony of daily experience: a policeman who must enforce a law he finds trivial, a lawyer who prosecute

a man whose actions he finds noble, etc. In each of these instances, we find that individuals have in a sense surrendered their own agentic autonomy, standing in its place, a set of practices, orders, and beliefs that they are subordinate to and to which they owe allegiance.

Stories, beliefs, and identities would increasingly establish traditions as the source of knowledge. Narrative and storytelling could develop with the emergence of language, and, with it, a development of consciousness and traditions. The band as a container and agent of its members could develop its own history and traditions. The state emerged as a 'person,' but also as a transhistorical character. The individual not only is located on the 'map', but comes to see his or her actions as embodied in rules, duties, and as part of a wider set of social and historical groups (Gottschall 2012).

History became a way to explain the interaction of 'groups.' The band's autonomy came to have agency and reality as the conceptualization of the group was anthropomorphized.

Cultural processes organized around ways to increase emotional solidarity and 'spiritual' catharsis. The empathic faculty that defined self-consciousness can now expand our capacity to experience the world through ritual and storytelling. Society is something distinct and subject to change and recomposition by its members, yet it retains its existence as a continuous 'social agent'. Through such organizations, we establish relations not only with strangers and affiliate with others that live at a long distance, but seemingly exist in relationship with the past and the future. We no longer can think of the agent as a construction to achieve immediate ends, but we must take the survival of

the 'state' as the embodiment of a profound truth, with our customs, values, and identities being things to which we dedicate our lives. As the moral representation of the 'state' becomes manifest in the environment, and its preservation becomes an ethical imperative, something worth dying for.

What's interesting, for instance, is not that states die, but that they can be reconstituted. Forging identities and communities is very difficult; it only happens on rare occasions. When it does, it allows for identity retention. Such is the paradigmatic case of Poland. Shifts of the state are such that they are able to be reconstituted by those directly or indirectly affiliated.

The social world also has boundaries. There are distinctions made between members of the group, who is to be included, and who is to be excluded. We think through social groups. We perceive the world through social groups. We interact with the world, primarily, in terms of our membership to a social group and the rules, rights, and exceptions we have with other members of our group. There is nothing inherent in these distinctions, but once produced, they are not subject to easy revision.

Human history is understood precisely in terms of social evolution, in the ways that social relations have been maintained or altered, how novel forms of living have been introduced, or how new ways of producing communities have come about.

A point shifted human consciousness from individual lifespan and its experiences. Memory no longer was the property of biographical organization of an individual and his life experiences. Instead, human memory was extended to become a mechanism of recording the life history of the social organisms as a whole; social development, and the

experiences and practices of the group become a part of the individual. The past no longer has a linear relationship with the development of the present, critically. Instead, the past becomes something alive and nuanced, because social memory not only chronicles a set of events as they developed, but provides other, potential outcomes, thus, describing not only what exists, but what could have existed, not only what has been gained, but what has been lost, how one was helped or was betrayed. Social memory plays an active role. Causation becomes decoupled from a simple sequence of events. So, effects from the past, including imagined events and acts and individuals, are now powerfully established as mechanisms to explain the present. These stories are sequenced temporally, because they are malleable, the means by which people explain society becomes an independent source of power, and cultures' mimetic function operates as a 'darwinian tool.'

With the development of group identity, we begin to affiliate with others, not merely by association, but by abstract symbols. These symbols allow for group identity to form within larger units, but also to extend through time. A state is now something that can exist for hundreds of years, linking many generations into a seemingly large body of members.

Consciousness first emerged with the integration of the senses in the body. The body served as a mechanism to integrate the sensory systems. Among human beings, self-consciousness became a model of perception for both the individual and his social world. This culminated in the reorientation of perception and action from material to ideational models of representation, a society that examined others by reference to

intentions. Through the dual function of the embodied nature of self-consciousness, the system of emotional coherence and interpersonal understanding facilitated the rise of symbolic culture. In addition, the self acted as a faculty that could objectify and subjectify perception at many different social levels. With the increasingly cultural, normative, and symbolic nature of the band, the cognitive model of man shifted from merely forming perceptions about the world to developing cosmological models about the natural and social world. Instead, the ideational and belief categories became predominant. The models of the ‘mind’ increasingly turned outward to give meaning to early humans lives, but also to transform an individual’s environment. The mental visas of individuals were expanded, as they situated themselves in both cosmic and historical processes.

If we move beyond the world, to the level of abstraction in art, we find something that is seemingly paradoxical. The more abstract the work of art inherently, the more concrete and pure its intentions, the more it comes to fit the ideal in itself as opposed to the glimmer of the ideal in concrete representations with their limited and often deceiving forms. Therefore, in abstraction with find something concrete—something that goes beyond the arbitrary elements of the way the world arranged matter in ways that obscure and lie. In a Platonic sense, we shift to the world of the forms.

There is a world of symbols, and yet, man stands outside this world. He utilizes it, works within it, and modifies it over time. Therefore, the symbols themselves—be they cognitive models of the world or linguistic representations of reality—cannot be treated as the totality of the world as a whole.

The 'primordial state' of hunter gatherer bands cast a shadow on our modern lives. Our social world builds on the ancient moral intuition of our ancestors. We see the world from the 'problem of justice', because it is the world from which we emerged, as equal and cooperative beings; it represents the world to which we also long to return. Statesmanship represents that space between the abstract and the concrete, that seeks to realize the ideal in the mundane. By finding new ways to cooperate, by finding ways to link ourselves emotionally and morally, by seeing others as neighbors and feeling their pain and sharing their joy, we've developed into the most dominant species on earth. Contrary to the culturalists' assumptions that see human interaction as based on relations of pure power, our self-consciousness was a bridge between ourselves in the world, our language is way to share experiences, not impose them.

### Conclusion

This study examined the ways that international relations have failed to provide any account of the state as a social phenomenon. It examined the limits of current theories as they relate to the state, particularly in the ways that collective actions are actively denied by the standard utilitarian model of rationality. Further, it sought to bridge cultural explanations of international relations, such as constructivism, with a scientific foundation. I developed a cognitive theory of the state that recognizes the inherent social nature of human beings, tracing its developments in hunter-gatherer societies, and demonstrating how this unique form of organization allowed for the

emergence of group agency. Through the emergence of an external reality—based on shared, common normative principles— and an organization that required its collective members to see their actions as a unified effort, the social band’s organizational mechanisms were extended into normative goods that were universal, and the social band was personified into a social agent. The social world was externalized into a concrete and separate reality, seemingly independent of the agency of individuals that had brought about its realization. The external worlds, social and natural, were given intentionality and agency. From this shift to symbolic and normative systems of organization, human beings developed increasingly complex forms of social organization. The emotional, symbolic quality of the social system, however, remains central to its operation as a normative and ideational point of orientation from which individuals derive their identities and values. It defines statespersonship as a form of knowledge that seeks to advance the interest and secure the safety of the community. It ties this both to the nature of our evolutionary history and to the writings of Aristotle, Plato, and Herodotus in the early classical period; they understood that statecraft as a practice was only intelligible when it dealt with issues that relate to public and not private interests.

This study sought to move international relations into new directions that helps to broaden the kinds of theoretical questions that can be asked and tackled, specifically by linking the state and state-system within a broader process of human social evolution.

## **CHAPTER 7: TRANSFORMATIONS FROM BANDS TO STATES**

### Overview

In Chapter 7, I will focus on the process of state formation and touch on important developments that occurred during the social development of bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and the state which have implications for international relations theory.

In each stage, I will examine the processes at work that allowed for the growth of increasing social complexity and coordination but also established the foundations for the emergence of inequality. I will highlight the way that collective action and groups became the central feature of human interaction and also demonstrate how they helped lead to the emergence of hierarchical, complex social forms of organization.

I will trace the changes in human social relations beginning with hunter-gatherer bands that lead to the development of collective intentionality, rule following, and normativity.

I will examine how the emergence of the social body as a distinct realm of reality required the subordination of individuals into members of a particular social space, how this was facilitated by the shift in social understanding from behavior to intentions, and how the emergence of a fractured selfhood unified emotional coordination, the emergence of language, and the rise of symbolic representation.



I will explain how the band was able to maintain its function as a public good through the development of cognitive adaptations, but also, importantly, through social practices that reinforced the norms of the society. I will acknowledge, however, that, over time, man's capacity to form into separate groups acted as a catalyst that helped facilitate the emergence of inequality. In this way, equality and inequality were built from the same primary process, but lead towards radically distinct ends.

I will point out how, as human social relations became focused on intentionality, and with it, the rise of language and symbolic representation, it not only allowed the band to gain an independent agency, but it was also able to be deployed into the world. Animism and a theory of 'mind' were used to understand not only collective intentions but the random actions of the environment in ways that made them intelligible and meaningful.

I will explain how culture acted as a system that helped to reinforce the band, but also served as a mechanism of selection and differentiation among groups allowing some groups to outcompete rivals. Cultural practices, in turn, became increasingly fixed into traditions that were passed down generationally. This included religion which served as a social mechanism to foster cohesion. Nevertheless, I will argue that religion also had the potential to create fissures in early society.

I will discuss how the radically normative and symbolic quality of human thought fostered the development of complex cosmological/religious systems that lead to the emergence of shamans which, in turn, introduced inequality in the band.

I will explain how tribes emerged through the expansion of kin networks within an interlinked web of mutually-associated bands as human beings became more and more efficient at hunting and foraging, and the size of the population increased. These efficiencies involved both innovations in social organization regarding improved strategies of learning, coordination, and cooperation, as well as technological innovations.

I will comment on the increasing ritualization of social relationships into normative roles with an integrated set of codes, norms, and obligations and how, as obligation and association extended into neighboring bands, individuals understood themselves as members of many distinct social groups. This intersecting network of social relationships allowed for increasing dissemination of technical innovations as well as for the development of trade networks.

I will show how chiefs arose as social interactions became more complex and how agriculture further intensified the shift towards stratification and social differentiation.

I will explain why what I found most salient about this is the way that social organization within groups became increasingly segmented into separate social bodies. Rights and expectations became associated with groups within the state, as opposed to a representative set of universal values. Distinct privileges were reserved for powerful groups. Hereditary and customary forms of authority began to appear. It was with religion that a universal form of authoritative structures of rule and domination were able to be legitimized. Through shared religion, social cohesion expanded beyond a single

tribe or chiefdom. I will point out that, although state formation has taken many distinct forms, all of them came about by linking state power with mythological and religious sanctification.

I will maintain that human behavior is highly ritualized, with individuals coming to interact by norms and expectations used as a guide to make judgments about appropriate and inappropriate behavior on the basis of a normative rather than a purely strategic calculation.

Further, I will posit that the relational nature of human social interaction is such that the distinctions and competition within groups are often greater than concerns regarding inequality among separate groups. Social position is based on our sense of place within immediate social networks rather than on an analysis of social systems in general. Social class, occupation, and kin relations all carry their set of expectations about what individuals should believe, how they must interact, and what their social role is. This frames how people act within their groups and how interactions are organized among individuals with distinct social membership. Individuals are understood as representations of their groups first, and, only secondly, are they recognized as distinct individuals.

I will explain how an essential element in the establishment and maintenance of inequality rests on the many ways that individuals are linked within these systems. The relational nature of human social interaction is such that the distinctions and competition within groups is often greater than concerns regarding inequality among separate groups.

Social position is based on our sense of place within immediate social networks rather than on an analysis of social systems in general.

I will cite evidence from the legal systems of early states to show how group membership was treated as the central social characteristic in the development of many early states. As proof, I will cite examples of where violence within societies is often greatest against individuals who are seen as violating the basic codes and values that underpin the social order to which they belong.

I will show that there is a robust and persistent incentive among group members to enforce social codes and behaviors. This is grounded in the kinds of moral systems that were developed to help maintain the common and public goods of the hunter-gatherer bands, but they have been used to often tragic and profoundly negative ends.

I will emphasize that state and a social community are often distinct. Indeed, it is only on rare occasions that the state and the community have been fused together: in the innovation of the Greek polis and again with the emergence of the nation-state in the modern world. Thus, community structures often are more enduring than state systems and are organized in ways that are not dependent on states for the development of complex social interactions.

I will point out that what interests me is how relationships that are highly antagonistic can be maintained within societies-- indeed, that the linkages and interdependence allow for the perpetuation and stability of highly unequal social hierarchies citing as an example the caste system in India.

I will conclude that complex social systems are maintained in ways that perpetuate social distinctions and prevent the emergence of a common space for solidarity, organization, and transformation of the structures of inequality that divide and control the vast majority of individuals. Ironically, it does so through normative and symbolic systems that were first utilized to establish common social space based on systems of reciprocity, equality, and cooperation.

The most salient feature of human social organization is our organization around groups. Our capacity to act as members of groups helped drive our cultural and cognitive evolution within the band and the emergence of complex social organization. Human normative values and beliefs continue to be central elements of both processes, but can also foster very distinct social systems.

The Greek polis' revolutionary character rested on its ability to link group identity and membership into a common political institution. Though limited and exclusionary (of women, slaves, and in most cases, the poor), it also reintroduced essential characteristics of equality, cooperation, and solidarity that developed within the band.

### *Evolution of Human Sociality*

The past few chapters have sought to trace how the capacity of human beings to form collective agency evolved. A critical feature of our development rests on our organization into hunter gatherer bands that were equal, non-coercive, and based on reciprocal forms of cooperation and reciprocity. These forms of interaction were

sustained by cognitive and emotional developments that lead to the development of collective intentionality, rule following, and normativity.

Human ‘historical’ development, however, begins with the emergence of agriculture and the state. These innovations are rooted in and shaped social inequality and the emergence of hierarchies. What accounts for this radical shift in human social organization? Does it not contract and act against the forms of social reasoning and organization that were developed among hunter-gatherer bands? How can human beings who have evolved to resist domination and punish free riders for most of their evolutionary development suddenly operate within a system of gross inequality and uneven distribution of resources?

The emergence of the social body as a distinct realm of reality requires the subordination of individuals into members of a particular social space. This was facilitated by the shift in social understanding from behavior to intentions, the emergence of a fractured selfhood that unified emotional coordination, the emergence of language, and the rise of symbolic representation. Critically, this was unified by a strong emergence of norms as central sources of social action and understanding. As previously stated, the revolution in human cognitive and social relations occurred when the ‘group’ came to have a distinct reality independent of its members. The capacity to sustain equality required a cooperative structure that maintained the band as a communal resource that was not controlled or defined by an individual or faction that sought to privatize the public good. The band could maintain its function as a public good through the developments of cognitive adaptations, but also, importantly, through social practices that

reinforced the norms of the society. Boehm argues that social practices among egalitarian societies are important to preserve the basic cooperative way that social life is organized, with members who violate those rules being mocked, censored, and, if necessary, killed. Moral systems emerged out of intentionality and as a mechanism to judge others' behavior and their contributions to the group, but they were coupled with the emergence of a world filled with intentionality and meaning. Thus, moral and normative beliefs were combined into a unified view of the world, linking nature and society into intimate relationships of cause and effect, as well as the emergence of a complex network of beliefs, rules, and behaviors to regulate social life through the development of ritual, story, and religion.

The band emerged as early humans could endow their collective body with a distinct agency. The capacity to grant agency to different social organizations was deployed in new and multipurpose ways as human social roles grew increasingly complex, interdependent, and plural. Hunter-gatherers' equality established the 'first state,' as I argued in a previous chapter, by allowing for the emergence of a distinct realm of social reality that unified their behaviors. Over time, our capacity to form into separate groups acted as a catalyst that helped facilitate the emergence of inequality. In this way, equality and inequality build from the same primary process, but towards radically distinct ends.

### *State Evolution*

Elmer Service developed the best known typological model for human social organizations' evolution into distinct stages of development, from bands to tribes, to chiefdoms, and to states (Service 1971).

Many distinct theories seek to explain how the state emerged as an institution. V. Gordon Childe recognized the importance of agricultural surplus for the development of a class that was not directly engaged in labor, but this itself does not entail the need for the emergence of complex bureaucracies or the emergence of hierarchies and official rule. Wittfogel posits the origins of the state in the need of communities to create complex public goods, such as the development of irrigation and waterworks systems, which required the centralization, organization, and supervision of labor and resources. Oppenheimer sees the conquest of agriculturalists by pastoralists as central to the development of the state, as the conquerors formed mechanisms by which to maintain their position of power and to organize the defeated population. If accurate, this demonstrates why farmers and cowboys can't be friends. Carneiro focuses on the dilemma when an increase in population faced the limited availability of new agricultural lands to put under cultivation. This produced a crisis since fertile soils had already been brought into production, but individuals were not able to easily shift residence, as they were located in geographic zones surrounded by desert or inhospitable land (Carneiro 1970, 733-738).

The mechanisms at work have been widely debated. Agriculture and state systems have formed in many different regions of the world independently of each other. This is a



testament to the latent capacity of human beings to form complex social systems and institutions, provided that the right conditions exist to call for their development.

Instead of focusing on the process of state formation, I want to briefly touch on important developments that occurred during each of the social development of bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and the state.

In each stage, we find processes at work that allowed for the growth of increasing social complexity and coordination but also established the foundations for the emergence of inequality. In this way, I hope to both highlight the way that collective action and groups become the central feature of human interaction and also demonstrate how they also helped engaged the emergence of hierarchical, complex social forms of organization.

#### *The Band: Cultural Overdetermination and Shamanism*

As human social relations became focused on intentionality, and with it, the rise of language and symbolic representation, it allowed not only the band to gain an independent agency, but also was deployed into the world. The forces of nature were now combined with mental states and personalities, animism and a theory of 'mind' were used to understand not only collective intentions but the random actions of the environment in ways that made them intelligible and meaningful.

In a sense, human beings became culturally overdetermined, as cultural factors came to determine behaviors irrespective of the kind of basic biological benefits to individual fitness that had first allowed them to become fixed within the human species.

This is exemplified by the way that human belief structures become totalizing visions that united nature, groups, and individuals into a complex matrix of meaning and intention.

The forces of nature were animated into spirits, the group became personified, and individuals became subsumed and defined by sociocultural belief systems and practices.

Though they emerged within a particular social structure, the normative and rule-following nature of sociality was also very flexible. Culture acted as a system that helped to reinforce the band, but also served as a mechanism of selection and differentiation among groups. Social practices, beliefs, and values could increase the levels of coordination into more complex forms. These, in turn, could allow some groups to outcompete rival groups. Cultural practices, in turn, became increasingly fixed into traditions that were passed down generationally.

Cultural beliefs and practices were not understood in utilitarian ways and were only able to be judged by how they helped the band endure and perpetuate itself. But as cultural and normative systems came to be the principal means by which people understood their relationship to each other and the world, the values of the band were increasingly decoupled from the basic principles of the band. That is not to say that cooperation and equality disappeared. Indeed, they did not, as all hunter-gatherer bands globally share this same basic structure. Instead, it allowed for the development of new forms of social organization should ecological and material conditions emerge.

Following Durkheim's *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life*, we can recognize that religions were linked to the way that society organized itself, with religious beliefs acting as mechanisms by which society unified and sanctified its own existence. For

Durkheim, the distinctions between the sacred and the profane—central to all religious categorizations—are made distinct from the private or public nature of behaviors and practices. Sacred acts are public actions, practices, and beliefs that support the group as a whole. Profane acts are private as are individual actions and opinions (Durkheim 2008).

The sacred represents the values of the society as a whole; it both affirms them as goods in themselves, and seeks to have them instantiated in ritual and practice by social members.

Durkheim developed his theory of religion by reading field reports on Australian aboriginals. He particularly focused on the use of totemic representations by aboriginal tribes. These totems had dual functions, in that a totem both represented a divine being and served as the symbolic representation of a specific tribe or group. In this way, aboriginal religious practices were forms of collective self-worship, fostering unity and embedding individuals into social systems. The collective group agency was facilitated by the linking of the group with a set of religious conceptualizations, but religion served as a social mechanism to foster cohesion. Religion was not a practice that was distinct or otherworldly, but a tool to help address immediate social needs within society (Durkheim 2008; Mol 1979, 379-389).

I agree entirely with Durkheim's assessment, but argue that it remains critical to recognize that the power of religion to link society to a transcendent realm brings a set of distinct consequences. That is, while religion might have emerged and might function as a way to help foster social cohesion, it also alters the ways that social bodies and individuals act in ways that can also produce deep divisions and make disagreements

intractable. Following Paul Tillich definition, religions deal with ‘ultimate concerns,’ in a manner that subordinate the needs of individuals or the significance of social processes.

### *Shamanism*

The radically normative and symbolic quality of human thought fostered the development of complex cosmological/religious systems. The emergence of shamans exemplifies the centrality of this process as primarily a universal component of hunter-gatherer societies globally.

Social distinctions first became pronounced with the rise of shamans, who acted as intermediaries between the world of the spirits and the world of human beings, both as intercessors and representatives. They represented a form of authority that was distinct and also in many ways, against, the equality of band members. It gave a distinct function and status to a member of the group that was authoritative, compelling, and not easily challenged. All members of a group did not equally exercise judgment and understanding on critical social concerns.

Shamans acted as healers and interpreters. We often typically understand shamans as engaging in ecstatic and dissociative states of mind. This was one essential component of a shaman’s function. They also organized broad social rituals through music and dance, that sought to facilitate healing, unity, and fertility for members of the tribe. A shaman’s power rested not only on the capacity of each to enter into altered states of consciousness, but also to induce altered states of consciousness among members of the band. Individually, shamans helped to facilitate healing through sympathetic magic.

Collectively, shamans organized group rituals for seasonal changes and rites of passage (McClenon 1997; Balzer 1990). They also identified certain locations as representative of sacred space. The elaborate cave paintings discovered in Lascaux are representative of the central role that shamans took in making social meaning unified in sacred rituals and practices (Demorest and Jochim 1988, 558-562).

*Tribe: Emergence of networks of kinship, affiliation, and trade*

Tribes emerged through the expansion of kin networks within an interlinked web of mutually-associated bands.

Human migration globally is evidence both of the increasing need to seek out new environments for hunting as well as of the emergence of a highly dynamic social organization capable of adapting to diverse settings, the tribe. As human beings became more and more efficient at hunting and foraging, it increased the size of the population. These efficiencies involved both innovations in social organization regarding improved strategies of learning, coordination, and cooperation, as well as technological innovations, such as improved axes and javelins. Tool making became increasingly detailed with a number of distinct steps and parts occurring in the forging of weapons, the making of clothes, and food storage.

Finding increasingly effective ways to extract and store food resources allowed for a more stable social system. Communities that developed expertise in fishing, for instance, no longer required the need to move seasonable with the migration of game (Stringer and McKie 1998; Coudart 1991, 395-408).

### *Kin Networks*

Hunter-gatherer bands existed in a complex and extensive set of trade and kin networks. Social complexity increased, both with the increase in population, but also the emergence of more intensive and extensive forms of social association and identification. These new relationships were structured by the same cognitive mechanism that helped the development of 'collective agency' within the early hunter-gatherer bands. The relationship of individuals within groups could be understood as embodied in the form of collective intentionality distinct from, but linked to, its members. In this way, a diverse network of familial, tribal, and intergroup interactions could be formed and structured.

These processes functioned through the increasing ritualization of social relationships into normative roles with an integrated set of codes, norms, and obligations. Within kin groups, individuals could trace familiar relationships with common ancestors and relatives within broader networks that extended beyond the group into other bands. The socially interlinked nature of human social relationships was increasingly in complexity and consequence. The formation of pair bonds ( marriage) had significant social implications for the kinds of associations and affiliations these unions could have on the ways individuals become embedded into their respective partner's familial network. The dangers of inbreeding were avoided by the need to find unrelated individuals with whom to breed, which in turn required that one could trace one's relation to others as well as identify groups of unrelated individuals (Hill, Walker et.al. 2011).

Pair bonds were structured into normative roles. As the family has grown into a symbolic relationship, so marriage carries a unique set of implications, by which one extends one's 'family' to all the social network of the spouse. In this way, distinct families and group networks were increasingly connected through bonds of obligation and recognition. In human beings, when hunter-gatherers form pair bonds, familial ties are extended bidirectionally.

In addition, mate selection required shifts in populations and residency patterns among individuals. This allowed for bands to become increasingly interlinked by culture, practices, and kinship that extended into a complex tribal system of affiliation.

Relations of obligation and association extended into neighboring bands, and individuals understood themselves as members of many distinct social groups. This intersecting network of social relationships allowed for increasing dissemination of technical innovations as well as the development of trade networks (Chapais 2009).

### *Chiefdom, Trade, and Agriculture*

Social interactions became more complex and therefore required management. Warfare with rival groups and tribes also became increasingly complex and needed central coordination. Challenges within social groups were complicated, as disputes had individual and social implications. Family, band, and tribal interests were now invested with their own 'identity' and 'interests,' and competing claims among groups required negotiation and adjudication through the establishing of a representative who would act in the name of the group. This required a cognitive faculty that could understand social

groups as possessing distinct agency, with goals, interests, and values that could be understood collectively within the group and by external parties.

For many chiefs, their authority rested on their charismatic capacity. They were 'big men.' Their power was limited but depended on the ability to garner loyalty and favor. Inequality was increased through increased wealth and the emergence of trade. The trade allowed for the exchange of goods that were valuable because of the prestige that its possession gave to its owner. Distinctions in wealth, ornamentation, and prestige goods clearly demonstrated inequality and social distinction, so why would it be tolerated and maintained? Chiefs, and later kings, focused on the accumulation of prestige goods that they would distribute to their patronage networks. The Chief's subordinates were dependent on the chief for their position and access to critical resources, which they used, in turn, to establish their dominance and to develop a set of corresponding networks of dependence which owed favor and loyalty to them. Overtime, chiefdoms became increasingly permanent and hereditary positions. The 'social' space in which individuals operated was now complicated by distinct group identities, goals, and interest, and not by a single 'common' frame of reference as in the earlier hunter-gatherer bands (Creamer and Haas 1985, 738-741; Earle 1997).

Agriculture intensified the shift towards stratification and social differentiation. Agriculture fosters mechanisms that support the specialization of labor and the emergence of a distinct political class. However, what I find most salient about this is the way that social organization within groups has now become increasingly segmented into separate social bodies.



Rights and expectations became associated with groups within the state, as opposed to a representative set of universal values. Distinct privileges were reserved for powerful groups, priestly classes, aristocratic or wealthy elites. Other groups had limited legal protections, such as peasants, or were reduced to property as slaves.

At the same time, the normative dimensions of society were radically shifted away from the environment in which they first evolved. Notions of 'right' and 'wrong,' moral beliefs about proper forms of conduct, were no longer used to maintain equality and prevent hierarchy, but were put to very distinct ends.

By the emergence of chiefdoms, there were distinct authoritative roles emerging. For a family, these roles were linked through common ancestor, codes of obligation, and agreements as to who could come to represent and lead the family or group. This established a hereditary and customary form of authority. In addition, religion continued to play a central role in social organization and cultural beliefs and practices.

It was with religion that a universal form of authoritative structures of rule and domination were able to be legitimized. Even at the level of simple chiefdoms, we see complex, shared communal efforts to erect religious monuments, such as the construction of megaliths. Stonehenge, for example, was constructed many times by communities that worked on this projects for decades. Sacred space acted as a shared cultural institution, allowing for a shared site of worship and pilgrimage for a large body of social groups with a shared sense of sacred beliefs and rituals. The Puebla civilization that developed out of Chaco Canyon and the Nazca Lines were both formed as pilgrimage sites (Renfrew 2001; Silverman 2004).

Religion was central, as it acted as a mechanism for social cohesion that came to extend beyond a single tribe or chiefdom. Networks of people who shared a similar belief structure would work together for the establishment of sacred institutions and spaces. The temple institutionalized standard religious practices in ceremonies and traditions.

### *Authority*

State formation has taken many distinct forms depending on the region. All functioned by linking state power with mythological and religious sanctification. For Mesopotamia, early states emerged first as temple complexes run by priests. Temples had ceremonial as well as administrative roles, acting as centers of pilgrimages and as marketplaces of exchange. Temples grew very wealthy from donations and patronage, and developed administrative capacities to organize labor projects and to engage in long-distance trade (Lundquist 1982).

In time, the priestly families that ran the first cities of Sumer would be replaced by monarchs. Mesopotamian kings retained the basic armor of temples, as they asserted themselves as representatives of the gods. In Egypt, this process was even more pronounced, as the pharaoh was understood to be a living god.

Hierarchical structures in humans emerged, but they required forms of normative legitimation.

The particular rules and practices of society are secondary to the ways that these are sanctified within a religious narrative that explain the origins of the culture. Its system of practices, laws, and beliefs are a result of divine intervention. What I am focusing on is

not the specifics of practice, but the metatheoretical justification that allows for it to obtain legitimacy and authority.

Direct dominance is unstable and resisted instinctively although some individuals do subordinate themselves to a broader set of normative beliefs structures and the practices of society. Ideologically, human normative values and beliefs can be used to legitimate exploitation and domination.

Importantly, the authority of the monarch linked to a wider cosmological system of gods was the central mechanisms by which the government could function. The monarch served as the representative of these broader religious values and beliefs. This link is the foundational authoritative assertion. Authority is invested in a leader, who is himself acting as a representative of a higher, divine power. As a representative of a divine power, the monarch can invest others with legitimacy to act in his name in the maintenance of public order and governance. Through this link, the monarch can extend authority into a wider set of institutions, rules, practices, and individuals who act in the name of the ruler (Beckman 2003).

At the same time, the power of a state to gain assent and maintain authority within the state was not absolute. By the time that the state emerged, religious and social practices that formed group identities had already developed in communities. We see this in reference to the Hebrews whose beliefs and identity were developed before the emergence of a royal monarch. The tribal structure of the Israelites was established, with a hereditary priestly class, and with religious authorities that were capable of resisting and overthrowing the ruler if necessary.

The Egyptian state was an empire, in that Egypt represented two distinct communities who saw themselves as separate societies, with separate origins. The pharaoh of Egypt, importantly, ruled these two communities not as the ruler of a single community, but as a king of two distinct lands, both governed under his authority. For instance, the Shabaka stone, written during the 25<sup>th</sup> dynasty, continues to make reference to the pharaohs authority over both lands as distinct regions (Kemp 2006, 71-73). The distinctions within the Egyptian community can be seen in the crown of the Egyptian king, which combined the traditional crowns of upper and lower Egypt into a single crown.

Ancient near eastern states and empires were not broad sociopolitical programs to unify their diverse subjects into a common identity. Instead, the states were projects focused on controlling trade routes and accumulating wealth. They functioned by violence and compromise, often through the co-option and subordination of local and regional elites into an imperial system of governance (Tuplin 1987; Balkan 1986).

I do not, therefore, see that emergence of the state as representative of an unquestionable authoritative institution nor its institutional organization as the central means by which complex social systems emerged. Instead, I argue that it is based on the way that group membership established an interlinked and variegated network of relationships that reinforced the establishment of hierarchy for the system.

*Groups, groups, groups!*

Far from a mere view of the ‘state’ as an enforcer of inequality, I argue, it is the subordination of individuals to a complex set of groups—that while organized around the same basic logic as the band—interact in ways that facilitate the emergence of large inequality and social differentiation.

There are two distinct points in the evolution of collective human agency. The first is the development of the group within hunter-gatherer bands. This shared point of reference and coordination allowed for greater forms of interpersonal cooperation among equal members.

As the kinds of social groups increased, however, individual membership to groups became more complex. Human beings are categorized by their group membership, and, within groups, by their familial and class status.

What is salient here, for me, is not that societies grow in complexity nor the distinction between ‘order’ within the state and ‘disorder’ outside the state. Instead, it is that communities can become increasingly integrated without being unified or homogenized. In other words, social relations within a state or region can both act in ways that support, conflict, complete, and reproduce each other. In a sense, this is true of the international system. Anarchy compels states to behave in certain ways. However, this is also true within societies.

Social groups become the preeminent category of reference, as an individual's identities and behavior are linked to rituals, beliefs, and practices that reinforce his social role and position.

Therefore, the symbolic nature of interactions is not limited to the leaders of groups but comes to be the most salient feature of intergroup interactions among all members of societies. Group identity becomes primary among individuals of distinct social membership.

*Social bigotry, difference, and disgust*

Human behavior is highly ritualized, with individuals coming to interact by norms and expectations that redefine the kinds of relationships and expectations they hold. Given the nature of human socialization, as described in a previous chapter, individuals tie their emotions to a wider set of beliefs and practices that are shared as common cultural values and beliefs. Human reasoning is grounded in this basic cultural framework, which is used as a guide to make judgments about appropriate and inappropriate behavior on the basis of a normative rather than a purely strategic calculation.

The capacity of individuals to follow norms and practices is a central component of human nature. However, this mechanism can be used both to facilitate social cooperation as well as to maintain relations of antagonism. Now, one of the most salient features of a social system is that order can be produced in ways that are not ideal but reflect the direct desire of most of its members. The normative dimensions of society

became important, as the emotional system of individuals were linked (Henrich and Boyd 2001, 79-89).

Groups represent normative orders of conduct, habit, and ritual. The loyalty of people to groups is particularized, with identities narrowed into increasingly distinct categories.

Group identities now must establish their distinction from other groups that are deemed inferior. This is done by developing separate and distinct practices and habits. Taboos and injunctions emerge that categorize groups according to standards of purity and impurity, superiority or inferiority. These distinctions alter the relationship within groups as well as between them. Therefore, women are increasingly segregated and marginalized socially as powerful and wealthy men seek to make women into status symbols that demonstrate their capacity to support a wife or wives. In highly confrontational social groupings, powerful emotions such as disgust are now linked to the existence of distinct social groups, beliefs, and practices. As groups, social order is sanctioned by a broader set of moral beliefs and values, other societies' distinctions are often not merely 'different,' but 'evil.' Violent military conquest allows for the development of slaves and the erasure of human beings as a single species with a set of basic rights and dignities (Smith 2007).

Social class, occupation, and kin relations all carry their set of expectations about what individuals should believe, how they must interact, and what their social role is. This frames how people act within their groups and how interactions are organized among individuals with distinct social membership. Individuals are understood as

representations of their groups first, and, only secondly, are they recognized as distinct individuals.

An essential element in the establishment and maintenance of inequality rests on the many ways that individuals are linked within these systems. Many of them are in positions that are not ideal, but also not so onerous that they cannot accept them. Further, the relational nature of human social interaction is such that the distinctions and competition within groups is often greater than concerns regarding inequality among separate groups. Social position is based on our sense of place within immediate social networks rather than an analysis of social systems in general.

The rights of aristocracy, for example, became inherited by a class. Groups formed on the level of class, occupation, and kin; these were also forms of collective representation. The desire to maintain behavior, however, was not done for the sake of maintaining egalitarian social relations within a band, but to preserve the reputation and 'honor' of the group to which one was affiliated.

### *Whither Public Goods?*

The identity of the group provided the individual with a personal identity. In a social system in which identity is found in groups, group affiliation is necessary. As members of a group, individuals can form associations and alliances rapidly and find support networks that have a wide reach. Though individuals are unable to develop close ties with hundreds of people, they can develop forms of support and reciprocity very quickly through their membership to a collective group.



Mancur Olson argues that public goods can only be sustained if individuals are willing to monitor and punish against free riders altruistically. Within the band, that is precisely the dynamic that emerges. We frequently find forms of policing of norms violation and sanctioning of actors who act against the state.

Often in complex societies, individuals are oriented within their particular social group and not towards a broader set of common spaces. In nearly all anarchic states, rule was based on a close relationship to the monarch. Governments were organized around palace politics, not general forums of discussion. The state provided certain essential services, but it represented the interest of a narrow ruling elite, who were often dependent on mercenaries and foreign scribes for the efficient operation of their government, as it was too risky to invest such power into the native population.

Within groups, we see people engaging in altruistic forms of sanctioning and monitoring that act as ways to reinforce social norms. Group membership acts as a stand-in for personal character, as groups serve as a mechanism by which to assess individuals' values, beliefs, and habits.

Individual behavior is understood in terms of group membership. Behaviors that undermine or injure the reputation of the group—be it the family, the tribe, or the faith—are treated as threats to its members' social standing and call for heavy policing and sanction among members of the group. Equally, the individual's interactions with other individuals from other groups is understood in symbolic terms as having importance in the relation between different groups (Mifune, Nobuhiro, et.al 2010, 109-115).

Social policing and monitoring turn within the group for two reasons. First, the group is seen as the embodiment of a shared public good for its members. Secondly, other groups see individuals and their group's actions as basically the same. As the behavior of individuals is reflective of other members, individual actions can produce costs and penalties for all other members. The social system as a whole regulates individual behaviors through a system of interlinked group interactions. Individual behavior is monitored and regulated principally within the group. The social system is now composed of many integrated social groups, acting in ways that are both supportive and competitive. Blood feuds among tribes and systems of violent retribution among groups that spiral into cycles of violence are well known. Intergroup interactions between individuals are understood in terms of their group membership. Behaviors between these individuals that are understood by one group as a violation of basic norms or practices often lead to violent acts against other members of the group, as opposed to against the individual violator. This places great pressure on groups to monitor their own members' behavior as well as that of members of other groups (Fehr, Fischbacher, et.al. 2002, 14-15).

The legal systems of early states and peoples reflect this fundamental principle. Communal liability and reciprocal consequences of transgressor to perpetrator are specified in Deuteronomy, the Code of Hammurabi, and also represent important components of Greek traditional law. *Lex Talionis*, rather than a regressive legal concept, was one that sought to limit the outbreak of violence through proportionality. What is important for my argument, however, is that it demonstrates the ways that group

membership was treated as a central social characteristic even in the development of many early states (Francesco and Dari-Mattiacci 2004, 489-505).

Violence within societies is often greatest against individuals who are seen as violating the basic codes and values that underpin the social order to which they belong. In this way, Socrates was killed by his fellow Athenians; Gandhi was assassinated by a Hindu fundamentalist; Rabin and Sadat were each murdered by religious fanatics from their respective communities.

There is a robust and persistent incentive among group members to enforce social codes and behaviors. This is grounded in the kinds of moral systems that were developed to help maintain the common and public goods of the hunter-gatherer bands, but have been used to often tragic and profoundly negative ends since then (Lanchlan, Janik, et.al. 2004, 561-70)

### *State and Community*

The state and a social community are often distinct. Indeed, it is only on rare occasions that the state and the community have been fused together. This is the central innovation of the Greek polis. It was established again with the emergence of the nation-state in the modern world. Community structures often are more enduring than state systems and are organized in ways that are not dependent on states for the development of complex social interactions.

What interests me here is how relationships that are highly antagonistic can be maintained within societies, indeed, that the linkages and interdependence allow for the perpetuation and stability of highly unequal social hierarchies.

This social process is exemplified by the way that caste has historically functioned in India. The Indian caste system shares affinities with other social class structures, but it departs from them in the way it is able to limit the capacity of military power or economic wealth to alter the fundamental structure of caste.

It is estimated that the Indian subcontinent had the largest economy in the world until roughly 1600. Throughout its history, however, India was subject to conquest and invasion. A key element of this rests on the centrality of caste to the organization of the Indian social order. The centrality of caste vitiated the capacity of a broader social order to emerge. The state lacked the depth to transform its societies in ways that could address external threats, even though it had the population and material resources to do so. Indeed, the two largest religious faiths that emerged from India, Jainism, and Buddhism, were founded by princes who argued against the legitimacy of caste and sought to abolish its function. During this revolutionary period, Chandragupta Maurya, himself with a questionable caste background, was able to establish a large empire and send Buddhist missionaries abroad. Over time, however, Buddhism and Jainism slowly were reincorporated into the dominant social order (Omvedt 2003).

This reincorporation was not based on the abandonment of a specific set of beliefs and practices that were distinct from Hinduism. Indeed, Hinduism represents a very diverse tradition of beliefs and practices. Instead, caste distinctions were established

among virtually all communities within the Hindu social zone, regardless of their particular theological beliefs.

Therefore, we find that in India Muslim and Christian communities are also organized into distinct castes with taboos around intermarriage within lower-ranking castes. Within castes, there are distinct hierarchies and distinctions, just as there are between them. Untouchables reproduce the caste system from which they are excluded by treating other groups of untouchables as ritually unclean and shunning interactions with them (Dumont 1980).

Complex social systems are maintained in ways that perpetuate social distinctions and prevent the emergence of a common space for solidarity, organization, and transformation of the structures of inequality that divide and control the vast majority of individuals. Groups that share similar positions in the hierarchy see each other as competitors rather than allies. The group's practices, identity, and internal monitoring of members reinforces a highly unequal society, though it does so through normative and symbolic systems that were first utilized to establish common social space based on systems of reciprocity, equality, and cooperation.

Groups and systems of groups are often highly entrenched. Cultural practices are not easily altered, as changes in group beliefs and practices threaten to destroy the shared space of action for its members and have implications for the organization of other groups as a whole. The intransigent nature of group structures is reflected in the conflictive nature of state competition, but it is also found in social structures as well. Both, however, are the product of communal consensus, socialization and habitual

reproduction that can be altered through the reorientation of the way agents relate to each other.

The most salient feature of human social organization is our organization around groups. Our capacity to act as members of groups helped drive our cultural and cognitive evolution within the band and the emergence of complex social organization. Human normative values and beliefs continue to be central elements of both processes, but can also foster very distinct social systems.

The Greek polis' revolutionary character rested on its ability to link group identity and membership into a common political institution. Though limited and exclusionary (of women, slaves, and in most cases, the poor), it also reintroduced essential characteristics of equality, cooperation, and solidarity that developed within the band.

## Conclusion

In Chapter 7, I focused on the process of state formation and touched on important developments that occurred during the social development of bands, tribes, chiefdoms, and the state which have implications for international relations theory.

In each stage, I examined the processes at work that allowed for the growth of increasing social complexity and coordination but also established the foundations for the emergence of inequality. I highlighted the way that collective action and groups became the central feature of human interaction and also demonstrated how they helped lead to the emergence of hierarchical, complex social forms of organization.

I traced the changes in human social relations beginning with hunter-gatherer bands that lead to the development of collective intentionality, rule following, and normativity.

I examined how the emergence of the social body as a distinct realm of reality required the subordination of individuals into members of a particular social space, how this was facilitated by the shift in social understanding from behavior to intentions, and how the emergence of a fractured selfhood unified emotional coordination, the emergence of language, and the rise of symbolic representation.

I explained how the band was able to maintain its function as a public good through the development of cognitive adaptations, but also, importantly, through social practices that reinforced the norms of the society. I acknowledged, however, that, over time, man's capacity to form into separate groups acted as a catalyst that helped facilitate the emergence of inequality. In this way, equality and inequality were built from the same primary process, but lead towards radically distinct ends.

I pointed out how, as human social relations became focused on intentionality, and with it, the rise of language and symbolic representation, it not only allowed the band to gain an independent agency, but it was also able to be deployed into the world. Animism and a theory of 'mind' were used to understand not only collective intentions but the random actions of the environment in ways that made them intelligible and meaningful.

I explained how culture acted as a system that helped to reinforce the band, but also served as a mechanism of selection and differentiation among groups allowing some

groups to outcompete rivals. Cultural practices, in turn, became increasingly fixed into traditions that were passed down generationally. This included religion which served as a social mechanism to foster cohesion. Nevertheless, I argued that religion also had the potential to create fissures in early society.

I discussed how the radically normative and symbolic quality of human thought fostered the development of complex cosmological/religious systems that lead to the emergence of shamans which, in turn, introduced inequality in the band.

I explained how tribes emerged through the expansion of kin networks within an interlinked web of mutually-associated bands as human beings became more and more efficient at hunting and foraging, and the size of the population increased. These efficiencies involved both innovations in social organization regarding improved strategies of learning, coordination, and cooperation, as well as technological innovations.

I commented on the increasing ritualization of social relationships into normative roles with an integrated set of codes, norms, and obligations and how, as obligation and association extended into neighboring bands, individuals understood themselves as members of many distinct social groups. This intersecting network of social relationships allowed for increasing dissemination of technical innovations as well as for the development of trade networks.

I showed how chiefs arose as social interactions became more complex and how agriculture further intensified the shift towards stratification and social differentiation.



I explained why what I found most salient about this is the way that social organization within groups became increasingly segmented into separate social bodies. Rights and expectations became associated with groups within the state, as opposed to a representative set of universal values. Distinct privileges were reserved for powerful groups. Hereditary and customary forms of authority began to appear. It was with religion that a universal form of authoritative structures of rule and domination were able to be legitimized. Through shared religion, social cohesion expanded beyond a single tribe or chiefdom. I pointed out that, although state formation has taken many distinct forms, all of them came about by linking state power with mythological and religious sanctification.

I maintained that human behavior is highly ritualized, with individuals coming to interact by norms and expectations used as a guide to make judgments about appropriate and inappropriate behavior on the basis of a normative rather than a purely strategic calculation.

Further, I posited that the relational nature of human social interaction is such that the distinctions and competition within groups are often greater than concerns regarding inequality among separate groups. Social position is based on our sense of place within immediate social networks rather than on an analysis of social systems in general. Social class, occupation, and kin relations all carry their set of expectations about what individuals should believe, how they must interact, and what their social role is. This frames how people act within their groups and how interactions are organized among individuals with distinct social membership. Individuals are understood as

representations of their groups first, and, only secondly, are they recognized as distinct individuals.

I explained how an essential element in the establishment and maintenance of inequality rests on the many ways that individuals are linked within these systems. The relational nature of human social interaction is such that the distinctions and competition within groups is often greater than concerns regarding inequality among separate groups. Social position is based on our sense of place within immediate social networks rather than on an analysis of social systems in general.

I cited evidence from the legal systems of early states to show how group membership was treated as the central social characteristic in the development of many early states. As proof, I gave examples of where violence within societies is often greatest against individuals who are seen as violating the basic codes and values that underpin the social order to which they belong.

I showed that there is a robust and persistent incentive among group members to enforce social codes and behaviors. This is grounded in the kinds of moral systems that were developed to help maintain the common and public goods of the hunter-gatherer bands, but they have been used to often tragic and profoundly negative ends.

I emphasized that state and a social community are often distinct. Indeed, it is only on rare occasions that the state and the community have been fused together: in the innovation of the Greek polis and again with the emergence of the nation-state in the modern world. Thus, community structures often are more enduring than state systems

and are organized in ways that are not dependent on states for the development of complex social interactions.

I pointed out that what interests me is how relationships that are highly antagonistic can be maintained within societies-- indeed, that the linkages and interdependence allow for the perpetuation and stability of highly unequal social hierarchies citing as an example the caste system in India.

I concluded that complex social systems are maintained in ways that perpetuate social distinctions and prevent the emergence of a common space for solidarity, organization, and transformation of the structures of inequality that divide and control the vast majority of individuals. Ironically, it does so through normative and symbolic systems that were first utilized to establish common social space based on systems of reciprocity, equality, and cooperation.

I observed that the most salient feature of human social organization is our organization around groups. Our capacity to act as members of groups helped drive our cultural and cognitive evolution within the band and the emergence of complex social organization. Human normative values and beliefs continue to be central elements of both processes, but can also foster very distinct social systems.

The Greek polis' revolutionary character, I noted, rested on its ability to link group identity and membership into a common political institution. Though limited and exclusionary (of women, slaves, and in most cases, the poor), it also reintroduced essential characteristics of equality, cooperation, and solidarity that developed within the band.

## CHAPTER 8: FROM MYTH TO PHILOSOPHY

### Overview

In Chapter 8, I will investigate the emergence of historical consciousness and political theory in antiquity by examining how ancient writers explained the origins of the human species, human nature, and the development of the state.

I will explain the important role that myths and the gods played in the ancient world and will note that, though the Greeks were influenced by Mesopotamia and Egypt, Greek historical memory extended no further back than the Trojan War. Passed on orally, it was finally incorporated in the writings of Homer and Hesiod.

I will point out how the Western tradition inaugurated by the Greeks is typically embodied in the historical personage of Socrates. He reoriented philosophy away from abstract speculation about the laws and operation of the natural world and to the practical questions of ethics, reason, and politics. Although this continues to be the dominant interpretation, I will assert that the argument has only limited validity and that only through the arguments of the Presocratics can Plato's philosophical system be made intelligible.

I will note how a poet's work was a public and performed act whose power resided in the artist's capacity to reaffirm the traditions, beliefs, and values of the community in powerful ways.

I will analyze how Hesiod separated the world into distinct periods, each marked by the existence of a race of humankind all of which were subject to destruction. I will argue that Hesiod's two extant works, *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*, provide insight into the cosmological beliefs of the Greeks. In *Theogony*, the genealogy of the gods is presented, yet the origin of humankind is never clearly stated.

I will argue that western political systems and philosophy owe much to Greek myths and the proper interpretation of their meaning with respect to the frailties of humankind.

For example, the sequence in Hesiod's divisions signal the shift from pure myth to a mythological past that contained elements of an actual history. I will comment on Hesiod's view that destruction would come when the traditions and values of the culture were abandoned. The failure to heed the call of justice, to act with respect to other members of one's community, and to recognize a good man from a bad one would result in the destruction of the entire race of iron. Hesiod's ages of man is cyclical, but not inevitable. It was dependent on the choices that men made.

I will state that Hesiod's cosmogony was secularized by the Presocratics. In its place, the Presocratics offered theories on the origin of the world, the gods, and humankind. Theories of human nature have played a central role in political theories. To define human nature, however, theorists found it necessary to locate its essence in an

original state. Political theories of the state and humanity, I will maintain, always had to advance a theory of human origins.

I will point out how Homer's treatment of Agamemnon is a reflection of how kingship was explained and understood in the Ancient Greek world. Greek culture was defined by ambiguities that forced the mind to seek more concrete answers to the fundamental questions of life, propelling its intellectual development in powerful and profoundly consequential directions.

I will show how historical consciousness emerged from three interrelated developments. Greeks moved away from the practice of kingship towards the emergence of city-states governed by their citizens. The role of a constitution and a lawgiver became central points of both intellectual investigation and practical politics. The emergence of Greek tragedy as a civic form of education and entertainment fostered a critical engagement with Greek myth.

I will examine how the development of the polis created a sense of Greek identity. Although they were independent states, their common Greek culture and shared political values united them in a common culture. I will argue that, in a world filled with city-states governed by distinct constitutions, the success and stability of particular city-states was attributed to the constitutional and cultural practices they had developed.

I will point out how the mixed nature of colonies, by which different communities were eager to maintain their practices and traditions, encouraged lawgivers to find fruitful compromises. The best features of distinct legal systems could be combined and the least useful practices discarded.

I will show how, in the case of both Solon and Lycurgus, we find the model of individuals who seek to reconcile the contradictions and competing interests of the state and the individual. The source of their wisdom is found in moderation, but also in the application of historical observation and learning.

I will comment on the contributions of both Athens and Sparta, Solon's constitutional reforms, and Sparta's innovation authored by Lycurgus. He sought equality among the Spartans. He believed that a government needs authority, but it also requires wide assent and participation, as well as wisdom and passion. Lycurgus found a way to blend monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Therefore, in Sparta, kingship would be limited by the establishment of two royal houses. I will also point out how in Sparta, the authority of the state came through socialization, how the communal nature of the system was also expressed in its economic system that sought to minimize inequality and differentiation among its citizens by having a form of money that was unique and only functional within Sparta itself. I will comment on how, in Sparta, Lycurgus shifted the focus of loyalty from individuals or groups to the state above all. I will affirm that this was a remarkable innovation. Thus, Lycurgus broke the inevitable cycle of altering political forms and civil factionalism by combining elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy into a single constitutional order.

Finally, I will briefly examine drama, addressing the role Greek tragedy played in mining myths for truths about the human condition. I will posit that playwrights were able to do so because there was no priestly caste. Playwrights were allowed to reinterpret well-known myths.

In short, Athenians believed that people only learn wisdom through suffering, but people can learn wisdom from watching the suffering of others in a tragedy.

*Greece Classical Literature and the Emergence of Political Theory and History*

I will briefly investigate the emergence of historical consciousness and political theory in antiquity. I approach this topic by seeking to identify the ways that ancient writers explained the origins of the human species and the development of the state. To identify the origins of man was to establish a point that could identify human nature, either as a static and unfixed reality, or one that altered through the development of civilization. The state, as the point of communal authority, represented human capacities in both their best and most negative light. Positively, it demonstrated the inherent need and desire humans possessed to live within society. Negatively, the emergence of law was a testament to the weakness of human nature to act virtuously without the threat of punishment.

All traditional societies had a shared catalogue of myths that explained the origin of the world and the gods. In the Near East, for instance, mythologies were central to the legitimation of the power structures. Priests and kings were believed to be in communion with the gods and to act as intermediaries. The creation story of the Babylonians, *Enuma Elish*, was recited in a public ceremony when the king reaffirmed his claim to the throne. Equally, the Torah was a document that not only gave an explanation for the origins of the world and the human, but also elaborated the relationship between God and his chosen people as one of a covenant.



The Greeks were deeply influenced by the cultures of Mesopotamia and Egypt. There are, however, salient differences. The oldest Greek literary texts are the works of Homer and Hesiod. The historical memory of the Greek people, passed on in oral traditions before finally being canonized in a set of writings, extends no further back than to the Trojan War.

The Western tradition that was inaugurated by the Greeks is typically embodied in the historical personage of Socrates. He is considered to have reoriented philosophy away from abstract speculation about the laws and operation of the natural world to the practical questions of ethics, reason, and politics. Though this continues to be the dominant interpretation, the argument has only limited validity. Furthermore, it is only through the arguments of the Presocratics that Plato's philosophical system is made intelligible.

### *Hesiod and the Ages of Humankind*

Poets evoked the muses. A poet's work was a public and performed act. Its power did not reside in the singular creativity of an artist, but in his capacity to reaffirm the traditions, beliefs, and values of the community in powerful ways. Homer's epics contain details of an era that Homer could never have directly witnessed or experienced, such as the use of chariots in war and the structure of ships that were no longer in use in his time.

Hesiod separated the world into distinct periods, each marked by the existence of a race of humankind. These divisions gave a temporal quality to history. All the races of humankind, including those of Hesiod's time, were subject to destruction due to their

own failings. Hesiod's two extant works, *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*, provide insight into the cosmological beliefs of the Greeks as well as a window into the mundane concerns of individuals.

*Theogony* explains the genealogy of the gods. It does not give a clear explanation of the world because the gods are as much a process born of the world as are men themselves. The gods are the products of the universe rather than its generators. Within *Theogony*, however, there is a stunning omission. The origins of humankind are never clearly stated. This absence speaks clearly to the ambiguous and difficult relationship the Greeks had with their theological concepts. The world was a place of struggle and strife.

After the appearance of man on earth, men and gods had a celebratory dinner in the halls of Mekone. The division of the meat in the celebration would establish the way future sacrifices were to be divided when men worshiped the gods. It was here that Prometheus first did great service to mankind. Prometheus arranged the meat to trick Zeus, hiding the best and most nutritious meat in the stomach of the animal and making the bones and fat seem the more appetizing. Zeus chose the poorer meats. In light of this trick, he denied man the use of fire. Prometheus, in order to save mankind, stole fire from Mount Olympus and delivered it to mankind. In response, Zeus sent Pandora in particular and women in general to trouble men all of their lives (*Theogony* 535-605). The survival of man depended on the intelligence of Prometheus.

The world was a place of struggle and strife. *Theogony* elaborated the struggle for power among the gods. *Works and Days* reinforced *Theogony*; it also articulated a vision of history that divided the world into five ages. Each age was based on a distinct race of

men who embodied qualities. In each case, the race either receded from the living world or destroyed itself in struggle.

The world of the gods underwent cycles of destruction and contests of power. From chaos emerged the gods who joined in sexual union and produced children. The first gods were Gaia and Ouranos. The root word for Ouranos is water. Equally, the root word for Gaia is earth. Therefore, when Thales began his arguments about the arche of the world as water, he did not deviate vastly from the mythology, but simply secularized a myth to focus on the material property that the god had previously been said to represent.

Ouranos ruled over his family, acting cruelly to his children. Gaia plotted with her children to overthrow their father, Kronos. Born from the union of water and earth, Kronos embodied time. It was from Kronos that our words for time, such as chronology, derive. Kronos, wielding a weapon forged by Gaia, castrated Ouranos and assumed power (*Theogony* 170-190). Ouranos had feared his children, and rightly. Kronos also came to fear that his power would be subverted by his children.

Zeus' mother was able to trick Kronos into believing that he had eaten their son. Zeus escaped into a cave in Crete and waited until he grew strong enough to overthrow his father, Ouranos (*Theogony* 470-520). Zeus faced threats against his supremacy from titans and from his own sons. Zeus' child with Metis, his first wife, threatened to have the skill and wisdom to overthrow his rule. Following the council of Gaia and Ouranos, Zeus swallowed Metis while she was pregnant with Athena. He incorporated Athena's wisdom and strength, also giving birth to Athena through his head. In this way, through council

and the ability to incorporate others' strength, Zeus was able to break the cycle of the gods. Athena was powerful but barren and would forever remain a virgin; thus, she was incapable of producing a new lineage of gods to challenge Zeus who possessed her reproductive power (*Theogony* 885-895).

Western political systems and philosophy owe much to Greek myths and the proper interpretation of their meaning with respect to the frailties of humankind.

The cycles of the gods were linked to those of mankind itself. Hesiod's *Works and Days* was deeply theological, but it also possessed a significant historical and ethical dimension. Hesiod established a theory of the five ages of men. Each age was ruled by a distinct race of men associated with a metal. At the time of Kronos, a golden race of men lived happily without disease or struggle. Food could be easily gathered from the land, and mankind had an abundant supply of sheep (*Works and Days* 110-120). The past races had been destroyed or transformed.

The golden race was 'covered by the earth' and now existed as spirits that acted as guardians of mankind. A new race, the silver race, arose. The race of silver was childish and ignorant, living most of its life in infancy, and only having a few short years of maturity before dying in a late blooming adulthood. The members of the silver race neglected the gods, customs, and moderation. They also engaged in frequent violence. These were also covered by the earth. In punishment for their transgressions, its members were sent to inhabit the underworld. (*Works and Days* 128-140). The next race, the men of bronze, were very strong in body and will. Warlike and without culture, they were men who did not 'eat bread.' They destroyed each other in war until they were all cast into

Hades for eternity (*Works and Days* 173- 185). The sequence in Hesiod's divisions signal the shift from pure myth to a mythological past that contained elements of an actual history.

The race of heroes of Greek mythology, whom Hesiod directly stated were created by Zeus, were of the generation that fought at Troy. They were the demi-gods and the great heroes of Greek legend such as Odysseus. They were also destroyed by war (*Works and Days* 155-170). In Hesiod's day, the world was inhabited by the race of iron. They lived lives of toil, struggling for all of their existence. They would one day be destroyed as had been all the other races that preceded them. The destruction would result from the inability of people to respect tradition and each other, to live with justice, to show compassion to strangers, to observe their responsibilities towards their parents, and to maintain oaths to friends (*Works and Days* 187-196). Cities were destroyed by moral corruption. Hesiod elaborated on this by stating:

Each other's cities; gratitude shall no man then enjoy  
Who righteously serves justice and who keeps his oath, but him  
Who's wicked and does violence-that man they will esteem.  
Might shall make right: the evil man his better will subdue  
By speaking crooked words and swearing oaths upon them too  
(*Works and Days* 190-195).

In the face of calamity, it was the fool who abandoned justice and honesty. They acted from recklessness, destroying themselves in the process.

Who keep the paths of justice straight, whatever may ensue,  
For them the city flourishes-its people thrive therefore;  
Peace that nurtures children reigns throughout the land, and war  
With all its woes is not ordained by Zeus who sees afar  
(*Works and Days* 225-230).

Justice was to be found within the hearts of men, placed there by Zeus himself. Unlike other animals which can turn on their own species and eat each other, men should have justice as their guide (*Works and Days* 275-280). The failure to heed the call of justice, to act with respect to other members of one's community, and to recognize a good man from a bad one would result in the destruction of the entire race of iron. Hesiod's ages of man is cyclical, but not inevitable. It was dependent on the choices that men made. Hesiod focused on the capacity of men to control their lives by the choices they made. This was as true for farmers who were focused on their land as for citizens who preserved justice in their city. Zeus' destruction of the men of iron would only occur as a result of human action. Hesiod's cosmogony was secularized by the Presocratics. In its place, the Presocratics offered theories on the origin of the world, the gods, and humankind.

Theories of human nature have played a central role in political theories. To define human nature, however, theorists found it necessary to locate its essence in an original state. Political theories of the state and humanity, therefore, always had to advance a theory on human origins.

The next section will be devoted to how this question was examined by philosophers of antiquity.

Greek historical memory did not extend beyond the world depicted in Homer's *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*. The historical migration of the Dorians into Greece from the north, the 'sons of Hercules,' preceded the actions and personages of the Homeric world. Homer's epics, in contrast to Hesiod's works, do not directly explain Greek cosmology.

Homer was a poet who found powerful and enduring ways to narrate the oral history of the Trojan War in a powerful, enduring narrative. Many elements of these epics provided historical information, but they were not historical in purpose or reflection.

There is debate about what kind of society is depicted in Homer's epic. To many, it echoes the Mycenaean kings who were destroyed by migrating forces such as the Sea People and the Dorians. To others, the poem is a reflection of a dark age that followed the destruction of Mycenaean civilization. Whatever the case, the poem depicted communities that were rural and organized around strong, militaristic chieftains who assembled kinsman and retainers in war. Their leadership depended on their capacity to lead in battle and to win booty which they could distribute among their network of supporters.

I will focus on Homer's treatment of Agamemnon as a reflection of how kingship was explained and understood in the Ancient Greek world. Agamemnon was presented in *The Iliad* as a leader of the expedition to Troy, a powerful king with authority over the other Greek kings. Agamemnon wielded a scepter forged by the gods which had been passed from the hands of Zeus down to the human until it finally came into the possession of Agamemnon (II. 115-30). The source of Agamemnon's authority was never fully explained. Agamemnon commanded the greatest forces and contributed the greatest ships and soldiers. His power was both recognized and challenged. Though Agamemnon had the right, by fear and tradition, to command others, his leadership was resented and questioned.

The gods and humans were closely bound together. Humans struggled against each other, just as the gods themselves struggled against each other.

Agamemnon, therefore, was depicted as a transgressor against both humans and the gods. Kingship was portrayed in very ambiguous ways in *The Iliad*. Agamemnon's seizure of Achilles' concubine was an expression of power, meant to demonstrate that, as the supreme king, he could make demands and take by right the goods of even the greatest of warriors (II. 215-22). The legitimacy of Agamemnon's kingship was resented, questioned, and challenged by a host of characters in *The Iliad*.

Achilles' portrayal of Agamemnon as a devourer of people is critical. As in Hesiod, in Homer, humans were distinct from animals through their abstention from cannibalism. To consume another, in metaphorical terms, was to break the most central bond of justice (II. 245-280).

Cannibalism is a consistent motif of barbarity and animality for Archaic Greek poets. The death of Hector fails to bring Achilles peace. It is only after Priam visits Achilles, when Achilles recognizes Priam as similar to his own father, and each can identify how both are mourning the death of someone they love, that Achilles can once again integrate himself into the community of warriors to which he belongs. Achilles has accepted his death, but he has also embraced his humanity.

The complexity of *The Odyssey* is too rich to be discussed fully within this chapter. Instead, I want to highlight elements of Homer's work that contrast distinct forms of community. This is most clearly manifested in the story of the Phaiakians and the Cyclopes. The Phaiakians represent the embodiment of a noble society. They are skilled



agriculturalists and sailors who join to guide their ships across the seas as well as to celebrate common feasts and festivals. In addition, they observe the laws of all civilized people, extending hospitality to guests, always maintaining the reputation and customs of their ancestors. They live in 'high-roofed' palaces, with mechanical dogs built by Hephaestus to guard the palace of Alkinoos. (Book 7, 80-95). They offer immediate hospitality to Odysseus (*Odyssey* Book 7, 190-200).

In contrast to the Phaiacians, Homer has Odysseus recount his encounter with the Cyclopes. The Cyclopes, though semi-divine beings, represent for the Greeks the original state of man before civilization. The Cyclopes live in a land with fertile soil, but lack the knowledge and skill to cultivate the soil. Instead, they live principally on the milk and flesh of their sheep, gathering whatever wild fruit is available. They engage neither in trade nor agriculture. Their lives are very solitary. They live in isolated mountain caves and never gather in common assemblies or celebrations. Cyclopes lack a sense of community and religiosity. They lack boats and never venture to sea. They do not worship the gods. Instead, each male Cyclops acts as the patriarch of his family and is the absolute judge and arbitrator over the lives of his wife and children. This patriarchy is described as "rough justice" by Homer. Such a state resembles the primordial family of the gods under the leadership of Ouranos, as described by Hesiod. (*Odyssey* Book 9, 110-20). When introducing the Cyclopes, Odysseus refers to them as the most religious, since they are entirely dependent on the natural abundance of nature to provide them with food. Civilization, therefore, both cultivates a sense of religiosity, as well as moves people

away from a total dependence on the will of the gods to provide for their care and well-being (Odyssey Book 9, 105-10).

Laws, a fear of the gods, and the practice of hospitality are the hallmarks of civilization. In obedience to Zeus, a stranger who enters one's home must be offered food and shelter.

Homer's most enduring artistic achievement, I think, was to give stories that were beautiful, complex, and ambiguous. Greek culture was defined by ambiguities that forced the mind to seek more concrete answers to the fundamental questions of life, propelling its intellectual development in powerful and profoundly consequential directions.

Hesiod's ages of the human, though mythological, captured a much wider vision of human life as subject to birth and destruction. Humans of iron were neither the first beings created on earth nor the best. Homer's work lacks a historical consciousness. Ionian scientific theories, however, were increasingly being studied across the Greek world. The natural cosmology of the Ionians secularized the creation stories. Questions of human history and human nature became increasingly pertinent.

The emergence of historical consciousness emerged from three interrelated developments. Greeks moved away from the practice of kingship towards the emergence of city-states governed by their citizens. The role of a constitution and a lawgiver become central points of both intellectual investigation and practical politics. Third, the emergence of Greek tragedy as a civic form of education and entertainment fostered a critical engagement with Greek myth.

The polis provided, not merely the institution around which Greeks would organize their lives, but also the mechanism by which they would distinguish themselves from others. Culturally, no common identity united the people of Greece. They understood themselves tribally. Thucydides remarked that Homer provided evidence of this absence by never using the term Hellenes or barbarians. A sense of the barbarian was only developed once there was an alternative, common designator for Greeks to hold collectively (Thucydides 1.3).

Brown made a critical observation regarding the unique elements of Herodotus' *Histories*. Herodotus was from Asia Minor, a Greek cultural area that had first developed the intellectual theories of the Ionians. The Greeks of Asia Minor were in regular contact with the civilizations of Mesopotamia and Egypt. They understood how much older these cultures were. They learned and developed their medical, astronomical, and cosmological theories from them. The intellectual contribution of the Ionians was brought to a close with the Ionian rebellion and the ruthless suppression of the insurrection by the Persians. The Athenians and Spartans, in contrast, were more isolated from their eastern neighbors. The success of the Greeks in the Persian wars bolstered their sense of superiority. In addition, the Greek migration to the West brought them increasingly into contact with people whose economic and political lives were much simpler in comparison. Therefore, the Greek sense of superiority is not a product of its contact with eastern neighbors, but of its steady movement westward (Brown 1962, 258-59).

The Greeks had a sense of history. The Trojan War was seen as the last episode of the heroic age when characters were closer to the gods. These people were also seen as

the ancestors of people alive at the time. In addition, the ruins of Mycenaean palaces were sources of great speculation for 5th century Greeks who understood these ruins to be the work of an ancient civilization with monumental structures that at times exceeded their own.

Though skeptical of knowledge of the past, Thucydides treated *The Iliad* as true. That said, Thucydides was capable of seeking a detached historical perspective. For instance, the ruins of Mycenaean palaces were visible in his time. The wealth of these ancient kings had vanished and the ruins themselves could not give a fair account of these kings' power or status. Therefore, in some distant future, though Athens and Sparta were two powerful states, a visitor to the cities would never be able to grasp the power of Sparta from the simplicity of its village structures while Athenian monumental architecture would seduce the visitor into ascribing to it a greatness beyond reality (Thucydides 1.9-1.11).

Ancient Greek culture developed within a highly stimulating set of historical and social factors. Greek city-states emerged as independent political bodies that were highly zealous of their independence. The Greek concept of freedom focused on the ability of a **male citizen** to live under laws. Now, it is important to always remember how limited the Greek polis was, limiting or outright denying the rights of women, slaves, and non-citizens to participate in democracy. But it is also important to recognize that it set the stage for moral progress and the expansion of the civil sphere. Citizens were intimate with the legal customs and practices of the times.

By the time of the Greek enlightenment, the Greek city-states had experienced hundreds of years of continuous colonization across the Mediterranean world. Colonies were organized as independent city-states; they were autonomous, self-governing political units ruled by the collective authority of their citizens. Although they were independent states, their common Greek culture and shared political values united them in a common culture (White 1961, 443-54).

Innovative ideas and practices quickly spread across the Greek world through trade, migration, and education. In a world filled with city-states governed by distinct constitutions, the success and stability of particular city-states was attributed to the constitutional and cultural practices they had developed. Colonies were established by cities facing population pressures, but colonial populations were typically heterogeneous populations from different Greek city-states.

In addition, unlike the complex empires to their east, the Greeks lacked a well-organized priesthood independent of the community to authoritatively interpret a body of sacred texts and to monopolize the right to perform rituals (Lloyd-Jones 2001, 461-62). Greek religious mythology was constantly retold and altered by poets and playwrights. The taking of artistic license and novel renditions of a tale were not only tolerated but expected. Greeks were politically active and intellectually conscious of how laws were formed; they took nothing for granted.

Each colony required a constitution with which to organize its settlers into a coherent political body, to bring them all under a single set of rules, practices, and civic-religious rituals. In this way, political theory had immediate and practical applications.

The constitutions of states were not theoretical exercises, but practical necessities. If a colony were to prosper, it required the best system of law and government. The mixed nature of colonies, by which different communities were eager to maintain their practices and traditions, encouraged lawgivers to find fruitful compromises. The best features of distinct legal systems could be combined and the least useful practices discarded.

In practice, Greek city-states underwent frequent periods of instability, shifting back and forth from tyranny, to oligarchy, and to democracy.

Authority in the polis resided in the community as a whole. Citizenship centered around service to the military. Authority within the polis could be arranged from oligarchy to democracy. Tyranny often could emerge, but tyranny, though common, was viewed in a highly negative light; it was seen as a form of lawlessness and oppression—as the will one individual chose for a community without regard to law or consent.

#### Athens and Sparta

In the case of both Solon and Lycurgus, we find the model of individuals who seek to reconcile the contradictions and competing interests of the state and the individual. The source of their wisdom is found in moderation, but also in the application of historical observation and learning.

Athens was one of the longest, continuously-existing Ionian settlements. It had not been subject—as had many of the city-states of the Peloponnese or Anatolia—to foreign conquest or to unending warfare with its neighboring states. Its domestic politics, however, were highly fractious. While no longer governed by monarchs, the Athenian oligarchy was perpetually threatened by the possibility of revolution from the poor and

marginalized segments of the population. It was also potentially at risk from the ambitions of individuals who wished to become tyrants.

The gulf between rich and poor had grown so vast that a noble of modest means, Solon, was given the power to rewrite the constitution.

The political system of Athens was organized into three distinct factions: the Party of the Plane, the Party of the Coast, and the Party of the Hill, organized geographically but expressing the different classes with their own set of interests and ambitions. Part of the coastal population were merchants, not aristocrats. Part of the population in the plane were aristocratic landowners. The Party of the Hill was composed of the poorest and most marginalized—those who were falling prey to debt, debt slavery, and persistent poverty (Plutarch, *Life of Solon*).

The gulf between rich and poor had grown vast. The interests of the merchants and aristocrats were always at odds. A noble of modest means, Solon, was given the power to rewrite the constitution. Solon was an aristocrat whose family had lost money. He became active as a merchant and became wealthy. As a merchant, Solon traveled. He used these travels as a way to learn, and he saw learning as the greatest duty of the individual.

Solon's constitutional reforms included the abolition of debt and debt slavery, as well as the return of all citizens who had been sold into slavery abroad. Agricultural exports were regulated to prevent food prices from rising beyond the reach of ordinary citizens. Fathers were obliged to teach each of their sons a trade; other than this, fathers did not have an obligation to sustain their sons as an adult. Solon believed that this would

encourage commerce. Solon also fomented economic expansion by allowing the migration of skilled workers and merchants. While Solon declared that only the wealthiest class of citizens could hold public office, he established that every Athenian be given the right to vote in elections and to serve on juries. The largest questions of state, such as war, were decided in the assembly. The Areopagus, a court, could overrule a law passed in the assembly. The 400, an assembly chosen by lot, prepared all laws and motions before they were presented to the assembly. Solon also sought to improve the knowledge base of Athens. People who had skills could move to Athens and become Athenian citizens (Plutarch, *Life of Solon*).

After completing his reforms, Solon removed himself from Athens and travelled the world for a decade. He spent time learning from other cultures, such as the Egyptian where he learned about Atlantis. He also spent time with King Croesus. Their encounter became an enduring Greek cultural motif (Shapiro 1996, 348-56).

Solon's constitutional reforms redistributed land, altered the practice of debt slavery, increased the size of juries, and divided classes by wealth. His reforms gave the right to act as government officials to members of the highest social class, but his reforms also ensured that all citizens had the right to vote. These reforms, however, did little to address the underlying problems. Athens soon came under the rule of the tyrant Pisistratus (French 1956, 11-25).

Sparta, unique among Greek cities, had seemingly found a way out of the inevitable flux. Sparta's stability was a product of its way of uniting governmental, class,



and individual interests in a novel governmental form. The authorship of this innovation is attributed to Lycurgus.

Lycurgus is said to be the uncle of the future king of Sparta. To avoid the suspicion that he sought to take power, he set off on a journey across the Mediterranean. He traveled to Crete where there were also Dorian Greeks and witnessed their austere form of life; he then viewed how the Ionian Greeks lived in luxury. He visited Egypt and observed the special role of the military. He travelled to Egypt, Libya, and even as far as India. By comparing and learning from the diverse governments of the ancient world, he could forge a new system that would endure (Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*).

Lycurgus sought equality among the Spartans. He believed that a government needs authority, but it also requires wide assent and participation, as well as wisdom and passion. Lycurgus found a way to blend monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Therefore, in Sparta, kingship would be limited by the establishment of two royal houses. Kings would have limited authority domestically but absolute command in battle. Sparta would also have a general assembly. Votes put before it would be decided by the group that beat their shields the loudest (De Laix 1974, 21-30).

The Gerousia would embody the aristocratic spirit. It would be a committee of twenty-eight members who would serve for life, including the two kings who could veto laws introduced by the general assembly. The Gerousia would uphold the power of the kings, but it had the ability to remove the king—should he act against the traditions and interests of the state. Ephors, though an innovation introduced after Lycurgus, were open

to all Spartans. There were a total of five members who served for a year. They were chosen by the assembly of Spartans to act as mediators between people and kings.

In Sparta, the authority of the state came through socialization. Thus, central features of Spartan life were education—a key to instilling civic virtue—and social institutions. Ephors granted or rejected a child as a citizen, not the father. At age seven, Spartan boys joined a small band with whom they would work closely. Twelve boys joined the band permanently. Eighteen graduated from their band. There were also eating clubs in which Spartan men lived until age sixty.

War was critical to Spartan development, but Spartans were not encouraged to make war willy-nilly. Spartans ruled over the Helots. Helots, however, were the slaves of the state as a whole and not of individual Spartans. The communal nature of the system was also expressed in its economic system that sought to minimize inequality and differentiation among its citizens by having a form of money that was unique and only functional within Sparta itself. Therefore, Spartans were not allowed to have gold and silver: iron spits were the only kind of money they had (Cartledge, 2003).

In Sparta, Lycurgus shifted the focus of loyalty from individuals or groups to the state, above all. This was a remarkable innovation.

Thus, Lycurgus broke the inevitable cycle of altering political forms and civil factionalism by combining elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy into a single constitutional order. A new, public form of education was designed to instill a civic ethos into the citizen body. It was forbidden to write down in a standard, explicitly legal code, the Great Rhetra, the law under which the Spartans lived. Instead, the Spartan

constitution was embodied in the customs and rights of the people; these were transmitted through oral education and made manifest and intelligible through the social practice of the subjects. Spartans were both the subjects of the law and its enforcers. They were free by virtue of their general submission to a common life.

### *Greek Tragedy*

In Greek tragedy, the works of Aeschylus and Euripides attest to a growing curiosity about man's earliest condition and about how culture had emerged. In *Prometheus Bound*, Aeschylus depicted man as without wisdom or understanding, unable to build shelters or to predict the changing of the seasons. Prometheus gave man not simply fire, but also knowledge. Prometheus taught mankind astronomy and mathematics, shipbuilding, writing, and horseback riding (*Prometheus Bound*, 459-62). Aeschylus' depiction of writing as a recorder of things was critical since it established the purpose of writing as linked with the preservation of past events. Though much of this was still linked to poetry, even poetry had begun to take on increasingly historical dimensions. Euripides in *The Suppliants* had Theseus praise the establishment of the city. By virtue of language and reason, human beings had been able to develop in material wealth, and engage in trade with other regions of the world for those goods which the native soil lacked. Human nature was neither good nor bad, but it was subject to change and alteration (*Suppliants*, 195-215).

Theatre was an important innovation. Therefore, the development of the chorus and the theater provided new ways of approaching the myths, often in ways that help to

humanize their characters. In addition to critically engaging with myth, we find the emergence of more contemporary issues such as the comedies of Aristophanes and Aeschylus' *The Persians*, a work of recent history, in which Aeschylus himself had been a participant.

To seek to find a lesson in the story, to make drama edifying, salient, and transformative, plays were not merely forms of entertainment, but they were also part of civic duties. Athenian citizens were paid to attend. Therefore, though they operated with mythological themes set in the distant past, the content of the works sought to resonate and to speak directly to contemporary moral and political issues.

Athenian democracy rested on the idea that every citizen should be as active as possible in democracy. Athenians understood that they had to educate themselves in the responsibilities of freedom. Tragedy was a form of education: a morality tale, a deeply religious experience.

In short, Athenians believed that people only learn wisdom through suffering, but people can learn wisdom by watching the suffering of others in a tragedy.

## Conclusion

In Chapter 8, I investigated the emergence of historical consciousness and political theory in antiquity by examining how ancient writers explained the origins of the human species, human nature, and the development of the state.

I explained the important role that myths and the gods played in the ancient world and noted that, though the Greeks were influenced by Mesopotamia and Egypt, Greek historical memory extended no further back than the Trojan War. Passed on orally, it was finally incorporated in the writings of Homer and Hesiod.

I pointed out how the Western tradition inaugurated by the Greeks is typically embodied in the historical personage of Socrates. He reoriented philosophy away from abstract speculation about the laws and operation of the natural world and to the practical questions of ethics, reason, and politics. Although this continues to be the dominant interpretation, I asserted that the argument has only limited validity and that only through the arguments of the Presocratics can Plato's philosophical system be made intelligible.

I noted how a poet's work was a public and performed act whose power resided in the artist's capacity to reaffirm the traditions, beliefs, and values of the community in powerful ways.

I analyzed how Hesiod separated the world into distinct periods, each marked by the existence of a race of humans all of which were subject to destruction. I argued that Hesiod's two extant works, *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*, provide insight into the cosmological beliefs of the Greeks. In *Theogony*, the genealogy of the gods is presented, yet the origin of humankind is never clearly stated.

I argued that western political systems and philosophy owe much to Greek myths and to the proper interpretation of their meaning with respect to the frailties of humankind. For example, the sequence in Hesiod's divisions signal the shift from pure myth to a mythological past that contained elements of an actual history. I commented on

Hesiod's view that destruction would come when the traditions and values of the culture were abandoned. The failure to heed the call of justice, to act with respect to other members of one's community, and to recognize a good man from a bad one would result in the destruction of the entire race of iron. Hesiod's ages of man are cyclical, but not inevitable. It was dependent on the choices that men made.

I stated that Hesiod's cosmogony was secularized by the Presocratics. In its place, the Presocratics offered theories on the origin of the world, the gods, and humankind. Theories of human nature played a central role in political theories. To define human nature, however, theorists found it necessary to locate its essence in an original state. Political theories of the state and humanity, I maintained, always had to advance a theory on human origins.

I pointed out how Homer's treatment of Agamemnon is a reflection of how kingship was explained and understood in the Ancient Greek world. Greek culture was defined by ambiguities that forced the mind to seek more concrete answers to the fundamental questions of life, propelling its intellectual development in powerful and profoundly consequential directions.

I showed how historical consciousness emerged from three interrelated developments. Greeks moved away from the practice of kingship towards the emergence of city-states governed by their citizens. The role of a constitution and a lawgiver become central points of both intellectual investigation and practical politics. The emergence of Greek tragedy as a civic form of education and entertainment fostered a critical engagement with Greek myth.

I examined how the development of the polis created a sense of Greek identity. Although they were independent states, their common Greek culture and shared political values united them in a common culture. I argued that, in a world filled with city-states governed by distinct constitutions, the success and stability of particular city-states was attributable to the constitutional and cultural practices they had developed.

I commented on how the mixed nature of colonies, in which different communities were eager to maintain their practices and traditions, encouraged lawgivers to find fruitful compromises. The best features of distinct legal systems could be combined and the least useful practices discarded.

I will show how, in the case of both Solon and Lycurgus, we find the model of individuals who seek to reconcile the contradictions and competing interests of the state and the individual. The source of their wisdom is found in moderation, but also in the application of historical observation and learning.

I will comment on the contributions of both Athens and Sparta, Solon's constitutional reforms, and Sparta's innovation authored by Lycurgus. He sought equality among the Spartans. He believed that a government needs authority, but it also requires wide assent and participation, as well as wisdom and passion. Lycurgus found a way to blend monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. Therefore, in Sparta, kingship would be limited by the establishment of two royal houses. I will also point out how in Sparta, the authority of the state came through socialization, how the communal nature of the system was also expressed in its economic system that sought to minimize inequality and differentiation among its citizens by having a form of money that was unique and only

functional within Sparta itself. I will comment on how, in Sparta, Lycurgus shifted the focus of loyalty from individuals or groups to the state above all. I will affirm that this was a remarkable innovation. Thus, Lycurgus broke the inevitable cycle of altering political forms and civil factionalism by combining elements of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy into a single constitutional order.

Finally, I will briefly examine drama and the role Greek tragedy played in mining myths for truths about the human condition. I will affirm that they were able to do so because there was no priestly caste. Playwrights were allowed to reinterpret well-known myths.

In short, Athenians believed that people only learn wisdom through suffering, but people can learn wisdom by watching the suffering of others in a tragedy.



## **CHAPTER 9: THE BIRTH OF POLITICS IN THE GREEK POLIS**

### Overview

In Chapter 9, I will examine the importance of the Kantian revolution with respect to the contribution of space and time to making the world intelligible. I will assert that, for individuals, the events, processes, and changes in the world are organized in relation to the self.

I will identify the three stages through which humanity's relationship to history has passed: biological development, the rise of civilization, and the development of complex forms of political authority and forms of organization. I will observe that, for most social scientists, the history of humankind is analogous with the history of civilization. .

I will note that history, as an intellectual exercise, as a philosophically mediated reflection on our relationship to the past, only emerged later and under rather curious circumstances.

I will maintain that history developed in relation to a specific institutional practice. The Greek state lead to related innovations: the development of politics as a communal form of social organization, and to history and political theory as intellectual disciplines.

I will observe how political theory is a distinct form of reasoning since it is interested chiefly in communal issues. It seeks to unite people in a community of mutually linked individuals. It thinks in terms of the state. It actively hopes to find ways to help the state endure. The clearest articulation of political theory and history developed conterminously.

I will refer to a point Toynbee makes in Volume 1 of *A Study of Civilization*. Of the ancient civilizations that he lists, certain civilizations, like that of the Shang, were the progenitors of practices and belief-systems that were developed and expanded throughout Chinese history into the present. Others, such as that of ancient Egypt, a civilization that endured for 4,000 years, left no social and intellectual heirs to the models of life and beliefs that is created. Egypt lacked the kind of dynamism that influenced reason; instead, religion was created from its sense of isolation and exceptionalism.

I will stress that the practice of writing history—not merely recording historical events, but establishing a narrative that relates developments from cause and effect—developed seemingly exclusively among the ancient Greeks and Chinese. While other ancient civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt developed elaborate forms of record keeping, they did not write history. I will comment on how the Greeks developed politics as an intellectual discipline. Politics was not developed as a way to simply describe and catalogue all forms of governmental action or institutions. The Greek conception of politics centered on a specific form of rule—namely, on a form of political organization that had as its object the interest and welfare of the community.

I will note that the revolutionary and central operating idea in the Greek's development of politics is that government was to serve. The power of the state was not directed towards conquest, but was designed to allow for the flourishing of its population. The Greeks recognized the inherent condition of humans as social creatures, and they knew that each citizen's welfare and the interests of the 'community' were above those of the individual.

I will comment on how politics was also a scientific field in that it represented a form of technical knowledge. History allowed a statesman to learn from the past, to compare and contrast forms of social organization, to discard what was ineffective, and to introduce the institutional and ethical systems that were most helpful to state governance.

I will note that politics as praxis was embodied in statesmanship, the intellectual practice that sought to find and implement forms of government that foster harmony and preserve the state as a common institution that unites its diverse citizens and does not set them into conflict and violence against each other. .

I will explain how Greece is central to international relations. The character of the state as a public institution allows for the development of national interests that are representative of the state as a whole and not reducible to the interest of private actors. The separation of power is essential to that end. The rationality of international relations is founded on the existence of national interests. Democratic regimes are better at mobilizing militarily against autocratic regimes. They actively balance against threats to their independence. It is precisely for this reason that international relations focuses on the Greek city states, the Italian renaissance states, and the Westphalian modern states. In

all cases, the institutions of the state came to represent broader social interests as a common institution, responsive and linked politically, ideationally, and emotionally with its population.

### *Time, Memory, and History*

All accessible reality exists within a temporal-spatial dimension. Space is the plane of action. The Copernican revolution inaugurated by Kant recognizes that the categories of space and time were the necessary, inherent, mental properties by which human beings made the world intelligible. In the absence of space and time, no form of chronology, causality, or meaning could be formed.

Time binds agents and objects into a comprehensive relationship. The constant-conjunctions of Humean causality are dependent upon actions being identified sequentially. Time cannot be located as an independent property, but instead it forms the vector through which causal relations are observed, sequences develop, and patterns emerge.

The effects of time and the existence of patterns are themselves dependent on memory and correlation. Memory and narrative explanation, both personal and social, are subject to alteration. Explanations focus on maintaining consistency, and on our tendency to explain causes in light of our current position. Therefore, we are subject to confabulation and error.

Human beings must see the world in terms of cause and effect. Indeed, this is inherent to all species. Without at least a primitive understanding of cause and effect

relationships, no sense of the world would be possible. When we think of personal identity, it is not the events, but the way that they are organized that make them intelligible and that gives them coherence. That coherence is achieved through a thematic organization in relation to a specific subject. For individuals, the events, processes, and changes in the world are organized in relation to the self. For social science, events are organized in relation to a social object.

### *History and Politics*

Humanity's relationship to history has passed through three critical stages. The first is his biological development. This constitutes nearly the entirety of our development at a species which has existed for at least 200,000 years. The second historical moment follows the typical convention of historians, focusing on the rise of civilization. Civilization is seen as the product of three interrelated forces, the development of agriculture, the rise of cities, and the invention of literacy. The development of agriculture arose approximately 10, 000 years ago, and it was not until 5,000 years ago that it attained the necessary set of efficiencies to allow for the development of complex forms of political authority and economic specialization. The history of humankind is traditionally seen as analogous with the history of civilization. The emergence of the first city- states, the sudden appearance of Sumer on the plains of Mesopotamia, *that* is where 'history begins,' to borrow the title of Samuel Noah Kramer's famous book.

There is something curious in this view. Obviously, both our evolutionary development and the emergence of urban civilization are indeed a part of our past; they are critical elements in the development of mankind to the present. History, as an intellectual exercise, as a philosophically mediated reflection on our relationship to the past, only emerged later and under rather curious circumstances.

The social sciences are ontologically-grounded in terms of their relation to space and time. Spatially, this is most clearly embodied in the distinct territories that have formed, expanded, collapsed, and been replaced. As many critics have observed, the social sciences are focused on the formation of political space. The lens by which we examine the past is through the shifting fortunes of empires: the rise, as well as the fall, of states. The temporal dimension is subsumed under the spatial, geopolitical dynamic. Time is a way of measuring the political duration of states.

Conceptually, time has been constructed in the social sciences according to distinct forms of political organization. The broadest categories of historical demarcation are treated as critical transitions between these political orders. Each of these periods constitutes a historic age. A central task of theory, whether economic, political, or sociological, is to uncover how each social order is constituted as well as to explain the mechanics beyond their demise and transformation.

History, therefore, developed in relation to a specific institutional practice: specifically, the Greek state. The nature of the Greek polis lead to two mutually related innovations: specifically, to the development of politics as a communal form of social organization, and to history and political theory as intellectual disciplines.

Political theory is a distinct form of reasoning since it is interested chiefly in communal issues. It seeks to unite people in a community of mutually linked individuals. It thinks in terms of the state. It actively hopes to find ways to help the state endure. The clearest articulation of political theory and history developed conterminously. The emergence of history was a product of conscious meditation on social forms and organization, not as given or natural, but as the product of choices, developments, and social forms.

The establishment of continuities and discontinuities are conditioned by memory, with their validity predicated on the fallibility of remembrance.

### *Historical Consciousness*

Obviously, both our evolutionary development and the emergence of urban civilization are indeed a part of our past. They are critical elements in the development of mankind up to the present. To reiterate, history, as an intellectual exercise, as a philosophical mediated reflection on our relationship to the past, only emerged later.

This process, however much it is criticized, only demonstrates how social time is a construct, a perspective of how to understand the past as well as the present. Though distinct, societies hold alternative conceptions of time. For the purpose of this study, I seek to highlight two alternative forms: popular forms of social time and scholarly forms of social time. In either case, when the operant lens that grounds the development of a socially-articulated sense of time is examined, critical light can be shed on the essential presuppositions and dogmas of a culture.

I think it is useful to point to Arnold J. Toynbee's work in *A Study of Civilization*. A massive work, it is futile to try to summarize even a small portion of its arguments. One distinction that Toynbee makes in Volume 1, however, is very useful. Of the ancient civilizations that he lists, certain civilizations, like that of the Shang, were the progenitors of practices and belief-systems that were developed and expanded throughout Chinese history into the present. Others, such as that of ancient Egypt, a civilization that endured for 4,000, left no social and intellectual heirs to the models of life and beliefs that is created. Why? Because it never was able to sustain a set of values that have persistent relevance and were continually embraced and invigorated.

The remarkable element of Egypt is both its continuity as well as its essentially self-contained culture. It lacked the kind of dynamism that influenced Greece: instead, religion was created from its sense of isolation and exceptionalism, and this endured despite its conquest by foreign rulers. The social system was linked to, but not determined by, the political institutions. The Ptolemies, for example, ruled over the Egyptians in the manner of pharaohs, but without the ability to speak their native tongue.

The practice of writing history—not merely recording historical events, but establishing a narrative that relates developments from cause and effect—developed seemingly exclusively among the ancient Greeks and Chinese. These two civilizations pioneered the writing of history. The appearance of historical writings by the Greeks and Chinese are unique developments, without parallel in other ancient societies in antiquity.

History as a discipline is a particularly contemplative exercise and a rather rare one. Even after the advent of writing, for thousands of years, ancient civilizations in



Mesopotamia and Egypt developed elaborate forms of record keeping but did not write history.

Myths, letters, inscriptions, and accounting ledgers abound, but not history.

Persians are dependent on the ancient Greek accounts of the invasion of Xerxes, except for the labors of archeologists, to learn about these events in any depth. Decrees were etched in stones; victories were recorded, but the question of human social development as a historical phenomenon worthy of its own analysis was completely absent.

### *The Greek Concept of Politics*

The Greeks, in turn, also developed the practice of politics and history in relation to the polis. Central to political science and international relations are three terms: politics, the state, and international relations.

The Greeks developed politics as an intellectual discipline. Politics was not developed as a way to simply describe and catalogue all forms of governmental action or institutions. The Greeks were aware of many kinds of governments. The Greek conception of politics centered on a specific form of rule—namely, on a form of political organization that had as its object the interest and welfare of the community.

We see this feature of ‘politics’ in our language and definition. Therefore, the city-state, the *politeia*, is defined as “what is held in common.” The Roman republic expresses this identical sentiment, namely the state as a *res publica*, ‘the public thing,’ which is similar to the English word commonwealth (Scott 2004, 591-601).

This point is critical because, too often, democracy is understood as the most salient Greek political contribution. Politics, as developed in the Western tradition, is not simply describing 'city government'; it is a revolutionary social doctrine. Specifically, it is a vision of government that is public and shared by the whole community. It has a moral doctrine that fights against the government being utilized as a tool for the advancement of private interests.

Following Aristotle, politics should not be understood by rule or domination, nor by the particular ways power is organized in states. After all, all governments are ruled in one of three ways: by the 'one,' by the 'few,' or by the 'many' (Pol I. 1279-1282).

Out of the three basic types of rule, Aristotle distinguishes six forms of government: kingship/tyranny, aristocracy/oligarchy, and polity/democracy, tyranny, oligarchy, and democracy. The first two forms are especially corrupt and defective forms of government because they rule the state for a set of private or factional interests. They undermine the state and corrupt its cohesion.

In tyranny, the government is completely corrupted, as it takes a common possession, the city, and reduces it to a private good (Pol V. 1311a-1311b). Oligarchy, likewise, sees the city as the 'property' of a select few who govern out of self-interest and are avaricious. Democracy, while a corrupt form of government, is better than tyranny and oligarchy, since, collectively, often even very imperfect groups can use their innate sense of virtue and right to make decisions that are in the interest of the community as a whole (Pol. IV 1289-1290).

Across the world, there were many well-developed states and forms of government, but they were based on the divinity of their 'rulers,' and the governments were owned as private instruments to secure wealth and prestige.

The merit of a polis is that it is organized to meet the needs and to serve the interests of the community as a whole. Namely, the polis is ruled by and for the common good of the community (Pol. III, 1276a-1276b). We understand the polis as defined as the governing of the city by its members, called citizens. The citizen's freedom was defined by his participation in government. Therefore, the citizen's freedom was expressed not as a set of rights, but through active participation; participation was both the duty and a right of the citizen.

The conceptual foundation of 'politics' did not develop simply as a definition of Greek governmental procedures, however. Instead, the revolutionary and central operating theme in the Greek's development of politics is the purpose that government was to serve. The power of the state was not directed towards conquest, but was designed to allow for the flourishing of its population.

The polis is a revolutionary innovation because of the universal conceptualization of government as a mechanism developed by the community as a common mechanism to improve their lives and character. It articulated a principle of governmental that was universal and public.

Politics pertained to the polis/city. Politics represented the activity of a city's citizens in governing themselves. The form of communal organization is based on a shared identity, operating on the basis of membership and participation. Therefore, a state

functions through the participation of its members and not merely as a form of rule defined by and dependent on coercion.

The 'state' and the 'community' are fused together. As a social practice, citizens are joined together in community, sharing among members who share in equal rights. Citizens are governed by dialogue and argumentation, not merely by imposing their will or from reaching a compromise from mutually opposed interests. It is a way for citizens to educate, inform, and persuade each other in ways that collectively help the community to arrive at the best decision. Citizens are able to engage in debates that allow individuals to transcend their particularity, and to act for and reason on the basis of communal interests. Likewise, citizens can judge behaviors in reference to how their actions contribute to or injure the function of the polis.

In order to function, citizens have to be educated by the state, to be able to cultivate civic virtue (Pol. 1337). Civic virtue fosters communal development by creating citizens who act in the best interest of the state as a whole, even if it might contradict their individual interest at any particular moment. The communal nature of 'politics' is embodied in the dynamic between its citizens and the government. The government educates its citizens not merely to be ruled, but to rule, and to engage in practices that foster their individual development. The Greeks recognized the inherent condition of humanity as social creatures, and they knew that each citizen's welfare and development was contingent on the kind of city in which he developed. The city depended on its citizens, but citizens were also dependent on their city to act as an agent that hinders or facilitates each person's development.

The interest of the individual and the state were linked, but the common interest had a moral status as well as an underlying assumption that guided the action of citizens. The interests of the 'community' were above those of the individual. Individuals that threatened to gain too much power, for instance, could be ostracized.

Politics was also a scientific field in that it represented a form of technical knowledge. As a science, however, politics could develop epistemically into a technical domain. The city was not merely the object of knowledge, but it also represented the zone to which knowledge could be applied. History allowed a statesman to learn from the past, to compare and contrast forms of social organization, to discard what was ineffective, and to introduce the institutional and ethical systems that were most helpful to state governance.

Politics as praxis was embodied in statesmanship, the intellectual practice that sought to find and implement forms of government that foster harmony and preserve the state as a common institution that unites its diverse citizens and does not set them into conflict and violence against each other. Statesmanship concerns itself with developing state institutions that can survive internal division or external conquest, mitigate internal disorder, and maintain the strength to answer external dangers.

The state became the eminent institution of Western political theory and development. History evolved as a way to chronicle, study, and analyze the rise and decline of nations and their organizational structures.

There are theoretical underpinnings of politics as an intellectual exercise. For example, a statesman is capable of creating governments that can organize society into a

cohesive, cooperative social body as well as to develop institutional practices that endure. The separation of powers is a mechanism that not merely prevents the domination of one faction by another, it also utilizes state institutions that can counter the inherently unstable and, at times, oppositional interests of its members (Hahn 2009, 178-84).

The most famous component of ancient political theory relates to the development of political systems that divide power into separate institutions, and that mitigate against factionalism and the usurpation of the state by private interest. In addition, however, the role of a statesperson was to serve as a leader who could exercise foresight and judgment, guiding the state through threats. To do so, a leader had to be able to act as a representative of the state. This took many forms, from merely introducing constitutional reforms to helping existing states or, in the case of states that could not be reformed, to the establishment of new colonies.

The state acts as the point of orientation, with the 'state's' experience and interactions forming the basis of analysis. The state is taken for granted as a common point of reference and understanding. As such, the theoretical houses of international relations are, nevertheless, grounded in a folk, common sense, appreciation of the state.

This articulation of the state as established in ancient Greece is central to international relations. The character of the state as a public institution allows for the development of national interests that are representative of the state as a whole and not reducible to the interest of private actors. The rationality of international relations is founded on the existence of national interests.

The normative doctrine of the state, its *raison d'être*, arises from the relationship of the state as the basis of social organization for its members. The security and survival of the state is critical and real because of the state as the basis of the citizen's identity, affiliation, and loyalty. Furthermore, the state acts to maintain its sovereignty and resists domination because of its independence as expressed as a form of autonomy and self-government, free from external coercion. Democratic regimes are better at mobilizing militarily against autocratic regimes. They actively balance against threats to their independence. It is precisely for this reason that international relations focuses on the Greek city states, the Italian renaissance states, and the Westphalian modern states. In all cases, the institutions of the state came to represent broader social interests as a common institution, responsive and linked politically, ideationally, and emotionally with its population.

The polis is a very specific form of social organization as well as an intellectual practice.

As Alan Gilbert has argued, the healthy political institution that seeks to advance the common good, to represent the true interests of its citizen, focuses on ways to help its members flourish as individuals. It engages in the international system as a means by which to help secure those rights. It guards against aggression and conquest. It does not, however, go into the international area to destabilize and undermine other states or to limit democratic practices. Such actions undermine our own long-term welfare and the security of the state. Should the state become militarized and transformed into an imperial

power, it negates its ability to function as a common public institution dedicated to the welfare of its members (Gilbert 1999).

### *The Mechanism at Work in Politics, Civil Society, and the State*

This central mechanism refers to the capacity of members of the polis to reason on the basis of common interest, to organize and make decisions for the collective good of the community. Social agents reason on the basis of a common interest. The point of analysis of the state rests on two dimensions: 1) on the capacity of the state to represent abroad a set of interest that is bound to the community as a whole, and 2) on the interest that is focused specifically on the state.

The state is composed of many elements, but its unity is based on a singular conception of the state as a common point of representation and identification. Just as a representative acts ‘on behalf of constituents,’ the ‘statesperson’ acts on behalf of the state.

### Conclusion

In Chapter 9, I examined the importance of the Copernican/Kantian revolution with respect to the contribution of space and time to making the world intelligible. I asserted that, for individuals, the events, processes, and changes in the world are organized in relation to the self.

I identified the three stages through which humanity’s relationship to history has passed: biological development, the rise of civilization, and the development of complex



forms of political authority and forms of organization. I observed that, for most social scientists, the history of humankind is analogous with the history of civilization.

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I maintained that history developed in relation to a specific institutional practice. The Greek state led to related innovations: the development of politics as a communal form of social organization, and to history and political theory as intellectual disciplines.

I observed how political theory is a distinct form of reasoning since it is interested chiefly in communal issues. It seeks to unite people in a community of mutually linked individuals. It thinks in terms of the state. It actively hopes to find ways to help the state endure. The clearest articulation of political theory and history developed conterminously.

I stressed that the practice of writing history—not merely recording historical events, but establishing a narrative that relates developments from cause and effect—developed seemingly exclusively among the ancient Greeks and Chinese. While other ancient civilizations in Mesopotamia and Egypt developed elaborate forms of record keeping, they did not write history. I commented on how the Greeks developed politics as an intellectual discipline. Politics was not developed as a way to simply describe and catalogue all forms of governmental action or institutions. The Greek conception of politics centered on a specific form of rule—namely, on a form of political organization that had as its object the interest and welfare of the community.

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I explained how Greece is central to international relations. The character of the state as a public institution allows for the development of national interests that are representative of the state as a whole and not reducible to the interest of private actors. The separation of power is essential to that end. The rationality of international relations is founded on the existence of national interests. Democratic regimes are better at mobilizing militarily against autocratic regimes. They actively balance against threats to their independence. It is precisely for this reason that international relations focuses on the Greek city states, the Italian renaissance states, and the Westphalian modern states. In

all cases, the institutions of the state came to represent broader social interests as a common institution, responsive and linked politically, ideationally, and emotionally with its population.

## CHAPTER 10: THUCYDIDES, EMPIRE, AND STATIS

### Overview

In this chapter, I will examine the writings of Thucydides and maintain that he has been widely misunderstood. I will assert that our approach to Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War is emblematic of a general problem in international relations.

I will argue that, if we read Thucydides' account of the war closely, we will find strong reasons to argue for the pathology of empire. I will ask how the pathology of empire, as represented in Thucydides, can be so unquestionably elevated within international relations as a central foundational truth, unquestioned and reproduced as indicative of the inherent nature of interstate relations.

I will conclude that international relations needs to be able to draw distinctions between political actions and the policies of true statecraft. It must differentiate between decisions and strategies that truly act in the interest of the state and policies that are groundless, irrational, or founded on private ambition. While these distinctions are important, they are not treated as central to distinguishing IR as a field of rational assessment and analysis. The most astonishing feature of Thucydides' accounts is

focused on questions of domestic deliberation, particularly on how the private ambitions and interests of individuals took precedence over the interests of the state.

### *Greek Tragedy and the Birth of History*

Greek tragedies were ways to demonstrate how human nature and reason always reached their own limit and contradiction. Greek plays focus on hubris and fate. These two aspects are intimately related. Character is central to one's actions, yet, the features of a character that make him great also lead to his downfall. Therefore, what raises someone up to greatness is also the ultimate cause of his destruction. It is clearly expressed in Oedipal tragedies. Oedipus' intelligence makes him a great king, but his intelligence also forces him to always seek out the truth. In tragedy, knowledge is always revealed to the protagonist after the fact. There are frequent reversals of intent (peripeteia). Oedipus' investigation of the murder of the previous king leads to a horrifying conclusion and to anagnorisis, the moment of the hero's realization about the true consequences of his action and his true identity. Agamemnon returns from Troy with Cassandra, a prophetess whose prophetic visions are true, but never accepted as possible by those she tells. Indeed, Aeschylus refers in the beginning of *Agamemnon*, the first of the three plays that make up *The Oresteia* to a well-known view that Zeus commands that man learn by suffering (*Agamemnon* 175-179). Nevertheless, the cause is often mistakenly ascribed to the hero's "tragic flaw" or hamartia, a personal weakness that causes his downfall (Stinton 1975, 221-228).

Observation and reflection remain the basic method of inquiry for international relations. International relations is the realm of repetition and recurrence. International relations remains much closer to a model of classical scholarship than other social sciences. It has observation, historical analysis, and from it, a set of laws that orient the behavior of states. In history, the laws that shape the world of men and states could be discovered. History was the laboratory of politics, observations made from specific examples could become the basis of generalizable political principles. In knowing the movement of history, the enduring patterns that appeared and reappeared, we could also seemingly overcome them. Knowledge of the past helps us understand the present, but it also allows us to shape the future.

Men's lives and choices are placed within a narrow spectrum of ever-recurring patterns whose course they can alter but not entirely overturn (Berlin 2001, 38). It is an intellectual apparatus that utilizes historical investigations as a guide to contemporary actions. These are able to create analogous relationships across time and to identify the choices that lead to the best outcomes. The historical particular has universal relevance; it can be taken out of its context and still provide wisdom.

At one level, history appreciated change. For international relations, its view of history is grounded in a tragic view of the inevitable nature of conflict, in human nature and in the competition among states. We are heir to the sophists, but the sophists neither understood politics nor the social dimensions of humanity. Though they moved beyond the world of convention and unmasked it as a fiction, they could not see that it reflected a more enduring truth.

The central innovation of Greek intellectual history was the development of historical consciousness. They understood that the world was in flux, that the present was contingent. The presocratics had expanded man's view of himself, seeing him in a much broader set of biological and cosmological developments. The division between custom and nature became clear. The constructed and contingent nature of value, beliefs, and governments called into question their universality.

Because the polis was the center of life, it was in the movement of states and governments on which historical inquiry was focused. The West developed intellectually through an articulation of politics as the central act of individuals and communities. History becomes, therefore, the story of states, their rise, expansion, and decline. The decline of one empire is inevitably related to the rise of another. This is the engine of Western historical understanding.

History was cyclical, and cities and civilizations, like bodies and plants, were subject to the laws of genesis and decay. All things, be they animals or states are subject to decline. For the Greeks, the polis was seen as the ideal universal mode of life. But the conflicting interests of its members, the competing claims and ambitions of individuals and classes, always placed it in danger.

It was in the development of history, that the unfolding and change of social life can be chronicled. We see the progression, decay, and development of temporal institutions. In this way, history helps us overcome temporality. History acts as a mechanism that both studies change but also helps us transcend our own contingency. We

must live within time to actualize ourselves, but, with history, we could overcome our own immediacy.

From the understanding of the recurrent patterns of time, cycles of generation and decay, the ancient Greeks developed philosophy. History begins to establish a set of connections across time. Historical developments could be recorded and understood and knowledge developed. Forms of knowledge, governmental practices, ideological and religious values can be combined, constructing political systems that are more effective and stable. The challenge became a way to counter the effects of time; how to create a polis can somehow forestall the rhythms of nature, to overcome corruption and disintegration.

There are elements to human nature and the world as a whole that always bring about destruction. The cycle of governments from oligarchy, timocracy, and democracy is generational: the excesses of one generation lead to a set of different, but equally unbalanced drives in the next. The movement of history reveals a paradox in the nature of the development of states. The source of a state's greatness is often its poverty, its simplicity and ethic. These allow it to become powerful. In power, however, the members of the states are made wealthy and indulgent, licentious and driven by appetites. In temporality, it could be seen that the changes came about not only from alterations from the outside, but in the contradictions that each age created.

Thucydides is understood as one of the most important intellectual sources for international relations. He is widely thought to embody the very paragon of historical writing and is considered to be an objective historian who accumulated facts.



Thucydides chronicles the war between Athens and Sparta without reference to myth or the gods and diligently documents the effect of the war that consumes the entire Greek world until his death. Thucydides is frequently heralded by realists as representative of the universal forces at work in politics and the international system since he addresses the recurrent themes and patterns in history, such as the limits of morality against power, human nature and human history as organized around the struggle for domination.

International relations limitations are salient in its relationship with Thucydides. The limits in the way that we approach Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War is emblematic of the general problem our approach to international relations creates. I highlight the limited ways that we understand Thucydides as a way to create a more comprehensive relationship to history, but also as an argument for why international relations would benefit from using Herodotus and Plato as part of the central text that tries to understand international conflict.

In terms of Thucydides, there are a multitude of problems inherent to our approach. First, we misread Thucydides' work. Secondly, we don't appreciate the biases and limitations of Thucydides' interpretations or presentations as reflective of 'facts' and 'occurrences'. Third, Thucydides never lived to see the end of the war, and therefore did not write a true history of the war. Fourth, we are, therefore, left with a view of the war that is not complete and in which we do not understand it in a broader context. For example, readers focus on the *Melian Dialogue*. Thucydides documents a similar exchange between the Spartans and the Plataeans.

The debate of the Plataeans before the Spartans is comparable to the *Melian Dialogue*, but it is even more significant and richly ironic. The Plataeans, who have served honorably in the wars against the Persians, originally had hoped to become allies of Sparta but were rejected. Subsequently, they turned to Athens for aid against the aggressions of Thebes and become their most staunch allies. After the surrender of the town, the Plataeans ask the Spartans only to be given a fair trial in accordance with Greek law and custom. The Spartans violate these traditions, putting all of the inhabitants to the sword. Thucydides notes that the Spartans took this course out of expediency. "The adverse attitude of the Spartans in the whole Plataean affair was mainly adopted to please Thebans, who were thought to be useful in the war at that moment raging"(Thucydides 3.68).

The Plataeans, an honorable people who had surrendered to Sparta and asked for a fair jury, were sacrificed by Sparta for a moment of temporary expediency to please their Theban allies. Of course, it would be Thebes that in less than a century would rise to power and forever break the hegemony of Sparta, making the Messenian helot an independent state and Sparta a historical curiosity. Sparta had maintained a stable government for over 400 years by the start of the war. The Spartans, 'victors' of the war against Athens, would themselves be destroyed within a short period of time. Sparta would be destroyed by empire, just like Athens. This broader historical development is missing from the way we approach the period.

In addition, Thucydides' work highlights the central link between the internal order of a state and its external conduct as the most important factor during the war. The

power of a state resides in its internal unity, and the kinds of goals it has. Therefore, we cannot simply treat IR outside of a broader set of questions about the nature of the state and community.

### *Thucydides' Historical Method*

The most central goal of Thucydides' history was his desire to identify the true causes of the conflict between Athens and Sparta. Popular belief attributed the outbreak of the war to the violation of specific treaties or transgressions. Thucydides, in contrast, placed the crises and conflicts over Corcyra, Megara, or Potidaea as symptoms of the true underlying cause of the war: the shift in power between Athens and Sparta. Such an explanation demonstrates Thucydides' systematic materialism (Thucydides 1.23-1.33).

Thucydides set out to write the history of the war between Athens and Sparta as the first true event that could be accurately recorded historically. The previous wars and conflicts of the Greeks were too removed in the distant past to provide an accurate depiction of events. The past was preserved in poetry; it had been constructed to satisfy listeners and to glorify and romanticize actions. There was little to be gained in treating these works as faithful reflections on the past. The lack of knowledge and false beliefs that were held about the past were innumerable. In fact, Thucydides reaffirms this by demonstrating how erroneous popular beliefs were about contemporary events. For example, it was believed that Hipparchus was a tyrant of Athens, when it had been, in fact, his elder brother Hippias; it was also believed that the kings of Sparta cast two votes each in assemblies (Thucydides 1.20-21).

Thucydides recounts, briefly, the development of Greece. The territory that the Greeks inhabited was subject to frequent struggles among migrating populations. Different tribes and confederacies went to war to occupy the most fertile land. Such conflict was detrimental to the development of wealth and learning. In a passage that no doubt inspired Hobbes, Thucydides depicts this time as:

There was no trade, no secure communication with each other by land or sea. Each group grazed its own land for subsistence, not building up financial reserves or farming the land, as it was never known when someone else might attack and take it from them — besides, there were no walls. In the belief that they could acquire the daily necessities of food anywhere else, it was easy enough for them to uproot. For that reason they lacked the strength of large cities and all other kinds of resource (Thucydides 1.2).

It was at the margins within settled communities that culture and wealth were able to develop because, there, people were able to continuously inhabit the land without being subjected to generational displacement.

Thucydides' survey of the Greek past gave a very economic interpretation. Military campaigns were determined by revenue. It was only long after the Trojan wars, when Greek city-life began to stabilize around enduring city-states that revenue increased to allow for greater social development, ship navigation, and commerce. Increasing wealth caused piracy. The first empire, Minoan thalassocracy, came to dominate sea commerce by combating pirates and growing wealthy in revenue and tribute. Economic growth was the fundamental factor of growth for Thucydides. It was also from wealth that the traditional kingship of the Greeks was displaced by the emergence of tyrants

across Greece. How or why such a transition emerged, though of fundamental import to the development of Greek history, was not investigated further (1.13).

The state emerged with the power and military might to punish piracy. The older cities of Greece were built far from the shore since they were frequently attacked by roving pirates. The newer, more powerful cities were built on the shoreline, with high walls to defend them from raids and navies in order to secure their interests at sea (1.7). Ships of war, the trireme, developed to increase the power of states and to protect the wealth brought by trade from commerce. (1.13).

Thucydides had a highly materialistic, strikingly modern, view of the forces that propel history. Wealth was the mover of men and states. It was wealth that allowed Agamemnon to lead the Greeks in the Trojan War. His family had accumulated vast resources, considering the poverty of the land, from the time of the migration of his ancestor, Pelops. (1.9).

The emergence of the city-state was treated only cursorily by Thucydides. It was identified with a refinement of manners, as people began to cease walking around armed in their daily interactions. In addition, the distinctions between aristocrats and commoners were blurred as both groups adopted similar styles of dress. The city was founded and maintained by the material interests of its citizens. Therefore, Thucydides stated: "Desire for profit was the motivation both for the weaker to tolerate the domination of the stronger and for the more powerful to use their economic advantage for the subjection of lesser cities" (1.8).

The tyrants had only private interests and placed their focus on securing power in the city and on accumulating wealth. With tyrants governing many Greek cities, the Greeks did not engage in common action (1.16-17).

Thucydides believed that the Peloponnesian War was perhaps the greatest war the world had ever experienced. The wealth of both alliances allowed for the conflict to continue for years. Thucydides sought to emphasize the unique qualities of the war. The Peloponnesian War was not contextualized with past conflicts, but treated as distinct and unique. Thucydides' writings were a source of history, but they lacked the qualities of true history. Thucydides lacked the historical perspective necessary to ground events in a broader context. Thucydides was not a historian but a chronicler of the highest order.

Thucydides hoped that his history would endure, stating:

I shall be content if it is judged useful by those who will want to have a clear understanding of what happened — and, such is the human condition, will happen again at some time in the same or a similar pattern. It was composed as a permanent legacy, not a showpiece for a single hearing (1.22).

There is little doubt that Thucydides begins his work as a highly materialistic and structured account of human and state interactions. Thucydides was no doubt highly influenced by the pre Socratic and sophistic intellectual revolution. In political terms, the development of Athenian imperialism and sophistic skeptics brought a shift in the understanding of politics. Specifically, politics as defined as a communal practice that helped to develop, maintain, and expand public harmony, liberty, and public goods, and which embodied a particular ethical-communal order, was transformed into a radical individualism. In this way, sophism is a form of antipolitics, as it basically abolishes the

polis as a public space, transforming it into an instrumental tool of individuals to realize private ambition and to pursue private gains.

*Sophism, Stasis, and the Limits of the Individual*

Thucydides composed his work over the course of decades.

One finds many sophistic arguments within the work, not only in the *Melian Dialogue*, but in the articulation of the Athenian thesis. Specifically, the Athenians had come to read history as a series of empires. The laws of empire were part of the basic laws of nature, expressed in terms of power. The exercise of power over the weaker was a basic condition of human social life. Its exercise could be seen operating always, reaching back to the most distant parts of the human past. The strong are compelled by nature to rule over the weak. Justice only exists among equals. Equals are defined as being equal in power. (1.75). In this way, the Athenians do not seek to apologize for their empire, as the desire to rule is universal. The Athenians are unique only in their achievement of power, which they need to justify merely by the authority invested in their own power over others.

The longer the war continued, the more we can see Thucydides' focus shift away from the basic theoretical presumptions that marked his introduction. Material explanations are absent, with personality, ambition, the emotions of human beings increasingly playing the central course of explanation. In addition, conflict and competition found within city-states becomes the central point of consideration, more important than that of any purely systems-level competition and balancing among competing states.

It is highly questionable, therefore, that Thucydides can appropriately be read as a realist as it has come to be understood. Thucydides writes about a war; questions of morality, communal harmony and discontent are central to the story. What is chronicled by Thucydides is the consequence of a community that becomes unmoored from its values, that falls prey to a corrosive and self-defeating obsession with gain, power, and violent conflict with members of one's own community. This disaster is catalyzed by the Athenian and Spartan conflict that engulfed nearly the entire Greek world, but is also shaped by the influence of sophistic arguments that come to dominate the culture of the Athenians, and, through them, many other city-states, that would act as a powerful corrosive on the civic values that maintained the polis. In this way, the Peloponnesian War chronicled civil war as well as interstate warfare.

In addition to questions of interstate conflict, Thucydides' history should be read in reference to the internal decay of states as they devolve to factionalism. This dimension of Thucydides' work was central to ancient readers, but has been ignored by realists who eschew questions of internal politics. This is the very center of action in Thucydides, namely how factions come to dominate the political association within cities, how private interest take precedence over public goods, and how class distinctions produce civil war, in which parties invite and assist external military intervention. We need to focus on these questions to help develop a more accurate theoretical and historical articulation of the conflict, since Thucydides' work is rightfully treated as one of the central texts of international relations as a discipline. The role of factions plays a



decisive role in the military efforts of both Athens and Sparta, with aristocrats or democrats often betraying the city willingly.

According to Thucydides himself, Athens's defeat was a result of internal disunity (Thucydides 2.66). Therefore, in defeat, Athens was above all conquered by her own social ills rather than by an external enemy. This was the direct result of her deformation under imperialism.

### *Rationalism and Structuralism*

When approaching Thucydides, like Hobbes, we find two distinct arguments that can be made regarding human nature. If we do a very naive reading of Thucydides, we can treat his history as a clear manifestation of human nature in which power and self-interest predominate above all other things. This is the rationalist articulation embedded within structural accounts of conflict, such as the shift in power between Sparta and Athens as the basic cause of the war. The second reading exemplifies the irrational nature of human passions. These two arguments are often used within realist's accounts; indeed, we find them at work in Hobbes, who translated Thucydides, but they present distinct theoretical models that are not reconcilable.

Structural explanations are questionable, given that Sparta had not previously been actively seeking to balance or mitigate the growing power of Athens. The Greek city states also had failed to effectively balance against the Persian empire previously. Indeed, natural characteristics and culture play a role from the very beginning of

Thucydides' account. The energetic and active nature of Athenians makes them very distinct from the cautious and laconic Spartans.

The greatest failure that IR has made is accepting the claims made by individuals within Thucydides' work and confusing them with true accounts of history or human nature. We should not confuse the Athenian thesis about the course of history as representative of a universal truth nor even the view of Thucydides.

Indeed, if we read Thucydides' account of the war closely, we find strong reasons to argue for the pathology of empire. How can the pathology of empire, as represented in Thucydides, be so unquestionably elevated within international relations as a central foundational truth, unquestioned and reproduced as indicative of the inherent nature of interstate relations?

### *Why No International Theory?*

Martin Wight, one of the modern founders of mid 20<sup>th</sup> century international relations theory asks the above question (Wight 1969). What is salient in Wight's question, however, is both his focus on the early modern philosophers, who were social contract theorists, and his underappreciation of the richness of ancient political theories related to the topic.

First, there are central important theoretical arguments about the rise and fall of empires among ancient writers. As I will highlight in the coming chapters, Herodotus and Plato have well developed theories of international relations. Their works are basically entirely ignored by the field, including Wight (de Romilly 1991).

Second, it was widely recognized by both ancients and modern writers that questions of the state's internal capacities and goals developed from its internal social order. States that were republics were very distinct from monarchies, both in the ways they organized internal military defenses and the kinds of goals they had externally. In this way, ancient historians and philosophers that dealt with questions of international relations necessarily blended the domestic and international realm as centrally constituted and interlinked. The need to balance, defend against aggressors, and make alliances against common enemies was well understood, both within Europe as well as in Asian and Indian strategic traditions (Boesche 2003; Zhang 2001).

The enduring strength and concerns of a state, however, ultimately rested on achieving harmony within a state, forming cooperative relationship among classes and minimizing the negative effects of faction. Are these questions separate from concerns about international relations? Absolutely not. They are the greatest source of danger to states as well as potentially, their greatest source of strength. These questions dominated political theory, not in spite of concerns of international relations, but because they are central components of the relationship of states and the international systems. In a sense, Wight's question highlights the quixotic quest that international relations has embarked upon as a field, hoping to develop a theory of interstate politics without linking it closely with questions about the nature of states and societies.

When one reads Thucydides' chronicling of the consequences of factionalism in the erosion of Greek polities, the way morality and social order is treated by realists is

entirely reversed. The Peloponnesian War does not chronicle the limits of morality, but the consequence of decayed moral consensus in the destruction of states and people.

Hobbes's first intellectual publication was a translation of Thucydides' Peloponnesian War. Hobbes would develop his theory of the state of nature from Thucydides' account of the civil war in Corcyra (Thucydides 3. 69-85) and the effects of the plague in Athens (Thucydides 2.48-54). In contrast to Hobbes's theoretical arguments, this helps demonstrate that state function is not the mechanism by which social order was achieved in Corcyra. It was the expression of the basic communal relationship that the society had once formed but under which it no longer functioned, by a divergence in morals, beliefs, and identities among its subjects. In the absence of the ethical and cultural mechanisms that unify populations, states have limited power in the short term, and ultimately cease to exist as institutions. This is true of Hobbes's own time, when a rupture in religious and political values lead to the English civil war (Shulman 1988, 429-34)

The rival alliances of Sparta and Athens created fissures within cities, dividing states into rival oligarchic and popular factions. Civil unrest, *stasis*, is a critical motif captured by Thucydides (Edmunds 1975, 73-78).

Only a very naive reading of Thucydides would treat his history as a clear manifestation of human nature as defined by rationality or a logically conceived sense of self-interest. This is the basic sophistic view that predominates in standard academic accounts of political science and international relations.

### *Power, Community, Statesmanship*

Realism does not stand the test of history because it fails to even question why states act or what their interests are. It is here that realism always breaks down. This is precisely because it does not see that the foundation of realism rests on the capacity of a state to preserve its internal order. The polis both enables the state and is also the reason that the state must act to secure itself. When we hear speakers discuss the fundamental nature of human beings, how the dictates of power and wealth must take maximal precedent, the great tragedy is not that this cold calculation is visited upon the cities they conquer, but must necessarily be extended into the very heart of the polis. The force of logic that comes to dominate the state externally will corrupt it internally:

Realism's simplistic understanding of Thucydides is employed to represent universal traits of human nature that both served as evidence as well as an argument for the inevitability of conflict, war, and aggression. In this way, politics is reduced to power, but power loses any kind of effective functional capability. Why? Because power is desired merely for its own sake, as human nature simply seeks domination over others.

#### *What is Power?*

The history of the Athenian empire can be encapsulated by two desperate struggles. The first is the resistance of the Athenian city to conquest of Greece by the Persian empire, standing against all odds, having Athens sacked and burned, its population taking refuge on ships, but enduring as a community, overcoming the forces

of empire through sacrifice and common cause. By any common calculation of material, resources, and manpower, the Athenians and their allies should not have beaten back the Persian campaigns. But power is a tool, a resource forced by human beings. Human solidarity and cooperation is able to resist much greater forces of material and numbers who are not unified in common cause.

This is a form of power rarely appreciated in international relations, because the questions of social organization and cohesiveness are treated as exogenous. As an empire, the power that Athens brings to bare against its adversaries in its campaign to conquer Sicily was far greater than any set of resources it had in the Persian wars. Like the Persian empire, however, these resources did not guarantee victory. Even with an accumulation of power that is 'overwhelming' against its opponents, it was defeated. At Syracuse, at the height of its ostensible power, Athens lost its true power, its capacity to act as a mechanism to secure the common interest of her people.

### *Politics vs Statesmanship*

The Athenian empire was a force that was unwieldy and without purpose. It exemplified the ceaseless hunger of empires, who believe that the only way to preserve what they have is to expend without end. They maintain that the only solution to failures for military victors are more military campaigns and that the only way to protect what one already possesses is by expanding further. Empires often produce a kind of frenzied gluttony that identifies the only way forward, the only way to safety, as acquiring more

empire. This mirrors the basic dilemma of a tyrant who rules lawlessly over a population.

International relations needs to be able to draw distinctions between political actions and the policies of true statecraft. It must differentiate between decisions and strategies that truly act in the interest of the state and policies that are groundless, irrational, or founded on private ambition. While these distinctions are important, they are not treated as central to distinguishing IR as a field of rational assessment and analysis. The most astonishing feature of Thucydides' accounts is focused on questions of domestic deliberation, particularly on how the private ambitions and interests of individuals took precedence over the interests of the state.

### *Moving Beyond Thucydides*

We read Thucydides with a great many preconceived interpretations, some of them centered on his own views and others related to the way IR approaches the study of international politics. Thucydides ambitiously proclaims that his history has been written to endure as a "possession for all time." No doubt, Thucydides has succeeded. We must, however, recognize the limits that Thucydides presents. As I will argue next, the limitations of Thucydides can be demonstrated in his assessment of Pericles. Thucydides, in the midst of chronicling the ravages of imperial warfare and the destruction of the moral order of Greek city-states, still remains a hopefully imperialist (Thucydides 2.66). Herodotus and Plato had a far greater and accurate assessment of the consequences which

empires bring to communities, and could see far better the historical course and consequences of the road upon which Pericles set Athens.

## Conclusion

In this chapter, I examined the writings of Thucydides. I maintained that he has been widely misunderstood. I asserted that our approach to Thucydides and the Peloponnesian War is emblematic of a general problem in international relations.

I argued that, if we read Thucydides' account of the war closely, we will find strong reasons to argue for the pathology of empire. I asked how the pathology of empire, as represented in Thucydides, can be so unquestionably elevated within international relations as a central foundational truth, unquestioned and reproduced as indicative of the inherent nature of interstate relations.

I concluded that international relations needs to be able to draw distinctions between political actions and the policies of true statecraft. It must differentiate between decisions and strategies that truly act in the interest of the state and policies that are groundless, irrational, or founded on private ambition. While these distinctions are important, they are not treated as central to distinguishing IR as a field of rational assessment and analysis. The most astonishing feature of Thucydides' accounts is focused on questions of domestic deliberation, particularly on how the private ambitions and interests of individuals took precedence over the interests of the state.



## CHAPTER 11: HERODOTUS, SOLON, AND HISTORICAL WISDOM

### Overview

In this chapter I will argue that Herodotus helps to bring the evolution of Ionian naturalism and sophism's political and human theories full circle. For him, history is a source of education that can help limit hubris and can serve as a wise counsel so that we avoid destructive patterns. These patterns are always conditioned by the limitations of individuals and peoples to situate themselves in a clear context, to see their place in history in ways that both tame wild ambition but also give a more profound sense of responsibility.

I will show how in challenging Greek popular beliefs and not dismissing them as falsehoods, Herodotus forces believers to have a far more nuanced view of their own perspectives, assumptions, and beliefs. He forces believers to acknowledge that other communities within the story have important perspectives on shared conflicts and myths.

I will maintain that there is a great deal of purely historical information within Herodotus that would be of interest to international relations. However, what I will emphasize is the contrast between Herodotus and Thucydides. Herodotus' Solon/Croesus motif is a form of mythological history, but one with strong predictive accuracy on how

empires form, grow, and decline. It focuses on the internal social dynamic within empires, with the division between the social ethos that gives people the strength to forge an empire being undermined by the changes in values, standards, and discipline in the following generations. I will note that, in contrast, Thucydides and realism are perspectives that provide a historical mythology. That is, they are works of history that do not truly understand the processes at work within human society, the limits of human rationality, the true purpose of government, and the requirements of statesmanship.

I will argue that scholars must incorporate the Aristotelian definition of the state as an institution to secure the common good, and include the insights of Herodotus and Plato as well, in order to develop a more mature, balanced, humane conception of international relations.

### *Culture, Nature, and History*

Herodotus helps to bring the evolution of Ionian naturalism and sophism's political and human theories full circle. Herodotus seeks to find ways to understand the patterns and laws of history, specifically war and empire. Unlike sophists, however, he can see that customs are inventions while still appreciating the centrality of the customs, beliefs, and norms in a discussion of what it means to be human. Against a sophistic view that sees nature and customs as totally distinct, Herodotus sees customs, practices, and ethics as important guides for individual and communal conduct. Communities are formed by their myths and customs, but they are not hermetically sealed from each other. As Herodotus writes, many of the practices that the Greeks believe to be their own

originated in other communities. Herodotus seeks to write a history of the ancient world because it is interconnected.

Like nature, communities and states are joined into patterns of growth and disintegration, but they are joined together by a set of beliefs and values and not merely by a set of abstract natural forces. Herodotus does not dismiss all customs as nothing but artifice, but sees them as powerful systems of moral and communal force. He is not interested in simply treating customs as artificial in the most mastic sophistic way, but in understanding customs and comparing belief systems among different communities. In so doing, he is able to see how these communities were interconnected and indebted to each other for many of the beliefs and practices that they considered exclusive or original to their own communities.

He believes that for Greeks to come to understand their own history, it is essential for them to understand the history of other communities. This is important for two reasons. First, the history of other communities played an important part in Greek history. The Greeks had stories about their neighbors. Their neighbors had stories about the Greeks. The other communities had their own perspectives that could both inform and alter the way that the Greeks understood their own history. Second, the history of other peoples, times, and governments provide lessons from which Herodotus' contemporaries can profit and learn. In history, the patterns of the past can be discovered, but also overcome.

Herodotus builds on a tradition of the preSocratics and ancient logographers when he sets out to write his history of the world. Herodotus inquiries are the first complete

work of history the Western world possesses. Methodologically, history sought to identify the cause of actions, and trace the course of historical developments. However, too often overlooked is the most important aspect of Herodotus innovation: namely, that in looking into the past, he believes that we can gain a more profound perspective of the future. Specifically, in educating ourselves in history, Herodotus believes we can learn to heed his most important injunction: look to the ends of things, to assess what would be the long-term choices made by individuals, cities, and empires.

Unlike Thucydides, who seeks to create a highly systemic and material argument in the beginning of his work, Herodotus places great emphasis on individual choice as a factor in the course of history.

Herodotus builds on the traditions of Greek conceptions of hubris and hamartia because history attests to the ways that people often engage in acts that lead to their own destruction. History is a source of education that can help limit hubris and serve as a wise counsel so that we avoid destructive patterns. These patterns are always conditioned by the limitations of individuals and peoples to situate themselves in a clear context, to see their place in history in ways that both tames wild ambition but also gives a more profound sense of responsibility.

To understand the Persian wars, it is necessary to trace the historical course of previous empires and communities from the beginning. The Persian empire represented just one example of a set of developments, drawing from and building upon previous modes of rule and expansion.

Herodotus mixes both history and mythology, since the cause of human action involves both myth and history, factual and fictional beliefs. Herodotus engages with Greek mythology and epic poetry. He records the beliefs and practices of the populations he visited. From this, many have accused Herodotus of simply perpetuating falsehoods. Instead, Herodotus felt the need to reflect beliefs that were held by communities without necessarily agreeing with their truth or accuracy. As Herodotus states directly: “My business is to record what people say, but I am by no means bound to believe it—and that may be taken to apply to this book as a whole” (7.152).

The Persian war was popularly understood as representative of an inherent enmity between the Greek and Near Eastern world. In this way, the Persian war was seen as an extension of the recurrent pattern of hostility between the Greeks and the Asians as immortalized by Homer. Herodotus places great importance, not on explaining the causes of the wars between the Greeks and Persians as they were conventionally understood, but on correcting popular myths.

The Greeks believed that the Trojan War occurred as a result of the kidnapping of Helen by Paris. This act was a violation of Greek hospitality and a breach of decent behavior.

Communities in the Near East, argues Herodotus, see this in a different light. In fact, Herodotus argues, this conflict was more complicated. Helen’s abduction was not the first such kidnapping. In fact, Io was taken by Phoenicians to Egypt; Europa was kidnapped by Cretans, and Medea was kidnapped by Jason, etc. Therefore, the Greeks had been the first to ‘commit’ a wrong in their relationship with the Near East. As the

'Asians' saw it, Paris's abduction of Helen was a form of retaliation for the kidnapping of Medea. This act culminated in the Trojan War (1.2-1.3). Herodotus then relates the account of these actions according to different traditions. For instance, according to Herodotus, the Phoenicians were acquainted with the story but denied that Io was taken against her will. Instead, she had become intimate with the ship's captain and found herself pregnant. She fled with the captain out of fear of being discovered and shaming her parents (1.5) Therefore, a war of the magnitude and scale of the Trojan War was an unjust and disproportionate action.

A sense of proportion was critical for Herodotus; actions taken to address a wrong should not exceed the bounds of a previous offense. Herodotus demythologized these critical narratives of conflict. They were entirely human events. Furthermore, Herodotus states that Helen was never in Troy during the ten-year siege of the city. In fact, the Egyptians recorded that she was in Egypt. No city would have endured such destruction to protect the mistress of a prince who was not even to inherit the crown. While Herodotus actively engages with mythology, he typically dismisses the validity of myths or used them as ways of understanding the community that held them.

This element of Herodotus is too often overlooked or dismissed. Yet, it actually is one of the most powerful aspects at work in this historical project. It challenges Greek popular beliefs, not by dismissing them as falsehoods, but by forcing believers to have a far more nuanced view of their own perspectives, assumptions, and beliefs. Second, it acknowledges that the other communities within the story have important perspectives on a shared conflict, even if mythological.

The Persians, Phoenicians, and Egyptians had their own historical memory about these events, from the kidnappings of women, to the Trojan War (2.113-.2.120). Both the Greeks and Asiatics shared a mythology of having suffered mutually inflicted wrongs. When people learned about the beliefs and practices of other communities, the folklore of each community lost some of its power to explain the past or to demonize those treated as enemies. In addition, such actions revealed truths through conversation among traditions. The so-called irrational behavior of the Trojans in allowing their city to be destroyed for a single woman was actually the result of the Greeks not believing the truth when the Trojans told them—perhaps because of obstinacy and a desire for conquest—that Helen did not dwell within their city. Every community preserved elements of their neighbor’s history.

Herodotus further distances Greeks from their relationship to the Homeric world by helping to put a great distance between the ‘age of heroes’ and his contemporaries. Many Greeks traced their ancestry to the Heroes of the *Iliad*, who in turn, were often descendants of the gods. Herodotus recounted the story of Hecataeus, an earlier Greek logographer who had traveled to Egypt. Hecataeus informed the Egyptian priests that his family was descended from a god sixteen generations in the past. The Egyptian priest walked Hecataeus through a temple room filled with statues, each representing a generation of priests of the temple. Although these statues numbered over 345 generations, none of them was the son of a god nor did the Egyptian priests, who had the greatest records of any nation, have any evidence of the gods as having been active on earth. Herodotus acknowledged the antiquity of other communities and the indebtedness

of the Greeks to Egyptian religious practices and beliefs. Herodotus provided us with some of the most detailed histories from antiquity by covering Egypt, Scythia, and Athenian history from the time of Peisistratus to the emergence of democracy.

The distance between the age of 'iron' and the 'age of heroes' was very wide indeed.

Herodotus seeks to preserve a memory of 'great deeds' of men, not mythical heroes, regardless of what part of the world they came from. Herodotus had a great appreciation of the antiquity of human civilization and was aware of how easily order, prosperity, and knowledge could be lost.

In writing his history, therefore, he states:

...I will proceed with my history, telling the story as I go along of small cities of men no less than the great. For most of those which were great once were small today; and those which used to be small were great in my own time. Knowing, therefore, that human prosperity never abides long in the same place, I shall pay attention to both alike (1.5).

Herodotus' central thematic focus is on empires. The entire ancient world of Herodotus has come into unity, as the rise and fall of empires has united all communities into close relationship.

Although Herodotus recounts the set of kidnappings that lead to the Trojan War, he dismisses their significance or facticity. Instead, Herodotus states that the first Asiatic that can be said to have *truly* harmed the Greeks was Croesus of Lydia. Croesus had



robbed the Greeks of their freedom, and this act was the true wrong of which the Greeks should be concerned (1.6).

Herodotus' view of history as an intellectual practice is subtle and deep. Given the parameters of this chapter, I will simply focus on a central theme of Herodotus as exemplified in the figure of Solon and his encounter with Croesus of Lydia. This represents a very rich philosophical portrayal of the ways that empires rise and fall and the use of history as a guide.

Solon travelled the world in search of knowledge, gathering wisdom from the places that he visited. Solon had the foresight and humility to see the limits of all human ambition and greed.

In the encounter of Croesus and Solon, three important points are made. Croesus, the wealthiest ruler in the East, shows Solon all of his possessions. After, Croesus asks who is the happiest man that Solon knows. Solon, to the frustration of Croesus, responds that it is an Athenian named Tellus, who lived in a prosperous city, saw all of his children grow and in turn have children, and died in a battle defending his city, and was given a public funeral. In other words, he was a man who lived within a polity in which he participated, allowed his children to flourish, and represented a communal form of governance that was in the interest of members (1.30-31). Croesus believes that Solon is a fool for not envying his wealth and power, but Solon warns him that it is only at the end of one's life that one can judge if someone truly chose the right life. In other words, Solon counsels Croesus to look to the ends of things. (1.32-34)

This is a powerful rebuttal to the Athenian thesis, as it makes a clear distinction between human happiness and self-development (eudaimonia) and the mere possession of wealth or exercise of power. In addition, it highlights that wisdom and power are distinct. That, in fact, it is often the powerful that are the most in need of counsel

Solon imparted a powerful truth to Croesus, but he was too blind to understand it. He urged Croesus to have a long-term perspective and not to be greedy, or seduced by quick or obvious choices. Croesus was not convinced. Although he already possessed an empire, he was eager to expand it. Croesus asks the oracle if he should attack Persia. The oracle replies that should he attack, a great empire will be destroyed. Taking this as a positive sign, Croesus makes war against the Persians. This leads to his defeat by Cyrus. In the moments before his death, tied to a pyre to be burned, Croesus comes to see the wisdom of Solon. In bitterness, he cries out his name. Cyrus orders the fire extinguished and inquires who Solon was. Croesus describes Solon as a man with whom every despot should converse (1.87).

Cyrus takes Croesus as an advisor, so that the experiences of others might serve as a guide. Likewise, all of us might come to use historical knowledge as a way to inform our own decisions and not commit unnecessary mistakes. Croesus can only see the wisdom of Solon through the bitterness of his own experience, but he can then act as a counsel for other kings.

According to Herodotus, empires corrupt the social order by reducing values to base materialism and licentious living. Moreover, they result in tyranny. Tyrants hate truth and prefer flatterers to wise council. Herodotus discusses the rise of the Athenian

empire. He also gives a very negative appraisal of Themistocles, one of its chief architects (8.112-114), but also a very negative assessment of Pericles, though one a bit subtler in presentation, as I will demonstrate in the next chapter.

Empires engage in wars of aggression, as they necessarily are driven to expand. The Lydian empire is conquered by Persia, but it was the Lydians who first acted with aggression towards the Persians. The Median empire was destroyed by the Persians, but the Medes were the ones that first acted aggressively towards the Persians. The Persian empire was destroyed, but it was the one that acted as aggressor towards the Greeks. In attempting to avoid destruction, empires actually ensure their defeat.

But most importantly, empires are destroyed by corruption. Empires are established by strong, disciplined, and resourceful people. The discipline and fortitude of Cyrus allows him to gain an empire, but his son Cambyses, raised in luxury and accustomed to tyranny, shared none of these virtues. He engaged in transgressions against the basic moral values of society; he governs poorly and through fear. His rule in Egypt is poor. Croesus seeks to provide him with council, suggesting he moderate his tyrannical and whimsical rule, but the wisdom of Croesus falls on deaf ears because Cambyses is corrupted internally by power that drives him into madness. Empires and tyrants go mad because they seek to wield power as an end in itself, and power without purpose is a form of mad instability (Herodotus, Book III).

The story of Croesus, of course, is a form of storytelling, yet, it provides a much better assessment of what would await the Athenians in their own imperial ambitions. There is a great deal of purely historical information within Herodotus that would be of

interest to international relations. However, what I want to draw out is the contrast between Herodotus and Thucydides.

Herodotus' Solon/Croesus motif is a form of mythological history, but one with strong predictive accuracy on how empires form, grow, and decline. It focuses on the internal social dynamic within empires, with the division between the social ethos that gives people the strength to forge an empire being undermined by the changes in values, standards, and discipline in the following generations. Thucydides, and realism, in contrast, are perspectives that provide a historical mythology. That is, they are works of history that do not truly understand the processes at work within human society, the limits of human rationality, the true purpose of government, and the requirements of statesmanship.

Croesus, a very wealthy patron of the oracle of Delphi, would no doubt have been frustrated with the answer that the pythia gave him. After all, while an empire was destroyed, it was his empire and not that of his enemies. One might ask, therefore, if the pythia lied. The pythia could easily absolve herself of responsibility, as Croesus could have been more specific in his questions.

But a student of Herodotus would argue otherwise. For it is not one, but two empires that were destroyed: that of Croesus and that of Cyrus. All empires are destroyed. The Peloponnesian War had already commenced by the time that Herodotus finished his work and presented it in a series of public readings to the Athenians. Herodotus' warnings were well reasoned and strong, but they went unheeded. As students of the Herodotus, we can give a more complex answer than a Delphic oracle. In the

course of the struggle of Athens and Sparta, which would engulf virtually the entire Greek world, two mighty empires would be destroyed, that of Athens and Sparta alike.

Unlike Odysseus, Solon's wisdom was not the result of suffering. Instead, it emerged from Solon's sense of moderation as well as from his capacity to reflect on the course of human events. Solon was one of the seven sages of Greece and embodied a particular Greek wisdom that valued freedom and recognized the dangers of tyranny. We must incorporate the Aristotelian definition of the state as an institution to secure the common good, with the insight of Herodotus and Plato to develop a more mature, balanced, humane conception of international relations.

### Conclusion

In this chapter I argued that Herodotus helps to bring the evolution of Ionian naturalism and sophism's political and human theories full circle. For him, history is a source of education that can help limit hubris and can serve as a wise counsel so that we avoid destructive patterns. These patterns are always conditioned by the limitations of individuals and peoples to situate themselves in a clear context, to see their place in history in ways that both tame wild ambition but also give a more profound sense of responsibility.

I showed how in challenging Greek popular beliefs and not dismissing them as falsehoods, Herodotus forces believers to have a far more nuanced view of their own perspectives, assumptions, and beliefs. He forces them to acknowledge that other communities within the story have important perspectives on shared conflicts and myths.

I maintained that there is a great deal of purely historical information within Herodotus that would be of interest to international relations. However, what I emphasized was the contrast between Herodotus and Thucydides. Herodotus' Solon/Croesus motif is a form of mythological history, but one with strong predictive accuracy on how empires form, grow, and decline. It focuses on the internal social dynamic within empires, with the division between the social ethos that gives people the strength to forge an empire being undermined by the changes in values, standards, and discipline in the following generations. I will note that, in contrast, Thucydides and realism are perspectives that provide a historical mythology. That is, they are works of history that do not truly understand the processes at work within human society, the limits of human rationality, the true purpose of government, and the requirements of statesmanship.

I argued that scholars must incorporate the Aristotelian definition of the state as an institution to secure the common good, and include as well the insights of Herodotus and Plato, in order to develop a more mature, balanced, humane conception of international relations.

## **CHAPTER 12: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS, STATESMANSHIP, AND THE PROBLEM OF PERICLES**

### Overview

In Chapter 12, I will assert that a careful reading of Thucydides shows the errors of scholars who do not recognize the disastrous consequences of Pericles' decision to enter the Peloponnesian war and his repeated refusal of peace offerings. It shows how these decisions set a course for Athens's own destruction. Pericles' imperial ambitions undermined civic ethos and endangered the entire democratic project. Pericles' policies thrust Athens into a near constant state of war for decades to come, resulting in the destruction of its empire through the decay of its own internal social order and moral system.

I will argue that, unlike facile realist interpretations, it is important to recognize that Athens made a choice to create an empire, compelled not by necessity, but by a desire for power and wealth.

Although he cloaked his message in metaphor, Herodotus is similarly critical of Pericles. Plato states that the greatest dangers are not external; they arise from unwise decisions made when states are flush with power.

I will show how Plato and Herodotus both understood that statesmen don't build temples but rather social orders. It is the capacity of these social orders to survive, to endure the passage of time, and to resist both internal decay and external threat, that we find the true art of politics and the moral imperative that grounds realism.

I will argue that the enduring values of Athens are not linked to her empire; they are separate and distinct. The empire ultimately threatened the best aspects of Athenian moral and intellectual life and ensured its destruction in war.

I will examine in detail the speeches of the Athenians as recorded by Thucydides' in *The Peloponnesian War* to illustrate how the sense of Athenian self-identity became intimately connected with its empire and with the exercise of power through the use of force. These speeches illuminate the way the sophistic view of human nature, having become pervasive in intellectual discourse, is used by Athenians in defense of their empire before their enemies, in speeches against allies, and in internal debates.

I will discuss Pericles' famous speeches preserved by Thucydides in his *Peloponnesian War* and examine them in light of Plato's direct critique of Pericles' oration in the *Menexenus*.

I will conclude that the men who followed Pericles lacked his intellect and skill. Their policies and values were a continuation of what Pericles had already set in place. Their failures, such as the expedition to Syracuse, were the result of a state that had defined itself only in terms of its power over others. Empires have no sense of limits or boundaries.



*Athens: Democracy and Empire*

Pericles was a member of the Alcmaeonidae that produced Cleisthenes, Pericles, and Alcibiades. Cleisthenes introduced democracy into Athens; Pericles shaped it into an empire, and Alcibiades helped lead it to its ultimate destruction. Pericles' intellectual capabilities and his leadership of the democracy are highly admirable. Under Pericles, the culture of Athens reached a radically new level of intellectual openness, fostering the exchange of ideas and advances in many fields of knowledge. Athenian democracy, though highly imperfect and exclusionary of women, slaves, and metics, represented the most expansive form of civil participation and flourishing that the ancient world had every experienced. These are a testament to both Athenian moral and political advancements as well as to Pericles' leadership. Pericles sponsored Aeschylus' *Oresteia* trilogy and its defense of democracy and trial by juries. Pericles' intellect was steeped in the Ionian theories of the presocratics; he was emerged in scientific theories and discussions about the nature of reason. Pericles, a student of Anaxagoras and Zeno, had detached his mind from the base superstitions that guided generations of unschooled Greeks. As recounted by Plutarch, when his sailors grew frightened at the occurrence of an eclipse, he lifted his cloak into the air, pointed at its shadow, and explained that both were the result of the same process, their only difference being in the size of the objects. (Plutarch 1914, 103).

Conventionally, Pericles is treated as a great, capable leader. Thucydides' history is also highly exculpatory of Pericles. His leadership and strategy are defended doggedly by Thucydides. His assessment of Pericles has often been actively reproduced by

generations of readers. They do this by not tracing the consequences of Pericles' decision to enter the Peloponnesian war and his repeated refusal of peace offerings, nor do they examine how these decisions set a course for Athens's own destruction.

His advice to the Athenians at the inception of the war, even today, seems reasonable. "If only they'd followed Pericles, they would have won" is the standard view of Athens under his guidance (Thucydides 1.144). The subsequent devolution of Athens is seen as a result of lesser men coming to take the reins of political power. Even by reading Thucydides, his greatest defender, such an interpretation can hardly be supported. A careful reading of Thucydides points to a different set of conclusions. The most important elements of Thucydides focus on stasis, civil unrest, and the consequences it had for both Athens and other city-states. For Thucydides himself, Athens's loss was the result of internal corruption.

### *Empire or Democracy*

Pericles as the leader of democratic Athens and Pericles as the leader of the Athenian empire, though the same individual, represent figures engaged in distinct and oppositional projects. Pericles inherited a democratic system of government from previous generations of Athenians. Pericles' imperial ambitions undermined civic ethos and endangered the entire democratic project. Pericles' policies would thrust Athens into a near constant state of war for decades to come, resulting in the destruction of its empire through the decay of its own internal social order and moral system.

For this reason, Pericles' failures as a statesman must be confronted if we are to understand the Peloponnesian war in a true light and to develop a mature realism. Pericles set Athens on a course of empire that would bring about its own destruction. Unlike facile realist interpretations, it is important to recognize that Athens made a choice to create an empire, compelled not by necessity, but by a desire for power and wealth. This choice represents a central moment of risk in all states. It is a fateful one, but definitive.

### *Herodotus Periclean Warning*

Among Pericles' contemporaries, there were many who recognized the dangerous road Pericles had chosen to follow. Herodotus' work serves as a warning to the Athenians about the course on which they are embarking. As Solon the Athenian had stated, wisdom is found in looking to the ends of things, in understanding the consequences of one's actions. The course of empire was a perilous one, and one that would challenge the very fabric of the social order. Herodotus alludes to the danger throughout his work. As John Moles argues, Herodotus does so by a series of interrelated metaphors. First, he recounts that Pericles' mother dreamt of a lion shortly before his birth (*Histories* 6. 131). Lions were mythologically creatures of great and savage danger, but they were also associated directly as the symbol of the Lydian royal house. In other words, Herodotus hoped to draw parallels between the story of Croesus and Pericles (Moles 559-586).

Herodotus' warning about the course Pericles set Athens on is most pointedly illustrated, though concealed in metaphor, the discussion of the birth of a lion.

The reason for this is that when the unborn cub begins to stir, he scratches at the walls of the womb with his claws...and as he grows bigger scrambles his way further and further...until, by the time that he is about to be born, her womb is almost wholly destroyed (*Histories* 3. 108-109).

Athens had made Pericles great, through its innovation of a new form of governance and birth of a tolerant, intellectually engaged, city of increasing rights and participation by its citizens. The greatness of Athens, which endowed Pericles with his own eminence and enduring fame, produced a leader who would destroy the womb from which it had developed, as he actively sought to transform Athens into an empire. This illusion would have been understood in highly negative terms by Athenians.

The art of a statesman is to help preserve the city, to maintain its order, and not to discard the womb that has given one birth, but rather to help further its perpetuation and well-being. At the end of his work, Herodotus urges the Athenians to refrain from reproducing the cycle of empires. In the *Histories*, he consistently counsels his audience to consider the fate of empire, to retain the wisdom of Solon, and to look at the end of actions. Herodotus ends his work with a minor battle in Asia Minor. Artayctes, a corrupt adviser to Xerxes, who sought to constantly increase his wealth at the expense of the state, was crucified by Athenian troops under the command of Pericles' father, Xanthippus. Artayctes was descended from Artembares, a man who had counseled Cyrus to move the Persian capital from the native but infertile soil that had made the Persians a strong and self-sufficient people to a more comfortable land. Cyrus rejects such advice since it was the challenge of cultivating such soil which had allowed the Persians to be

free and not enslaved, to rule themselves and not be ruled. Herodotus states that Cyrus noted: “Soft countries breed soft men. It is not the property of any one soil to produce fine fruits and good soldiers too.” Such a story was told as a cautionary tale to the Athenian’s warning them about the dangers of empire, how the source of what had made them great was undermined by their transformation into imperialists who rule over others with tyranny. In time, the tyrannical virtues of domination, power, and violence would become the values of citizens within the city. The Athenians would increasingly confuse material wealth and comfort with a representation of the best form of life. Like Artayctes, Pericles desires to abandon Athens’s ancestral territory and to transform its way of life, the source of its greatness, for the profits and comforts of empire (*Histories* 9. 122).

#### *The Fundamental Decision of Statesmanship*

The inability to truly assess the consequences of Pericles’ choice represents the limited ways we examine politics and international relations. Plato refuses to make such allowances and to provide such generous interpretations. The greatest risk a state faces are not in external threats, but in the kinds of choices it makes when it has power and uses it unwisely.

The limits and contradictions within modern realism are compounded by a form of analysis that eschews normative interpretations and analysis. However, this only expresses problems that are rooted in the ways that realism as a theoretical school of political analysis are linked to Sophists generally, and the limited ways that Thucydides and Machiavelli are read. Machiavelli is often treated as the first author to articulate the

*raison d'état*, the power of the state to act arbitrarily in the name of social security and communal preservation.

The challenges for the foundation or preservation of the state are inherent in difficult choices. The 'policy of the exception', the reason of state, are moments that define states and people, but the choice has central overtones. Republican and democratic forms of governance require leaders who preserve the social order against ambitions that would threaten its unity. The leaders must maintain the communities' values and system of government.

Realism is understood is viewed as a naked analysis of the operation of power. Many see realism as an argument against moralism. However, as Alan Gilbert has argued, this is an incorrect reading. To sunder morality and politics is to give each one authority over separate realms of human existence. The division that limits the authority of each also concedes the basic validity of each. In fact, realism's arguments about the limits of morality and the needs for defense, are rooted in a deeper moral argument. "Thus, we may best interpret the realist view as a *clearheaded, ethical critique of moralism.*" (Gilbert 1990, 31).

Republics and democracies require men who can actively avoid the temptations of empire or private aspirations. They are embodied in historical figures such as Cincinnatus, formed by, and oriented to, the maintenance of civic virtue, and not in men such as Cesare Borgia, who lacked basic scruples.

In this way, Athen's failure was the moment she chose empire, because it undermined the basic interest of the social order. The rest of the story is simply the

recounting of that tragic choice. Athenian strategy became unmoored because it was no longer grounded in a basic set of objectives. Prudence and foresight are the hallmark of strategy, but function only if anchored to something concrete. For states, actions are assessed against more basic goals and standards internal to its character and interest. In the absence of a concrete internal conceptualization of goals, values, and objectives by which to frame state policy, state policies become unmoored from rational statecraft. This is precisely what happened to Athens, as it drifted away from values that connected the people and state as a moral community, with decisions of war and peace focused on the preservation of its way of life. When this happened, there ceased to be any real objective to strive for that linked the state to a basic, collective good. To Pericles, victory was the sign of captive cities paying tribute, but it was achieved at the cost of a healthy polis.

*Pericles: Between History, Myth, and Tragedy*

Bernard Knox has demonstrated Sophocles' intent in *Oedipus Rex*. Produced in the midst of the plague, the legend of Oedipus has never previously had any association with plague. Sophocles develops the story with the character of Oedipus; Knox presents Oedipus' focus on reason, action, and engagement in this world, as representative of Athenian and, particularly, Periclean characteristics. Oedipus has clear parallels to Pericles, with both men resolute in their decisions, believing in their capacity to navigate even the most difficult issues with the use of reason. Oedipus solves the riddle of the sphinx, but his unwavering confidence in his capacity to know and control the world around him. This central feature of his character, however, is also his hamartia (tragic

flaw). His reason is exercised as a testament to hubris, not wisdom, as it propels him to act in ways that ultimately shatter his identity and commit acts that bring a plague upon his city (Knox 1979).

Many of Pericles' family would die from the plague, brought on by the influx of the Athenian population. They had to flee their homes throughout Attica and find shelter behind Athens's walls at the start of the war with Sparta. Many lived in ramshackle tenements for years. Among the thousands who were struck by the plague were Pericles' legitimate sons Xanthippus and Paralus. Pericles offered cold comfort to the parents of the war dead in the *Funeral Oration*, yet Plutarch reports that Pericles broke down into a fit of inconsolable sobs when placing a wreath upon the corpse of Paralus. (Plutarch 1914, 107-108). He had but one remaining son by his mistress Aspasia. Having written a law that only allowed for men who have both an Athenian mother and father to be citizens, his last remaining offspring was not a citizen of the state that his father led. In the hope that his posterity would remain with the state, he asked for his son to be granted citizenship in exception to the laws (also see Carawan 2008, 383-391). The Athenian people consented. Pericles would die shortly after, but his son, Pericles the Younger, would serve as a general in the war in which Pericles so zealously believed. He was one of the generals at the maritime battle of Arginusae, where Athenian sailors whose ships had been destroyed were not retrieved by the generals as a result of a storm. The anger and wild emotions of the Athenian people was so great, they sentenced the generals to death. Socrates, who by lot had been made head of the presiding committee, refused to pass the motion. The next day, nonetheless, the generals were killed. This act came to be



seen as one of the greatest stains on the Athenian judicial system (Roberts 1977, 107-111). This point is worth highlighting because it speaks to the toll that empire takes even on its greatest advocates. They believe that through foresight and knowledge they can outwit fortune.

In following Pericles, in establishing an empire, the Athenians had already lost. The deep faults and failures of Pericles as a leader are glaring. They are found in the pages of Thucydides' history. Like most readers, even Thucydides is still seduced by Pericles' capacities. Pericles seduces the reader as he seduced the Athenians in his funeral oration. He asks the audience to fall in love with Athens and its monuments. These are distractions and illusions. As Thucydides himself admits, to see the monuments of Athens is to imagine a city that is far greater than it truly is. Plutarch highlights the building project of Pericles. Using the wealth of the empire, he employed the citizenry of Athens in military service or as laborers in city works. These works went up with astonishing alacrity, so that the beauty of classical Athens that we see today was almost entirely erected during the period of time that Pericles commanded the city:

For this reason are the works of Pericles all the more to be wondered at; they were created in a short time for all time. Each one of them, in its beauty, was even then and at once antique; but in the freshness of its vigour it is, even to the present day, recent and newly wrought. Such is the bloom of perpetual newness, as it were, upon these works of his, which makes them ever to look untouched by time, as though the unfaltering breath of an ageless spirit has been infused into them (Plutarch 1914, 41).

Plato and Herodotus both understood that statesmen don't build temples but rather social orders. It is the capacity of these social orders to endure, to resist the passage of

time, and to resist both internal decay and external threat, that we find the true art of politics and the moral imperative that grounds realism. While the monuments have endured, the empire was destroyed and the practices of the Athenians were subject to frequent upheaval, overthrow, and disruption.

The enduring values of Athens are not linked to her empire; they are separate and distinct. The empire ultimately threatened the best aspects of Athenian moral and intellectual life and ensure its destruction in war.

Pericles' vision for Athens divorced it from its history, its practices, and its sense of continuity. The speeches of the Athenians as recorded by Thucydides' in *The Peloponnesian War* illustrate how the sense of Athenian self-identity became intimately connected with its empire and with the exercise of power through the use of force. These speeches illuminate the way the sophistic view of human nature, having become pervasive in intellectual discourse, is used by Athenians in defense of their empire before their enemies, in speeches against allies, and in internal debates.

Pericles' final speech paralleled the choice of Achilles in *The Iliad*. Achilles' mother, Thetis, had told him his life had two potential fates. One of them would allow him to live to old age, in peace and obscurity. The other, short and bellicose, would make his deeds immortal (*Iliad* 9.410-416). Unlike Achilles, however, Pericles does not warn his audience of the dangerous end that they would face. He seldom imagines the tragedies that would befall his life personally.

*Periclean and Platonic Visions of Athens Contrasted*

In the remainder of this chapter, I will discuss Pericles' famous speeches preserved by Thucydides in his *Peloponnesian War* and examine them in light of Plato's direct critique of Pericles' oration in the *Menexenus*.

The famous Athenian 'thesis' of human motivations (power, honor, and interest) is first articulated by Athenian envoys sent to defend the actions of the empire before an assembly of Sparta and her allies. Citing their critical role in the defeat of the Persians, the Athenians recount the hardships and sacrifices they endured. While the rest of the Greek cities fell subject to Persia and while Sparta delayed sending reinforcements, the Athenians struggled ceaselessly. "But we left behind us a city that was a city no longer, and staked our lives for a city that had an existence only in desperate hope, and so bore our full share in your deliverance and in ours" (Thucydides 1.74).

The Athenians maintained their sense of community and patriotism even when their land and homes had been put to flame and no longer existed. Having succeeded in repelling the invasion, they made no apologies for establishing an empire. They bolstered their empire from fear, for honor, and to advance their interests. (Thucydides 1.76). Having increased in strength, it seemed fitting to them to exercise empire fully, seeing in nature a universal law that the stronger should rule the weaker. The Athenians ruled modestly, giving their allies access to the courts and treating them as equals. It was Athenian leniency, not its strength, that allowed its allies to grow bold and to complain against them (Thucydides 1.77).

The Athenian understanding of the Persian war clearly contrasted with the idealistic interpretation of the Western tradition. The Athenians came to see their success against Persia not as a defense of freedom against tyranny, but rather as evidence of the skill and power of Athens to overcome its opponents. In this way, Pericles convinced the Athenian assembly to prepare for war against Sparta, so as to "...hand down our power to our posterity unimpaired" (Thucydides 1.145).

From the first speech of Pericles, it is evident that he understands that the greatness of Athens centers on its empire. He rejects absolutely Athenian calls to negotiate with Sparta. The Athenians must use their naval superiority against Sparta and her allies, who, while being large in number, are slow to act and incapable of challenging the sea power of Athens. Pericles elaborated the strategy that he believed would gain Athens victory over Sparta: avoid land battles with the Spartans, and cease new territorial conquests while at war (Thucydides 1.144). If they did this, the Athenians would be triumphant. To do this, however, the Athenians would have to abandon their sense of residence in Attica. Athens, secure behind her walls, would become like an impregnable island (Thucydides 1.144). Pericles worried most about the potentially rash behavior of the Athenians far more than about the maneuvers of the Spartans. The chief objective of the Athenians must be to preserve their empire and to " attempt to hand down our power to our posterity unimpaired" (Thucydides 1.144).

The strategy outlined by Pericles failed. The war with Sparta had no resolution, and the Athenians set no clear objectives on when and how to achieve peace. The war would continue for decades. From his first speech, Pericles stated that his chief concern

was the inability of Athenians to control their impulses. This critical weakness, which would in time destroy the empire, was never addressed or remedied. The Athenian's restless appetite for empire was itself a product of the vision Pericles set forth for the city.

By the end of the second year of the war, the population of Attica huddled behind the city walls, far from their fields and homes now laid waste by Sparta. They still held the hope of returning to them soon. The contrast between the traditional practices of the Athenian city and the Athenian empire were becoming increasingly stark. Pericles addressed the people during these difficult times. His *Funeral Oration*, like the man himself, has been widely studied and frequently praised. It is considered one of the most beautiful examples of rhetoric from antiquity. A close reading of the oration, however, demonstrates the absence of coherent moral values or practices around which to gather the Athenians. Pericles states that the Athenians most deserving of praise were their immediate fathers, not for defending their independence, but rather for having established the empire. Athens was now able to fulfill all of its wants in both war and peace. Its wealth had allowed for the development of democracy and for a government that ruled in the interest of the majority and with justice for all. Athens was a city defined by its freedoms in government, habits, and private life (Thucydides 2. 38). Athens was able to balance public duties with private development, military service, and cultural innovation. Athens was the educator to the world. This power, however, carried no sense of wider moral responsibility. The daring of the Athenians, "...whether for evil or for good, have left imperishable monuments behind us" (Thucydides 2.41). The Athenians had greater strength and daring than their opponents had. Even in small numbers, "...we Athenians

advance unsupported into the territory of a neighbor, and fighting upon a foreign soil usually vanquish with ease *men who are defending their homes* " (Thucydides 2.39) (italics mine).

Having abandoned a sense of justice and proportion, Pericles sought to arouse the deepest patriotism in his audience. Athens stood without peer; its achievements would be immortalized. The war dead had chosen vengeance over security, glory over submission. Such a death also allowed a man's vices and wicked deeds to be eclipsed by his sacrifice for the state (Thucydides 2.42).

The *Funeral Oration* makes no reference to the gods or to the afterlife. Instead, the glory of the city, the freedoms of private interests, and the availability of luxury become the essence of what Athens offers its citizens. At the same time, as Pericles stated, a man is defined in Athens by his participation in politics (Thucydides 2.43). Politics had become a matter of empire, either in its preservation and defense or in the distribution of its wealth among the populace. The citizens had become paid seaman or laborers in public works. The great power of Athens was expressed in deeds and achievements that would exist for all time (Thucydides 2.41).

Above all, he praised honor. "For it is only the love of honor that never grows old; and honor it is, not gain, as some would have it, that rejoices the heart of age and helplessness" (Thucydides 2.44).

Thucydides demonstrated the hubris of Pericles' speech by recounting the outbreak of the plague immediately after. It reduced the inhabitants, having been cloistered in unsanitary conditions within the city walls, into a panicked mob, where

death struck quickly and honor was among its earliest victims (Thucydides 2.53). The dangers to a city are numerous. Pericles' strategy could keep them from danger, but it invited other menaces. The Athenians grew increasingly angry with Pericles for having advocated war. Some sent peace offerings to Sparta (Thucydides 2.59). Pericles defended himself against their charges, citing his patriotism and policies. He stated that he was incorruptible and honest but also capable in policy. These qualities were rare, but exceptional when combined (Thucydides 2.59). He sought to calm their fears and to address their anger not through a sense of communal resolve or the practice of democracy, but rather through the vast potential of the Athenian empire. Pericles finally shared with them the true potential of the Athenian empire. The entire sea had become the Athenian's domain. They had a navy greater than any other. Not even the Persian king would stand before them. Attica, their lands and homes, should be regarded as "...gardens and other accessories that embellish a great fortune" (Thucydides 2. 62). Athens was an empire. Their domain across the seas would give them enormous wealth and power beyond even what they currently imagined (Thucydides 2.62). To reap its rewards, one had to struggle for supremacy. He openly characterized the empire as "...a tyranny; to take it perhaps was wrong, but to let it go is unsafe" (Thucydides 2.63). When ruling over others, hatred is natural. Having become master of other Greeks, any loss of power could be used by subordinates and enemies to attack Athens. The war had to continue and the empire continuously perpetuated.

Moreover, Pericles maintained that should they lose, succumbing to the destructions that is inevitable for all empires, they could bask in the achievement of

having ruled over more Greeks than any other state, battled more opponents, and been the citizens of the greatest city. He counseled them to "Make your decision, therefore, for glory then and honor now" (Thucydides 2.64).

Pericles called on Athenians to set the needs of the state above their personal wealth and interests. Pericles' moral corruption was astonishing, even if he and his audience are not conscious of it in a direct way. Only a century earlier, the Spartans had liberated Greek city-states by toppling tyrants from office, including in Athens. Under Pericles, tyranny over fellow Greeks was a point of pride; the tyrannical nature of its empire was to be accepted. Those who questioned the value of the war and empire were "men of retiring views, making converts of others, would quickly ruin a state." (Thucydides 2.63). Thucydides' very positive assessment of Pericles as a leader would set the tone/ for future interpretations of his actions. Thucydides highlighted the capacity of Pericles to stand up to the populace, to guide and confront them when necessary. Thucydides affirmed the soundness of Pericles' strategy against the Spartans. The resources and wealth of Athens were so great that the city was able to withstand internal strife, incompetent leaders, and self-interested politicians who thought of their own interest above the needs of the state. This, rather than being a testament to Pericles' leadership, stands as his greatest indictment. He was himself aware of this fatal weakness within Athens. In many ways, it was an inevitability. Though Pericles was free from corruption, he actively corrupted its citizens, making them dependent on the wealth and benefits derived from ruling other states through force of arms. Athens no longer existed as a community of citizens but, as a confederacy of pirates; he treated their empire as a



rich mine that he could use for the basest ends. The men who followed Pericles lacked his intellect and skill, but their policies and values were a continuation of what Pericles had already set in place. Their failures, such as the expedition to Syracuse, were the result of a state that had defined itself only in terms of its power over others. Empires have no sense of limits or boundaries (Thucydides 2.65). In calling to people to set the needs of the state above personal wealth and interest, he spoke in terms of the even greater wealth and power that could be generated through their empire, not in the name of the community as an ethical order. When service to the state becomes the chief means of gaining honor and recognition, when those who question the policies of war are treated as retiring individuals without qualities required for leadership, political debates necessarily become bellicose.

The actions and words of the subsequent leaders of Athens did not demonstrate a radical divergence from the policies of Pericles, save for their willingness to meet the Spartans in open battle, as the imperial course would inherently cause degeneracy in the ethical and social organization of the community. The debate over how to deal with the revolt by the island of Mytilene demonstrates this. They were allies, secure from the threat of Spartan invasion by land. The Athenian assembly grew angry at this act of betrayal and voted to execute the entire adult male population and to sell the women and children to war. As quickly as the vote was cast and a trireme had been dispatched to fulfill the order, many began to question their decision. Cleon, who had risen to the greatest prominence after the death of Pericles, chastised the assembly for its lack of resolution. A democracy was not suited to managing an empire according to Cleon. The

members of the assembly seemed to be "...entirely forgetting that your empire is a despotism and your subjects disaffected conspirators, whose obedience is insured not by your suicidal concessions, but by the superiority given you by your own strength and not their loyalty" (Thucydides 3.37). The Athenians had first stated to the Spartans that Athens's motives for acquiring an empire were based on fear, honor, and interest. Empires are ruined by "pity, sentiment, and indulgence", as expressed in the Mytilenean debate. Democracy is one of the shining monuments of Athens, yet the very values of democracy were a threat to its empire. As Pericles had already stated, it was for sake of empire that Athens always must act. If the values of democracy were a threat to empire, what must be sacrificed?

Cleon understood the inherent contradictions between an open polis, based on discourse and compromise, against the unfeeling, iron rule of successful tyrannies. He distinguished himself from Pericles through an open discussion of this contradiction. He did not obfuscate, or treat democracy and empire as somehow completely compatible and separate practices as Pericles had done. To be a democrat meant to question government. For the Athenian assembly to doubt its ruling of a death sentence upon the entire male population of Mytilene, to even question the legitimacy of the empire's actions and practices was to invite its destruction. Only force mattered between Athens and her allies - force and its ruthless expression, justice.

Diodotus countered Cleon, not on the basis of morals, but rather because of a more realistic expediency. He believed that only the chief conspirators of the rebellion ought to be executed, not out of a sense of moderation, but because it would prevent

future rebellions by dividing the common people, who were often friends of Athens, from the urban aristocrats, who were most likely to revolt against her. The citizens must be spared, not in the name of justice, but for the sake of an injustice, a measured response against a revolting ally that ultimately would give the empire greater security (Thucydides 3. 47). Justice had become synonymous with force. Justice had been emptied of meaning; it had become a hollow echo devoid of independent reference. By the time of the *Melian Dialogue*, the most famous element of Thucydides' *History*, Athens had been at war for 16 years. In that time, there had been a few brief treaties of peace. They were, however, only temporary arrangements to better prepare for hostilities. The entire Greek world had been consumed in war. This was not a war between Athens and Sparta and their allies; the boundaries between friend and foe constantly shifted, with allies becoming enemies, and with fellow citizens murdering each other in civil strife.

The *Melian Dialogue* has become a foundational text in international theory. According to the standard account, the fate of the Melians, their refusal to simply submit to the power of Athens, demonstrated that power alone is the overriding force in the conduct of states. Though there is some virtue in this interpretation, it masks the greater folly of the Athenians who lacked even the capacity to deal with states on anything but violent terms. The Melians had remained neutral throughout the war, never harming the interests of Athens. Nevertheless, the Athenians began to raid their territory. The Melians resisted these acts. Athens sent military forces and prepared to lay siege to the city. The Melian delegation refused to meet with the Athenian representative in front of their population. This measure was taken by the Athenians as a seemingly wise precaution.

After all, they would simply have used it as an opportunity to "...deceive the ears of the multitude by seductive arguments" (Thucydides 5.85). Any defense of Athens as a city or its actions would be "specious' pretenses" (Thucydides 5.89). The Athenians had nothing to offer to the Melians except their lives. The Athenians stated that they acted in the 'interest of their empire', but they manifestly did not know what their interests were. The Athenians believed that their greatest enemies were their subjects. Neutral states such as Melos only emboldened the desire of other subject allies for independence. Against this, the Peloponnesians offered little risk; they "generally give us little alarm" (Thucydides 5.98). Only a state strong enough to frighten the Athenians would be left unmolested. All other states who could be conquered should be conquered.

Weak and unthreatening states were conquered. "Of the gods we believe, and of men we know, that by a necessary law of their nature they rule wherever they can...knowing that you and everybody else, having the same power as we have, would do the same as we do" (Thucydides 5.105). They advised the Melians that when forced to choose between war and security, they should choose security.

The destruction of the Melians must be set against the destruction of the innumerable cities that had been divided and destroyed through active participation in the war. Moreover, the Athenians showed that their power held no wisdom or prudence. They could not tell a friend from an enemy, nor could they identify what was truly a threat. They concentrated on subduing weak states who had never wronged them far more than on really challenging powerful ones who made active war against them. They feared their allies on whose goodwill, wealth, and military service they depended, more than

their enemies. To the Athenians, to be their ally seemed to provide no tangible benefits; it allowed a people only to live in servitude.

The Athenians counseled the Melians not to depend on their allies to rescue them, but rather to choose security over war, to disregard questions of honor, and to make decisions without reference to blind hope. According to the Athenians, there were only three kinds of social relationships: the weak, the strong, and the equal. All three were based on power. In the case of two states with different relationships of power, one state conquered; the other submitted. Two states that were equal had no choice but to war against each other. Equality of forces did not bring security, but it increased the need to fight. To meet a state or a man that is one's equal, therefore, was to always come upon an enemy (Thucydides 5.111). Such principles could not be more destructive to a democracy.

The collapse of the Athenian empire was soon to follow. A delegation of Egesteans arrived from Sicily. They appeared to be famously wealthy and promised untold riches should the Athenians align with them. Of course, the Egesteans were honey-tongued deceivers. Their words were nothing but--to reiterate the way the Athenians characterized their own rhetoric before cities-- "specious pretense." Given that Athenians stated that all of mankind strives for power and domination, Athens's eagerness to believe the Egesteans is remarkable. The cynicism of the Athenians was no match for their greed.

The Athenian character had become so deformed that its values could not be reasoned with. Nicias admitted this freely. He knew that to question the value of

conquering Sicily would be met with scorn and rejection. The only questions of empire that would be entertained were questions of tactics. It was an 'untimely' and not 'easily accomplished' ambition (Thucydides 6.9). Nicias strove to reason with the people against the persuasive schemes of Alcibiades. Alcibiades had risen to prominence through his good looks, capable military leadership, and incredibly amoral calculations. He had already undermined peace between Athens and Sparta, feeling insulted that the Spartans had not sought to negotiate with him in light of his youth. Beyond scheming with the Argives, he counseled the Spartans to lie to the Athenian assembly and to state that they had not been invested with power to make peace. He would later use his influence to make the concessions the Spartans wanted most. Having done so, he then used the Spartans' lack of authority to make peace as the means to rouse the anger of the Athenians and to maintain the war against Sparta (Thucydides 5.45). His perfidy had not prevented him from increasing steadily in popularity.

More critically, Alcibiades was a relative of Pericles; he had been raised under Pericles' roof. Pericles had become his guardian upon the death of his father. Alcibiades and the Athenian populace were reflections of each other. Both were energetic, innovative, and capable. Both showed tremendous promise. Their ambition, however, lacked any sense of purpose or morality. The corrupt values of Pericles, his praise of empire, his lack of vision or responsibility, were manifested in the deadly embrace between the Athenian people and Alcibiades. Nicias warned the Athenians that Alcibiades, interested only in his personal aggrandizement, was using this war to "...maintain private splendor at his country's risk," (Thucydides 6.12) and that to vote

against war was not cowardice. Of course, Pericles had already affirmed that men who questioned war were unfit to lead a state. Nicias pleaded to Prytanis, the council chairman, to resubmit the question of war to the population. Be, he implored, “the physician to our misguided city” (Thucydides 6.14 369).

Alcibiades’ defense is profitably set against Pericles’ *Funeral Oration*. The scandals of Alcibiades’ private life were meaningless. Pericles praised as one of Athens’ greatest freedoms the ability of individuals to engage in private acts: “we do not call upon to be angry with our neighbor for doing what he likes...But all this ease in our private relations does not make us lawless as citizens” (Thucydides 2. 38). For Pericles, the disgrace of improper conduct was sufficient to maintain social decency (Thucydides 2.37). Alcibiades believed that his private life had no bearing on his capacity to manage public affairs. He denied nothing. What was, then, the criteria by which Athenians judged the character and merit of their officials? Alcibiades had gained a great reputation by using his wealth to fund choruses and to enter seven chariots into the Olympic Games. Alcibiades defended these acts. Not only had his reputation benefited, but so had the image of Athens among fellow Greeks. Alcibiades did not mask his ambitions. He stated them proudly. He was of a superior character and would not dissimulate his skills or capabilities. Like Pericles before him, he believed himself first among men to lead the state (Thucydides 2. 61). Regardless of criticism, men such as he were the ones who made history and rose higher than their peers. They might be disliked by their equals, but they would come to be embraced by future generations who would link their city’s name and family histories to their accomplishments. Alcibiades asked that the Athenians cease

their suspicions, "...do not be afraid of my youth now, but while I am still in its flower, and Nicias appearing fortunate, avail yourself to the utmost of the services of us both" (Thucydides 6.17). While Pericles exhorted the Athenians to cease worrying about private concerns and focus on the interest of the state, Alcibiades raised his own interest as equal to that of the state itself. They were convinced, and he would, therefore, advocate for them both. Like the war dead of the *Funeral Oration*, a magnificent death could obscure and absolve anyone even of the most corrupt and base practices in life (Thucydides 2.42). Pericles proposed that Athens was the only city whose strength and resolve were greater than her reputation (Thucydides 2. 41). He stated that public charity was given from liberty, not calculation. (Thucydides 2.4). Alcibiades had used his wealth in the victories at the Olympic Games to make Athens appear greater than it actually was (Thucydides 6.16).

He claimed these acts were as much for his glory as for the state's (Thucydides 6.16).

The Athenian empire had to continue to extend. The character of the state could not go from expansion to rest, violence to peace. Conquest, continuously and without end, was the only road to security (Thucydides 6.18). Alcibiades made no apologies for his or the city's flaws and excesses; "...the safest rule of life is to take one's character and institutions for better and for worse, and to live up to them as closely as one can." (Thucydides 6.18). Pericles himself bade the Athenians to make the world the "highway of their daring, and everywhere for evil or for good" to leave monuments to their accomplishments (Thucydides 2. 42).



Pericles erred because he never understood the greatness of Athens. He saw her accomplishments and benefits as defined by her empire. He did not and could not elaborate a moral vision. He enjoyed the fruits of others' labors, but never asked how they achieved them. The Athenian envoys to Sparta praised the men who had fought the Persians not for empire but for liberty; when all of its monuments had been put to flame, and when its citizens had been driven into exile, they risked their lives: "...for a city that had an existence only in desperate hope" (Thucydides 1.74).

That Nicias understood this was shown in his speech before the defeat of Sparta at Athens: "Men make the city and not walls or ships without men in them" (Thucydides 7.77), but the very brick in the foundation of state had been left to rot and putrefy, to be made wild with avarice, to know neither its strengths nor its limitations.

A funeral oration was a wonderful way to appeal to the vanities of a people. To praise Athens before Athenians was an easy task. To hear such rhetoric, raised the splendor of Athens and its citizens far beyond reality, making the city appear far better than it actually was. It seduced its listeners, including Socrates, who said he felt stronger, taller, and better looking for three days afterward. During that time, before he returned to his senses, he felt he was a citizen of the Islands of the Blessed, and not of Athens (Menexenus 234-235).

To demonstrate the ease with which a funeral oration can be composed, he repeated a speech just recently given by Aspasia at her home to her followers. Not only was Aspasia Socrates' teacher in rhetoric, Socrates also alleged that she also composed Pericles' *Funeral Oration* (Menexenus 236a-b).

Thucydides began his account of the Peloponnesian War by giving a brief account of the development of Athens. Thucydides reiterated the belief that the exceptionalism of Athens was the result of her stability since earliest antiquity. In contrast to most of the Greek world which had been subject to invasion, dispossession, and warfare, Athens had enjoyed a respite from warfare and violence. Its population was believed to consist of the descendants of its original inhabitants, not of later conquerors. Unlike other areas of Greece, the soil of Attica was poor. The land was not attractive to invasion; the meager bearings of the soil prevented the growth of inequality and factionalism among its residents. Its poverty brought it peace and domestic harmony. While the rest of Greece underwent warfare and civil strife, Athens became a refuge from those fleeing violence (Thucydides 1.2-1.3). Pericles' *Funeral Oration* touched on this history in only one sentence before focusing on the greatness of empire.

Socrates, in contrast, did the reverse. He praised the war dead as the descendants of Athenians who since ancient times had been rooted to the soil of Attica, "...nourished not, as other peoples are, by a stepmother, but by a mother, the land to which they lived....Surely it is most just to celebrate the mother herself first, in this way the noble birth of these men is celebrated at the same time." Athens was a land of virtue in which justice and the gods were acknowledged (Menexenus 237 b-d).

Attica provided all of the nourishment the people needed: wheat, barley, and olives in abundance. There was no scarcity; hard work was rewarded. Attica instructed them on the gods, on the proper form of life, and on the use of arms "...for the defense of the land." (Menexenus 238b). The equality among Athenians that allowed them to work

in a democracy sprung from their common history. They were all sons of a single earth, brothers in equality, before the laws and in habits. The standards of Athenian democracy were the same as those set by an aristocracy: that the citizens with the most wisdom and goodness should guide the city (Menexenus 238c-239).

Socrates praised the Athenian struggles against the Persians. Marathon taught the Greeks not to fear the barbarians by land. Athens had stood alone, receiving only assistance from Sparta, though it had arrived too late. This demonstrated ".....that there is no multitude of men and mass of money that does not give way to valor." (Menexenus 240e). After the sea battles at Salamis and Artemisium, the Greeks lost their fear of barbarians by sea (Menexenus 241 b-c). At Plataea, through joint action with Sparta, they defeated the Persians (Menexenus 241c). The Athenians continued operations across the Mediterranean and expelled the Persians from the seas, making them fear the Greeks.

From that point, the speech diverges into a set of half-truths, ironic statements, and outright falsehoods on the later course of Athenian history. Socrates' funeral oration did not insult its audience, but it made them aware of the course to which Athens turned once it decided to establish its empire.

They were the first after the Persian War to fight for the freedom of Greeks in the new way—against Greeks; and since they proved to be brave men and liberated those to whose aid they came, they were the first to be buried in this tomb with civic honors (Menexenus 242c).

Having defeated the barbarians in joint actions, the Athenians now were able to conquer the other Greeks single-handedly. The disasters of the campaign in Sicily, the

civil war within Athens itself, could not break her spirit. The Persian king who had learned to fear the Greeks found eager allies among Athens's enemies; they supported her destruction. (243-245). The city itself was reduced to civil war, but, despite this, Athens was the greatest of cities. There was nothing to criticize, because even in their civil war, they treated each other moderately (Menexenus 244b).

Socrates' funeral oration, like so many of his dialogues, was a meditation on the application of the Delphic commands: to know thyself and nothing in excess (Menexenus 247e). His use of Athenian history was employed to remind the audience of the connection they had to the soil, its adequacy to meet their needs, and the peaceful relationships that once governed the city. He urged them not to become orphaned from their history, but rather to see themselves as an island, guarded behind walls and living on the fruits and grains of foreign lands. He repeated the message that Athenian fathers would give their sons before battle, focusing on wisdom and moderation. Knowledge without wisdom was simply "...low cunning" (Menexenus 247a). To follow in the ways and values of the ancestors, to maintain their virtue and increase it, would augment their glory. The magnificent treasure of the ancestors, however, was for Socrates not the lands they won, but rather the way they lived. Pericles saw the inheritance of the Athenians only in the fruits of empire (Menexenus 247c). The defeats the Athenians suffered were entirely at their own hands; they destroyed themselves through a refusal to recognize the freedom of a life governed by Delphic self-sufficiency.

## Conclusion

In Chapter 12, I asserted that a careful reading of Thucydides shows the errors of scholars who do not recognize the disastrous consequences of Pericles' decision to enter the Peloponnesian war and his repeated refusal of peace offerings. It shows how these decisions set a course for Athens's own destruction. Pericles' imperial ambitions undermined civic ethos and endangered the entire democratic project. Pericles' policies thrust Athens into a near constant state of war for decades to come, resulting in the destruction of its empire through the decay of its own internal social order and moral system.

I argued that, unlike facile realist interpretations, it is important to recognize that Athens made a choice to create an empire, compelled not by necessity, but by a desire for power and wealth.

Although he cloaked his message in metaphor, Herodotus is similarly critical of Pericles. Plato states that the greatest dangers are not external; they arise from unwise decisions made when states are flush with power.

I showed how Plato and Herodotus both understood that statesmen don't build temples but rather social orders. It is the capacity of these social orders to survive, to endure the passage of time, and to resist both internal decay and external threat, that we find the true art of politics and the moral imperative that grounds realism.

I argued that the enduring values of Athens are not linked to her empire; they are separate and distinct. The empire ultimately threatened the best aspects of Athenian moral and intellectual life and ensured its destruction in war.

I examined in detail the speeches of the Athenians as recorded by Thucydides' in *The Peloponnesian War* to illustrate how the sense of Athenian self-identity became intimately connected with its empire and with the exercise of power through the use of force. These speeches illuminate the way the sophistic view of human nature, having become pervasive in intellectual discourse, is used by Athenians in defense of their empire before their enemies, in speeches against allies, and in internal debates.

I discussed Pericles' famous speeches preserved by Thucydides in his *Peloponnesian War* and examined them in light of Plato's direct critique of Pericles' oration in the *Menexenus*.

I concluded that the men who followed Pericles lacked his intellect and skill. Their policies and values were a continuation of what Pericles had already set in place. Their failures, such as the expedition to Syracuse, were the result of a state that had defined itself only in terms of its power over others. Empires have no sense of limits or boundaries.

## **CHAPTER 13: THE SOCRATIC CHALLENGE TO SOPHISTIC REALISM**

### Overview

In Chapter 13, I will argue that Thucydides' work should be a critical text in international relations, but that Plato should be considered one of its most important theoreticians. I will explain that Plato understands how remote the origins of ancient human social organization are and that humans always begin a new civilization with an ignorance of the past, without recognizing the skills that have been accumulated. For Plato, however, the tragedy of this cycle stems from the fact that individuals do not see their place in time.

I will show how, following the theoretical speculations of the Pre-Socratics, Plato's understanding of history was deeper and richer than that of any of his contemporaries. Unlike them, or us, he was not seduced by those who use history as a form of self-indulgence, to bolster the singular importance of their time, who revel in the portraits of amoral adventurous heroes, or who treat the rise and fall of empires as the story of history, instead of the lessons of history. Neither did he treat the history of the world or the human race as a set of neat, sequential developments. Instead, he knew that the world was composed of forces far larger than those any human being could reasonably alter. Everything in the world was subject to change, decay, and erasure. To

take the established order of one's world as an immortal reality was folly. To become seduced and impressed with the splendor and wealth of the Persians or the new-found empire of the Athenians was childish. These were simply one of many empires which had developed and been destroyed

I will cite multiple instances of how Plato uses metaphor in his writings to express concepts which are very relevant to international relations.

I will emphasize Plato's point that, in coming to properly recognize what is universal in our particularity, we see the patterns of the world unfold (*Republic* VII 525c). As Hesiod himself stated, nothing is fated in the world; therefore, we can use knowledge to shape history in new ways, make new choices. Following Solon, we can learn without suffering, by looking to the ends of things.

*Plato: Historic Memory*

Though Thucydides' work should serve as a critical text in the history of international relations, it is Plato who should be understood as its one of its most important theoretician. Plato's contributions to international relations theory are rich and distinct, and they center on the problem of empire.

Plato understands how ancient human social organization is, that we have lived in communities stretching back into a past that is scarcely imaginable, how the development every conceivable form of government has flourished, in a ceaseless rhythm of expansion and contraction, growth and maturation, birth and corruption. But what can be made of



this tireless set of cyclical developments, how might we be able to both understand it and overcome its most destructive aspects?

Plato understands that our colloquial sense of time obscures from us the immense expanse of time in which humans have existed. Our knowledge of the past is a very small sliver of reality. Human beings have existed either since time immemorial or in some distance point from which we have no memory. Plato's account of the mountain's shepherd is not an account of the origin of mankind as a species. The origin of human beings must have arisen in an even more distant past. If not, human beings have existed eternally. Humans always begin a new civilization with an ignorance of the past, without recognizing the skills that have been accumulated. This is not what Plato is concerned with, however. The tragedy of this cycle stems from the fact that individuals do not see their place in time. They throw themselves into building empires, believing their actions and achievements to be exceptional. A thousand empires have already risen and been destroyed. They are now all forgotten. So, historical knowledge is critical. This is knowledge gained from experience (see Plato's *Laws*, Book III, also Plato's *Statesman*).

Historical memory reflects only a sliver of our total existence as a species. Our history is based on amnesia: on what we fail to remember. We situate ourselves inside of a story that makes us unique and exceptional. In fact, this is an illusion. Nothing we present is altogether novel, but more importantly, that which exists today will one day be destroyed.

Following the theoretical speculations of the Pre-Socratics, Plato's understanding of history was deeper and richer than that of any of his contemporaries. Unlike them, or

us, he was not seduced by those who use history as a form of self-indulgence, to bolster the singular importance of their time, who revel in the portraits of amoral adventurous heroes, or who treat the rise and fall of empires as the story of history, instead of the lessons of history. Neither did he treat the history of the world or the human race as a set of neat, sequential developments. Instead, he knew that the world was composed of forces far larger than those any human being could reasonably alter. Everything in the world was subject to change, decay, and erasure. To take the established order of one's world as an immortal reality was folly. To become seduced and impressed with the splendor and wealth of the Persians or the newly founded empire of the Athenians was childish. These were simply one of many empires which had developed and been destroyed, their names, leaders, and achievements, lost forever.

Across the world, ancient people speak of a great flood that overtook the land and nearly extinguished the human race. Here, in this tale, is one of Plato's greatest and most underappreciated lessons. The flood that all cultures speak about in stories that have been passed down from generation to generation—a flood that drowned armies and kings and destroyed monuments and cities—actually did occur; however, there was not one flood, but several. The world has been destroyed and remade innumerable times. The survivors of each flood are only the simple shepherds on the high mountains, illiterate and without a knowledge of history (Timaeus 22-23 a-d 1230). The human race is being constantly reduced to a state of infancy because it has no sense of history. Each group believes it is the survivor of only one flood. Each group practices the same folly only to suffer the same end.

We do not have access to the knowledge and achievements of these past civilizations. This tragedy, however, is only symptomatic of the senseless refusal of cities and men to understand themselves. Plato is seeking to overcome the challenges that history pose. It is in this way that memory and history allow for us to be saved and not lost. To overcome the link of experience, and suffering, is the only meanings of learning.

*Atlantis, The Ever Present Mirage*

Plato used the myth of Atlantis (elaborated in *Timaeus and Critias*) as a means of elaborating this critical fact. Solon, one of the great reformers of Athens and an ancestor of Plato, traveled the Mediterranean for 10 years after introducing constitutional reforms. There, we are told, Solon learned from the Egyptian priests about the greatness of Athens about which the present inhabitants had no recollection.

Plato recounts the legend which states that the ancestors of the Athenians had once been a great people. They were farmers of simple but virtuous habits who cultivated the soil and themselves. They passed on their possessions and habits to successive generations, living happy lives without ostentatious luxury or gold. (*Critias* 112a-e). Their virtue and moderation made them the leaders of the Greek world. They were renowned for beauty and justice. In time, Atlantis, a great empire originating from beyond the Pillars of Hercules, began to extend the empire and to threaten the entire Mediterranean world with subjugation. The Athenians alone, abandoned by allies, stood against Atlantis. Against all odds, Athens achieved victory. No sooner had they won, however, when the guardians who had defended Athens were destroyed in an earthquake; their memory and

achievements were forgotten by their descendants and countrymen (*Timaeus* 24-25d, 1232).

This myth speaks, of course, not to imagined happenings long ago, but to the Athenian polis who defeated the Persians with deep courage and wisdom. The achievement that allowed the Athenians to do this, the source of their greatness, has been long forgotten. The polis that produced these men who guarded the city against disaster were destroyed by a great earthquake. The earthquake, of course, is none other than the birth of the Athenian empire itself.

The Athenians are ignorant of the sources of their own greatness according to Plato. Instead, they are so enamored by empire they have lost all connection to the traditions that nurtured their ancestors and allowed them to defeat an empire that had vastly greater money and soldiers. On another level, however, this is not so because human souls are made up of a combination of 'same' and different', set inside of the eternal being (*Timaeus* 37). What was and what will be are both connected within an infinite, cycling relationship (*Timaeus* 38).

The subsequent obsession that we have with finding some 'mythical' city of Atlantis is a humorous, if tragic, failure for Plato's audience to grasp the story. There have been many versions of Athens and empires like Atlantis. We need to cease searching for a semi-divine realm and see it is the thousands of ruins cities and nations, buried and forgotten, with only the barest monuments to attest to ever having existed.

Odysseus ventures to the furthest reaches of the world, living among gods, tempted with the promise of immortality, as well as traveling to the underworld and

communicating directly with the dead. Odysseus reencounters his comrades from the Trojan war as well as many of the great heroes of the oral tradition such as Minos and Hercules. Through Odysseus, we witness Agamemnon's lament of having been killed at the hands of his own wife as well as Achilles, though now immortalized at the greatest warrior, longing for the life of even the most impoverished, landless man among the living. (Book 11, 400-630).

Francois Hartog treats the songs of the bard Demodocus as a critical point, a temporal and, therefore, historical union between myth and fact. The archaic hero fought for honor and glory, hoping to one day be commemorated in the songs of his community at his death, and, thus, to achieve a kind of immortality in their memory (Hartog 2000, 390-394). Odysseus transcends the boundaries of death, not only by traveling through the underworld while alive, but in witnessing his own deeds commemorated by the Phaeacians. He asks Demodocus to recount Odysseus' stratagem of the Trojan War, to see how faithful he is to the true story. (*Odyssey* 8. 485-493). Demodocus' story of the fall and destruction of Troy brings Odysseus to tears,

Odysseus praises the bard, but, more critically, becomes the bard of his own stories, the weaver of his own tale, as he recounts for the Phaeacians his own journey since the fall of Troy in the remainder of book 8 and 9. This might, in a broad sense, signal a shift from the epic as a form of collective memory to a narrative of personal experience, but it is representative of Odysseus overcoming travails and once again becoming sovereign in his own life.

To do so, he has to reconcile the myths of Greek culture and their misunderstanding of historical memory: an inability to learn from the suffering of others. Instead, like Oedipus, people only learned through their own suffering. From Zeus, mankind had received an inborn sense of justice and shame, but it was from Prometheus that our true salvation could be found.

Prometheus had stolen fire from the gods to save mankind. This first step freed mankind from the total dependence on nature. It was believed that, in return, Zeus had punished the world by send humanity Pandora's box. This is only a half truth. Prometheus had a brother, Epimetheus. Just as Prometheus represents humanity's savior, Epimetheus represents humanity's folly. Prometheus stands for forethought; Epimetheus for afterthought. It is important to note that it was Epimetheus who made the error of accepting the gift. The word "Pandora" means 'everything,' a source of unlimited potential. This presents blessings but also opportunities.

The cycles of history were marked by the destruction of progress and memory. Humanity would destroy itself through error and excess, and, in the subsequent degradation, return to a state of total ignorance, dwelling in caves like the savage Cyclops.

The Cave is the essential metaphor for human ignorance, but it extends to all times and peoples. People cannot see outside of the process of time itself. They are obsessed with the view that they are somehow extraordinary and that the petty struggles for which they waste their lives are of monumental importance.

Plato, like Herodotus, knows a fact central to the Trojan War. Helen was never in Troy, both speak of struggles against phantoms and illusions of the mind, yet it is these very illusions that people are the most attached to, that give their lives meaning and purpose. In this way, philosophy is a preparation for death, as it requires that we discard our own limitations of time, place, and particularity.

The Cave represents each generation of humanity bound to a particular set of beliefs, customs, and conditions that organize their world. In this way, the cave represents the condition of human convention, our *nomos*. Unlike the sophists, however, human customs and cultures are also representative of *physis*, a natural and universal set of laws that speak directly to the true and potential condition of our species.

It is here that Plato combined philosophy with history, by acting as a mechanism that both understands the 'cave' of limited culture, of time and place, but is able to unite these experiences into a more intelligent and useful whole. For the Greeks, the cave has dual signification and is used in this way by Plato. Within the cave, we see both humanity's point of original ignorance but also the source of sacred revelation.

The Idaean cave, the cave in which Zeus resists after escaping Cronus, is a destination for the interlocutors of the Laws and also is the location from which Minos learned legislation directly from Zeus. From Hesiod, we learn of the greatest achievement of Zeus. Before Zeus, there had been three generations of gods, with each new god usurping authority over the previous. Zeus stops the cycles of shifting rule and usurpation, that forced the gods to engage in violent act from parent to child, and child to parent. This pattern of violence and instability existed among the family of gods, such as

with the great war between the titans and the siblings of Zeus. Zeus broke this cycle fundamentally by giving birth to Athena himself. Athena was the god most capable of challenging his power, but Zeus found a way to absorb her power in a way that prevented it from being used to overthrow him. This brief set of points might seem trivial, but they are a central component of Plato's great political project.

Hesiod also speaks of distinct races that have inhabited the earth, being gold, silver, bronze, the age of heroes, and the age of iron. Hesiod's generation was the race of iron, but its future, like that of all the others, was not fate by the gods, but determined by the choices they made. All the other races, save for the golden race, had been destroyed by their own errors and transgressions and been thrown into Hades. While on earth, the golden race created harmony for their community and sufficient goods to meet all their needs. In time, the golden race was simply 'covered' by the earth, but they were still present. The spirits of the golden age now acted as the guardians of humanity.

Socrates states repeatedly that his daemon is a spirit of the golden race. Through this daemon, Socrates has been guided to avoid wrong and to make the best choices. The daemons are good and wise, or rather, that for Socrates goodness and wisdom are the same thing (Cratylus 397-398). The daemons are not true spirits, but individuals of great virtue and wisdom whom the living should use as models in the conduct of their own lives. For Socrates, the daemonic is found in maintaining historic exemplars as imminent models and guides in our own minds. Through them, we not only can find virtue, but serve as an example to others. In death, we can turn into daemons for others. At the deepest sense, Socrates' task deeply ties philosophy and history together. In learning



from history, both from the greatest of individuals and governments, by absorbing the spirits of their daemons' spirits, we can build towards the harmony of the golden race.

*Delphic Riddles, Greek Tragedy, and Homeric Tales*

Socrates set himself to the task of philosophy to try to answer the riddle of the Delphic Pythia, namely her pronouncement that none were wiser than he. Socrates set off to prove the Pythia wrong, but in his interrogations with his fellow citizens, he discovered that the foundation of wisdom is in accepting the limits of both our knowledge and the a willingness to abandon the prejudice and assumptions we falsely mistake for true knowledge. In his journey, however, he came returned back to the Delphic edicts: know thyself and nothing in excess.

The Pythia answered inquiries and spoke truthfully to those who inquired, but to understand the meaning of her statements often required tragic experiences. Too often, like Croesus, humans interpreted the oracle's riddles in ways that actually fulfilled the outcome they sought to avoid. The riddle of the Delphic oracle, however, is hardly a symptom of a narrow mysticism. Instead, it is symptomatic of the way human beings approach tradition and culture.

In the *Phaedrus*, Socrates criticizes writing. A text simply contains information, without reference to who is reading it. At one level, this might be taken as a sign of an esoteric doctrine, and perhaps it is. But what is central to writing is not that it reveals secrets to individuals it should not, but that in the assimilation and reproduction of information, often people believe they have understood something when they have not.

Philosophy requires dialectic, because it demands that people approach questions from their own interiority, engaging them at their fundamental point of subjectivity.

Plato is said to have abandoned his ambition to be a playwright after his encounter with Socrates. Plato's art is in dialectical philosophical writings, and Plato's first task in reconceptualizing the way philosophy and history are linked together closely by the task of Athenian playwrights. Herodotus saw that communities were formed by the kinds of stories the people tell each other. These stories account both for their differences, but also for similarities. In this way, the 'ancient enmity' of the Greeks and Asians', extending back to Helen, could be reformulated in new ways through a conversation. All communities are formed by, and pass on, stories to maintain their identity and tradition as a people. Regardless of how old a civilization is, each generation must be taught its myths, values, and history for the civilization to continue to exist.

The Greeks shared a complex and rich mythology, but lacked an authoritative priesthood to preserve their stories as static and orthodox scriptures. Greek intellectual dynamism is embodied in the way that Greek tragedy engaged in a dynamic reformulation and creative retelling of traditional myths. The challenge of the tragedian was not in inventing a story. He was not focused on simply producing novelty, but on a more challenging and rewarding task. Namely, it called on playwrights to reach into the myths of their community and draw new, greater, and more powerful meanings from the common myths and stories of the community. The tragedian was not telling a new story, but illuminating new and often previously unexamined aspects of a central and ancient

mythological story to the audience that had always been present in the tale. Like a Delphic riddle, it told a truth that was always present but too long unseen and unrealized.

All the elements of the story were basically the same, but their relationship and the perspective of the audience were altered. The transformative power of theater rested, however, on the capacity of the audience to find themselves in the story, like Oedipus hearing his own story sung by the Phaedians.

In the *Meno*, Socrates argues both that virtue can be taught and it cannot be taught. Memory serves no function by itself. It requires that we ‘encounter ourselves’ in the story, that we engage with the external world through our own interior introspection. Wisdom is born through a dialectic relationship that links the self and the world, that recognizes something true and transcendent in our world of shadows, to see through the particularity of our time, place, materiality, and mortality, and recognize the universal. Now, at first glance, this might be seen as an argument for an aesthetic retreat from the world. That is wrong. One of the most important attributes of any philosopher is possession of a good memory since it also followed, most critically, that we learn to see in the particularity and subjectivity of our own time, place, and temporality, something universal. It is this second step that is revolutionary aspect of history as an intellectual practice emerges. In coming to properly recognize what is universal in our particularity, we see the patterns of the world unfold (*Republic* VII 525c). As Hesiod himself stated, nothing is fated in the world; therefore, we can use knowledge to shape history in new ways, make new choices. Following Solon, we can learn without suffering, by looking to the ends of things.

Historical consciousness acts as a way to make the power of the prophetic eminent in the world. It calls on us to embrace Pythagoras as the true savior of mankind, so that by foresight we might save ourselves.

In Plato's *Republic*, therefore, his task is not to tell a new story, but to reorient our relationship to the oldest stories of the Greeks. For the intellectual and moral poverty of the Greeks rests not on what they had failed to learn, but on what they failed to understand within their own myths.

The *Republic's* initial philosophical questions center around the ring of Gyges. Plato's formulation of the ring of Gyges draws from Homer, Hesiod, but also Herodotus. Herodotus' histories center on the Lydian empire, founded by Gyges, the first to truly wrong the Greeks. In Plato's story, Gyges is not a royal bodyguard but a shepherd.

There was a violent thunderstorm, and an earthquake broke open the ground and created a chasm at the place where he was tending his sheep. Seeing this, he was filled with amazement and went down into it. And there, in addition to many other wonders of which we're told, he saw a hollow bronze horse. There were window-like openings in it, and, peeping in, he saw a corpse, which seemed to be of more than human size, wearing nothing but a gold ring on its finger.

As a shepherd, Gyges represents humanity as ignorant of history, eager to gain power, found empires, commit acts of violence and aggression. Earthquakes are used by Plato to represent the destruction of empires, as Hesiodic 'bad races' are always swallowed by the earth (Critias 112, Timaeus 25). Within the chasm of the earth, Gyges finds the body of a king, namely Odysseus, who is the true figure of the *Republic*.

Encased in a bronze horse, representative of Hesiod's bronze race, the most violence and destructive race; he has a talisman, a ring, that will give Gyges the power to usurp the Lydian throne by violence and found his own empire. Horses are ancient figures of kingship, with horse burial one of the most universal forms of royal sacrificial ceremonies in the world. Odysseus is both a king, but also a trickster, the leader that defeated the Trojans through the construction of the Trojan horse.

The Trojan horse, like Gyges ring, are both understood as gifts. For the Trojans, the horse symbolized their defeat of the Greeks after 10 years of war, the retreat of their enemy. It is in the moment of their perceived victory that they are also in their greatest danger. The ring of gyges is much like Pandora's box, full of a dangerous power, that can unleash 'everything, but only harms those who do not know how to use power, each an Epimetheus who opens a gift without knowing its content.

Socrates' conversation with Thracymachus is emblematic of the ignorance of the Athenians, who in defeating one empire, formed another. Thracymachus believes that all men seek to act as tyrants over others; he believes that strength, power, and domination are the criteria of rule. Justice equals rule by the stronger. After a bit of interrogation, he admits to Socrates that even in a community of thieves who prey on others, they desire a sense of justice and basic forms of conduct and respect within their own circle.

The *Republic* develops further by finding a way to take the myths of the Greeks, identify their truths, and use them to set a new path. Plato had two central interests: to find a way out of the cycle of political violence in order to create a secure and enduring

state and to have wealth enough to meet its need without abandoning its virtue for the chimera of empire.

Plato does this above all by reconciling the account of Hesiod's ages of man, the distinctions in human nature, into a system that can bind them in complementary relationship, and thus use differences to achieve harmony.

For Plato, and later Aristotle, there is a direct link between the character of a city and the soul of its ruler and people. Hesiod posted 5 races of men, which Plato ties with 5 distinct types of souls who create 5 different types of government (*Republic* VIII 544e-545a).

These distinct souls create different types of rule, but, by their own limitations, always establish the criteria for their overthrow by another type of soul, who then continues this cycle repeatedly (*Republic* VIII). But we are descended from all five races, not one alone. Therefore, we have elements of all of them in ourselves. This requires that we learn to first put our own nature in harmony.

Echoing Herodotus' warning about Pericles, Plato argues that inside all of us is a lion, but it is up to us to use nature, what is human and best within us, and not what is savage and inhumane (*Republic* IX 588-589). In feeding the lion, we forfeit the most beautiful part of what we are.

If, by doing so, he enslaves the best part of himself to the most vicious? If he got the gold by enslaving his son or daughter to savage and evil men, it wouldn't profit him, no matter how much gold he got. How, then, could he fail to be wretched if he pitilessly enslaves the most divine part of himself to the most godless and polluted one and accepts golden gifts in return for a more terrible destruction than Eriphyle's when she took the necklace in return for her husband's soul? (*Republic* IX 590).

*Rescuing Homer, Rescuing Ourselves.*

The last book of the *Republic* seems to be an argument against Homer and the poets. Art functions through its distortion of perception, its manipulation of consciousness (*Republic X* 601-602). But then, so does philosophy. Homer has failed to educate the Greeks for two reasons. First, the Greeks have not learned the true lessons contained within his work. Secondly, the Homeric epic requires a better and clearer ending.

With that, Plato returns us to the figure of Odysseus that began the *Republic*. He does this through the story of Er, a man who dies, witnesses the underworld, and returns with the story to help teach others. Ostensibly, Er witnesses' individuals choosing their next life, but this is incorrect. Instead, people are given the chance to pick their own daemons, or exemplary models to follow. As already discussed, daemons are human models, and we are tied to them through historical knowledge, not mystical invocation. But these models of life include examples for all forms of life, not just of those who have achieved wisdom and virtue, not simply golden souls but those of the basest metals. Humans makes their lives. The muses themselves have no role in the matter, with Lachesis stating "...responsibility lies with the one who makes the choice; the god has none" (*Republic X* 671bc). Lachesis is the daughter of necessity, but even in the face of necessity, Plato argues that we still have a choice to shape our lives and must take responsibility for our decisions. Our daemons are based on this world, on our historical and contemporary examples.

But, as Socrates states:

Now, it seems that it is here, Glaucon, that a human being faces the greatest danger of all. And because of this, each of us must neglect all other subjects and be most concerned to seek out and learn those that will enable him to distinguish the good life from the bad and always to make the best choice possible in every situation (*Republic X* 618b).

Here, Plato connects philosophy directly to history, in the most explicit terms.

This point of ‘rebirth’ is one of this world, a moment of consciousness awakening, a point in which humans realize their freedom. But in this, we also encounter the perils presented by the ring of Gyges and the box of Pandora. Freedom and power, argues Plato, require an: “Adamantine determination...lest we be dazzled there by wealth and other such evils, rush into a tyranny or some other similar course of action, do irreparable evils, and suffer even worse ones” (*Republic X* 619).

Er recounts how the first to choose, through greed and lack of foresight, selected tyranny. Only after having selected, did he realize that his choice would lead to him to ‘eat’ his own children (*Republic X* 619c). Those who had suffered least in life were the ones that chose poorly. Having not suffered in life, they had not acquired wisdom. Odysseus, last to choose, chose the life of a simple and private man, having abandoned his chimerical view of ‘honor’ in his experiences in the Trojan War (*Republic X*, 620a-620c). All those who chose, however, are forced to walk through the Plain of Unheeding and drink from the River of Forgetfulness. Er says that the entire party disappeared before his eyes, as there was “...around midnight...a clap of thunder and an earthquake.” As discussed above, thunder and lightning are Plato’s symbolic representations of the



cycles of empire. We must, therefore, conclude that these souls learned nothing from experience and the waters of forgetfulness once again did their cruel work on the minds of humanity (*Republic* 621b).

Socrates says that this story can save us, but to do so, we must traverse the River of Forgetfulness without drinking of its water. We must save this story, and, in so doing, save ourselves and others.

Plato recognizes the importance of having a strong military system, of the necessity of defending the state against acts of aggression. More importantly, however, Plato also recognizes that great states destroy themselves far more than they are destroyed by others. Plato's *Republic* recognizes the international system of states as one of competition and empire, but he also knows that a true government is focused on the wellbeing of its citizens, not the ephemeral 'glories' associated with military conquest. International relations, like the ancient Greeks, has misunderstood the true lesson provided by history. It has been fooled by the mirage of Homeric glory without reading for the true message of Homer's classics. Therefore, like the ancient Athenians, we must begin to learn to look towards the end of thing. Through history, we can learn wisdom without suffering, should we accept the challenge to traverse the Waters of Forgetfulness.

## Conclusion

In Chapter 13, I argued that Thucydides' work should be a critical text in international relations, but that Plato should be considered one of its most important

theoreticians. I explained that Plato understands how remote the origins of ancient human social organization are and that humans always begin a new civilization with an ignorance of the past, without recognizing the skills that have been accumulated. For Plato, however, the tragedy of this cycle stems from the fact that individuals do not see their place in time.

I showed how, following the theoretical speculations of the Pre-Socratics, Plato's understanding of history was deeper and richer than that of any of his contemporaries. Unlike them, or us, he was not seduced by those who use history as a form of self-indulgence, to bolster the singular importance of their time, who revel in the portraits of amoral adventurous heroes, or who treat the rise and fall of empires as the story of history, instead of the lessons of history. Neither did he treat the history of the world or the human race as a set of neat, sequential developments. Instead, he knew that the world was composed of forces far larger than those any human being could reasonably alter. Everything in the world was subject to change, decay, and erasure. To take the established order of one's world as an immortal reality was folly. To become seduced and impressed with the splendor and wealth of the Persians or the newly founded empire of the Athenians was childish. These were simply one of many empires which had developed and been destroyed

I cited multiple instances of how Plato uses metaphor in his writings to express concepts which are very relevant to international relations.

I emphasized Plato's point that, in coming to properly recognize what is universal in our particularity, we see the patterns of the world unfold (*Republic* VII 525c). As

Hesiod himself stated, nothing is fated in the world; therefore, we can use knowledge to shape history in new ways, make new choices. Following Solon, we can learn without suffering, by looking to the ends of things.

## **CHAPTER 14: WESTPHALIA: COMMUNITY BETWEEN STATE AND MARKET**

### Overview

For international relations, the state remains foundational, yet, the criteria of the state lack any formal definition. In addition, the ways that international relations conceptualizes history is problematic.

International relations theory depends on history as the basis of its theoretical analysis with important facets at work in the study of history and its relationship to international relations theory. In this chapter, I will attempt to address several questions: First, can the ahistorical universalism of realist theory apply to all state systems? How can the modern state's relation to colonialism and decolonization help us broaden our understanding of the state as a socioeconomic institution? What will the consequences be of neoliberal functions that weaken the state in order to actively regulate and intervene in the economic environment? Can this transformation of social and political order into a civilization of economic consumerism sustain itself? Will the state become reinvigorated as a zone of social action, or will forms of social solidarity shift away from states? Finally, I will provide some possible ways to address these issues.

### *International Relations and History*

International relations theory depends on history as the basis of its theoretical analysis. There are a number of important facets at work in the study of history and its relationship to international relations theory. I want to consider them in the following ways. First, can the ahistorical universalism of realist theory apply to all state systems? Is the Westphalian state a distinct state system or merely a continuation of an historical process? Further, what were the historical transformations within the Westphalian state and how did they influence the way the international system of states operates through time? How can the modern state's relation to colonialism and decolonization help us broaden our understanding of the state as a socioeconomic institution? Finally, does globalization represent a reorganization of states into larger states (regionalism), or a caesura of the state as an active political institution? The Westphalian state transformed social relations into political relationships. The modern state politicizes social relations, and capitalism, in turn, seeks to depoliticize the state. Neoliberal functions weaken the state in order to actively regulate and intervene in the economic environment. In this way, the state as a political actor is being subsumed by forms of economic governance, shifting regulatory management into an international technocratic system of governance. Can this transformation of social and political order into a civilization of economic consumerism sustain itself? Will the state become reinvigorated as a zone of social action, or will forms of social solidarity shift away from states?

*Realism: Neither Explaining the Past Nor Predicting the Future*

First, realism treats the logic of interstate competition as timeless. Therefore, the principles of realism can describe the international relations of many distinct state systems. Ostensibly, this allows for comparative analysis of many different state systems. However, because of the inherent universality of realism as always operant within interstate systems, the distinction among state systems are unimportant and against the explanatory power of the theory. In reality, realism works more by imposing a set of categorical assumptions on systems than as a way to truly understand the system of states.

For neorealists, it is the transhistorical and immutable nature of anarchy that organizes the competition among states, that gives realism its explanatory power. As Waltz argues, "...the logic of anarchy does not vary with its content.....The logic of anarchy obtains whether the system is composed of tribes, nations, oligopolistic firms, or street gangs" (Waltz 1990, 37). By seeking to render distinct historical events and phenomena as equivalent, it cannot identify the vast differences among historical periods. These errors, I argue, come primarily from the ahistorical nature of social science generally.

I believe that the best path moving forward for the field is to understand the international relations system as part of a broader process of human evolutionary development. We must contextualize the international system as one element within a

broader historical evolution, reflecting our species' development into increasingly interdependent and complex forms of social organization. This historical transformation-- the growth and transformation of adaptive and expansive forms of cooperation— represents the central dynamism in human biological and social history. We cannot treat the interaction of city-states of thousands and empires of millions as perfect equivalents. We must also be sensitive to and be able to explain the shift in organizational structures and affiliation in identity that allows us to form larger and more complex social units such as cities, nation states, empires, and universal religious communities.

Neorealist theory occludes any consideration of the dynamic at work within the state, on the distinctions among different units, and ignores important trends in the development of the international system as a whole. This failure takes on both theoretical and historical dimensions. Theoretically, international relations as a theory of interstate struggle and competition is premised on the natural and inevitable nature of conflict and competition. Conflict is naturalized, and cooperation is broadly ignored or explained in terms of the hard power dynamic that only serves to reinforce the established assumptions of realism.

International relations, as a theory of interstate relations, must become more sensitive to the historical dynamics within states since these have effects on the way international systems are organized. Furthermore, to function as states in international relations, states have developed complex political systems of government internally.

*Anarchy: Man's Equality vs. States' Inequality*

The sources of insecurity for individuals and states are different. Why? The dangers of anarchy among individuals in the state of nature arise from their *equality*. However, the *inequality* of states is the central problem of international relations. Unlike individuals, states can stand in incredible inequality with respect to their material conditions: population, military extension, resources, and territorial expanse. This points to the critical role that the internal organization of the state plays in the dynamic of interstate systems. The power distribution within the system is not static. That is, power is not an unchanging 'total.' It does not represent a sum of 100, with its division determining the character of states, but with the result always returning to the same 100. Power is generative, additive, and has multiple characteristics. States, moreover, are not rigid and unalterable structures; rather, they are fluid and dynamic social orders that must restructure their internal organization if they are to overcome external challenges.

Waltz recognizes this because he sees imitation and balance as the two ways that states adapt to anarchy. The international system acts as an ecological pressure that forces adaptation. Imitation allows states to adapt to the innovations of other states. In so doing, they not only effectively meet challenges posed by rivals, but they can also become increasingly similar, thus, increasing uniformity. In order for states to survive, they adapt to each other in ways that make them have similar characteristics (Waltz 1979, 93-101).

This process, however, argues precisely against treating all 'units', from gangs to tribes, as equivalent.



*Positivism: Predicting State Behavior*

The claims of realism dominate the field, but its central function rests on its capacity to make predictions about state behavior. I want, therefore, to focus on two forms of ‘scientific’ approaches to international relations: on data-driven statistical modeling and on structural realism’s record of accurately predicting state behavior.

To be scientific, many social scientists argue that particular events must be explained by way of general laws (Hoffmann 1977, 35–47). The deductive-nomological method of scientific hypothesis testing is treated as the best way to organize questions, theories, and propositions about the international system. The use of the DN model of causal explanation exemplifies a quest to discover universal laws within the social world. As Hempel argues about the application of the DN model to history, general laws are required to explain any event scientifically. Critically, for Hempel, explanation and prediction are equivalent. Explanations of past events must be formed by reference to general laws. Because past explanations are tied to general laws, by their very definition, they also make predictions about the future. Explanations require theories; theories must be general, and the validity of any explanation is based on its capacity to tie particular events to general laws.

The DN model of explanation has been critical in the advancement of scientific knowledge. Its application to social science, however, has delivered no true laws. It has, however, been imposed as the only methodology considered legitimate by many social science and international relations scholars.

Neopositivism is guided by a belief that all natural and social forms of knowledge can be discovered by a single method. In other words, it is a zealous believer in the unity of the sciences. Hempel sought to validate this claim by asserting that the scientific method could be used to identify general laws in history. History must inherently operate according to a set of laws such that historical time and distinct phenomena can be united into the same descriptive categories and empirical processes. Attempts to understand the mind, beliefs, and desires of historical agents is impermissible. These psychological explanations are not valid because human beings are simply another set of atomistic particles compelled by impersonal forces that push and pull agents in specific directions. The social sciences are limited by their inability to identify all the conditions that produce an event, but, provided the data is available, the laws that govern human history can be identified (Hempel 35-43, 1942).

In actual terms, the DN model is highly contested among neopositivists who are divided into two distinct camps. Although the deductive-nomological method seems to represent the most intellectually ‘sophisticated’ mode of theorizing within neopositivism, most of the actual quantitative work is undertaken within inference-probabilistic models. The distinctions between the inductive-probabilistic and the deductive-nomological methods might seem minor, but they are actually very significant. Unlike Hempel, who assumed that probabilities need to stand in place of certainties by a lack of complete information, the inferential models often do not treat outcomes as inevitable. In practical terms, most quantitative studies within the social sciences are highly inductive.

Investigators employ probabilistic models which depend on correlations to build arguments and rarely subsume explanations under universal laws.

The Correlates of War project would seemingly embody the highest ambition of neopositivism: to identify the conditions that produce war according to a universal law. Even a cursory reading of the works of David J. Singer, the founder of the Correlates of War, reveals the philosophical and methodological incoherence that guides its research. Singer, a champion of the scientific study of politics, criticizes the qualitative, traditional methods of diplomatic history. He defends the utility of large, quantitative statistical methods as a means of producing real knowledge and insight. Singer hopes to transform politics into a science. He advocates the advancement of political science into a behavioral science by raising the quality of research to that of the level of biology or chemistry. In the level of analysis problem published in 1961, he asserts that a model must provide: 1) an accurate description, 2) explain the relationship of the phenomena being studied, and 3) make predictions (Singer 1961, 78-79). In building the Correlates model, Singer creates the database and establishes the indicators. The focus is on identifying structural phenomena within a realist theoretical framework. Any model of politics has several ecological phenomena and behavioral variables. Within the ecological variables, according to Singer, are material, structural, and cultural attributes that condition particular nation-to-nation relations, the regional systems, as well as the global system as a whole. Singer focuses on the structural issues, over material or cultural factors, considering them to be those most responsible for war (Singer 1976, 27-30).

In principle, the Correlates of War is modeled on a structural and neorealist theory of international relations. At the same time, Singer treats war as a result of highly improbable events coalescing in specific moments in history. War is underdetermined as arising from unique circumstances, often under distinct causal processes. Wars are not inevitable (Singer 2000, 17). Specifically, like human beings individually, states as social organisms have the ability to make choices that are not conditioned exclusively by structure.

Taking a middle ground in what is essentially a specific case of the free will vs. determinism debate, one can agree that nations move toward outcomes of which they have little knowledge and over which they have less control, but that they nevertheless do prefer, and therefore select, particular outcomes and attempt to realize them by conscious formulation of strategies (Singer 1961, 85).

Singer's positivism forces him to search for science at all levels of social life. Therefore, state policy is treated as centrally a question of the elites who control the institution and their interests, as opposed to the transpolitical 'national interest' of the neorealists. In addition, per his desire to raise the scientific qualities of political science, Singer's theoretical interests extend beyond the domain of interstate relations (Singer 2000, 13-14). The relationship of war is inherently related, though not identical, to organized warfare. Behavioral science demonstrates that aggression is universal among species. Ethnologists have demonstrated, nevertheless, that among mammalian species, the way that aggression is expressed is highly contingent on environmental factors (Singer 2003, 246). Our ability to fight is also balanced by an ability to make peace. Singer, therefore, does not see war as a product of highly-deterministic social processes,

nor, even of our genetic makeup as defined by an innate capacity for aggression. Warfare is a product of a highly regimented, socialization that transforms the young into killers through indoctrination (Singer 2003, 248). He places culture as the powerful driver of human activities, treating war as a tragedy brought about by the ambitions of cynical politicians and priests who profit from ignorance (Singer 2003, 256-60). Therefore, the validity of a model that correlates war across historical, cultural, and economic systems seems to be of questionable validity, yet Singer's propensity for inductivism knows no bounds. In response to criticism, he defends inference and rejects that we can ever truly 'know' how the world works, criticizing scientific realists who believe they can discover true causal laws (Singer 2000, 12).

I highlight the myriad problems, both logical and theoretical, raised by the work of David Singer to demonstrate that inductive, quantitative models rarely generate genuine forms of knowledge. Ironically, the DN model is deployed most readily within the qualitative works of the neopositivists.

The most common use of structuralist models of international relations do not use statistics or formal models. Instead, neorealist assumptions help to make predictions about how states will behave given the anarchical nature of the international system.

### *General Laws: Fate or Free Will?*

If we discovered universal laws in the social sciences, what kind of implications would that have? Perhaps we have not succeeded in identifying general laws in human social behavior because of a lack of data. Given the appropriate data, we should be able

to calculate all future events. The causal forces that have created the present will mechanistically determine the future. After all, everything is determined by its previous set of conditions that compel it to act and move towards a specific course. If we follow the argument to its logical conclusion, we are greeted by LaPlace's demon.

If processes are generated by the system with a law-like regularity, can knowledge help alter the behavior of states or can it only explain the determined course of history? For structural realists, conflict is produced by nature of anarchy, the general law of the system. If the system is determined, neorealism cannot act as a guide to the formation of state policy and to the behavior of states. If, on the other hand, nothing can be done to prevent wars from breaking out once initial conditions had been met, it would hold little value as a social scientific enterprise, providing, effectively, no benefit to the world.

However, if the international system were on the brink of war, and knowledge about the conditions that produced wars could be used to prevent the outbreak of conflict, it would immediately undermine the validity of a theory to act as a general law.

Finally, since macro level processes are aggregates of micro level actions, it would also have to acknowledge the deterministic nature of all human activity, from that of individuals to that of the international system as a whole. This set of logical propositions is entailed by the deductive-nomological theories.

John Mearsheimer's works illustrate the profoundly deterministic character of structural realism. To his credit, Dr. Mearsheimer has never tried to hedge his predictions; he has made them clearly and publicly. In this way, he serves only as an

exemplar of the kind of monocausal logic that dominates the field. Mearsheimer's predictions proceed from the application of Waltz's structural realism (although, obviously with Mearsheimer's own offensive realist interpretation). Mearsheimer predicted that NATO would collapse with the demise of the Soviet Union. European nations would enter into an arms race. France and Germany would again be each other's greatest concern. He asserted that the Soviet threat was the only reason that Europe had been so closely allied with the United States. In the wake of this change, it would once again become a rival (Mearsheimer 1990b, Mearsheimer 1990a). The argument behind this was based on pure questions of state interest, balance of power, and military might. In short, neorealism has not been a good predictor of how nations have reacted.

Non-positivists are dismissed as basically utopian dreamers who believe that a world society, free of war and aggression, can be achieved by the force of ideas. Theorists who focus on the social and normative beliefs that underpin the state system, with interests in identity and culture, are treated under the umbrella term of 'Critical Theorists' (Mearsheimer 1994, 37-47). By this, Mearsheimer simply puts forward a theory which maintains that states and its citizens essentially lack the ability to learn. To learn, inherently, would mean being less conditioned to react within a narrow range of state behaviors. In addition, Mearsheimer warns optimists to recognize that from the period of the Westphalian system until the inauguration of the Cold War, Europe produced centuries of violent conflicts. Though this is beyond doubt, it seems questionable to treat the War of the Spanish Succession and the First World War as the inevitable results of multipolarity.

Though Mearsheimer's theoretical commitments remain centered squarely within neorealist structuralism, many of his central intellectual concerns deviate radically from the kinds of problems structural theories can predict or explain. Mearsheimer's work on the Israeli Lobby, in contrast, emerges from his belief that the foreign policy objectives of the United States are being driven by domestic politics and not by objective national interests. Ironically, Mearsheimer, one of the strongest champions for realism's being the most appropriate paradigm to explain international relations, wrote an entire book that contradicts the theory which maintains that states narrowly pursue their own materially-conditioned self-interest (Mearsheimer and Walt, 2007). Indeed, most recently, Mearsheimer has described American foreign policy as 'unhinged' and driven by a paranoid fear that the world is full of threats from the smallest and most local of conflicts (Mearsheimer 2014).

Over the past few decades, international relations has increasingly focused on modeling research questions that are clearly stated and tested as scientific hypotheses. As already briefly reviewed, however, the inductivism that guides these investigations has a highly impoverished or even absent theory upon which to base the formation of hypotheses. Mearsheimer and Walt, for their part, have recently spoken out against this trend within international relations. By reducing international relations research into hypothesis testing and quantitative models, it has become an intellectual discipline increasingly distant from the world that it is trying to study and explain. In consequence, it loses relevance (Mearsheimer and Walt 2013, 427-57). That said, structural realism has failed to explain almost all features of the post-Cold War world. The field, therefore,



refutes itself, as its dismal predictive power argues against its foundation as a scientific theory.

*The Westphalian State: Critical, or More of the Same?*

The feudal order that preceded the Westphalian state was very different. Authority was divided among distinct social institutions. The distinctions between the medieval and modern world are important because they demonstrate that different social and economic systems produce alternative types of international order. The hierarchy of the Middle Ages is important because it demonstrates the distinctions that exist between the structure of governance and the processes at work within the Westphalian state system. Feudal rule was personal, familial, and decentralized. Territories were allotted and offices were awarded based on personal inheritance and relationship to the king. Governmental titles and offices could be purchased and transferred. A nobleman or noblewoman might be the ruler of territories that were non-continuous. Vassals also had a great deal of autonomy from the king, as he was dependent upon their military service (Spruyt 1994, 80-82).

The modern world is characterized by the emergence two important developments: specifically, the emergence of territorial states and the rise of capitalism (Wallerstein, 1974). The state and capitalism represent the central institutional nexus that have come to dominate human social organization. The Westphalian state does not represent a continuation of a singular logic of anarchy; it is something distinct and liminal. In addition, the nature of the internal development of the Westphalian state plays an important role in the evolution of the international system and global capitalist

development. In early modern Europe, there existed hundreds of governments possessing a wide variety of attributes. Through intense competition, incorporation, and expansion, however, the state system of Europe was divided into territorial states (Spruyt 1994, 527-57).

The Westphalian state underpinned two transformative processes: first, the disruption of traditional social networks that regulated life through the introduction of capitalism, and, second, the development of the state as a fused space of social/political activity.

I want to briefly focus on the state in three ways. I want to first trace the development of territorial states' development to emerge as an organizational form of governance that dominates Western Europe. Second, I want to trace how the organizational capability of states helped them project power across the globe and to establish territorial empires and market systems to extract wealth globally. Third, I want to examine the emergence of decolonization which made states a universal institution around the world.

### *The Territorial State*

The Treaty of Westphalia has become a useful milestone by which historians and political scientists divide the world into medieval and modern. Westphalia was a solution to the wars fought as a result of the Reformation. States that were advocates of the Reformation supported the development of the Westphalian model of the state. In lands

in which the Reformation found few supporters and/or was effectively squashed, there was no interest in the development of the state system (Philpott 2000, 224).

The Westphalian states were defined by their sovereignty. Sovereignty referred to the authority which a monarch had to govern over a specific territory, free from intervention by outside powers. In linking sovereignty with territoriality, the operation of government became fixed into a concrete geographic space, and its institutions were formed in relation to a society. Authority and sovereignty were understood as rights of monarchs over the state—not as characteristics of states or people (Osiander 2001, 253-57).

The state is born of its intensive capital needs which require that taxes be assessed to bring in sufficient revenue to fund its operation, particularly in the military sphere. Furthermore, to remain an active and adaptive state, it must also have the ability to reshape the economic sphere. This is particularly exemplified in the transition from an agricultural to an industrial economic system (Levi, 1998).

Monarchs needed to centralize power because of the changing nature of warfare and economics in the early modern period. The scale and scope of warfare had increased, requiring the development of larger and more professional armies. The gun replaced the sword; the soldier replaced the knight. The King's dependence of vassals was diminished by the growing wealth of the burghers, who had the means to finance the king's militaries. Monarchs gained power by centralizing authority against the aristocracy and by developing bureaucratic systems to centralize and implement their rule (Spruyt 1994, 89-93).

The culmination of the growing power of the merchant class through their alliances with monarchs helped shape the laws and practices of states. This facilitated capitalist systems of production. The intense capital needs of monarchs made them responsive to the needs of the merchants while focusing on extracting as much revenue from the territories they ruled as possible. Over time, the states were transformed by the nature of early capitalism into political systems that were representative of the primacy of economic accumulation (Downing 1992, 239-42).

The increasing requirements of warfare among European powers, it is argued, catalyzed the development of the modern state. Charles Tilly, one of the most well-known scholars on state formation, stated: 'War made the state and the state made war.' The state did not arise from a conscious desire of rulers to establish states; it emerged from conflicts that place systemic pressures on rulers to engage in warfare. Overtime, the mechanism of the state emerged as an unanticipated byproduct of this process (Tilly 1990, 21-26).

Many, such as Benno Teschke, invest little significance in Westphalia. Long after Westphalia, dynastic interests drove continental politics rather than questions of state (Teschke 2002, 5-14). The economic and social reorganization of the state, however, was critical. States that were most able to fundamentally reorganize their internal political order, dissolving the established institutions and customs from the medieval period, were the most modern (Downing 1992, 239-42.).

The state developed first as a coercive apparatus. It had the capacity to project violence externally and a system of internal mechanisms to monitor, regulate, and extract

resources. As the state grew, newly conquered territory needed to be administered. The military institutions of the state were shifting increasingly into broader civilian bureaucratic institutions.

Hui shows that credit systems and access to credit can be determinate in the formation of the state. Easy access to capital allows the state to borrow readily from established banks rather than develop independent revenue streams. In Europe, capital markets allowed states not to develop expensive and highly effective forms of taxation and collection because there already existed substitutes. The demands of power, however, forced rulers to find alternative ways to extract resources and raise revenue (Hui 2005, 140-42.).

Modern states develop by achieving a critical balance between capital and coercive force to forge a state with the economic resources that endow it with the military capacity to a) survive against other like-organized states, and b) conquer weaker states. Therefore, war is the central driver behind the state, and it plays a critical role in its maintenance.

### *Economization of Social Relations*

The economic development of the state, however, altered the internal organization of traditional societies. Feudal systems were forms of exchange and production embedded within social networks. They were organized around class and familial relationships, and they focused on the distribution of prestige goods and the expropriation of surplus agriculture. These were not based on an expensive economic system driven by

technical innovation, market prices, and exportation. As Karl Polanyi powerfully demonstrates in his classic, *The Great Transformation*, the revolutionary nature of capitalism was in the commodification of social relations, with social systems of exchange being replaced by economic market imperatives. Land, labor, and money, which had previously been primarily social in character, were placed into the competitive capitalist system. As Polanyi has commented, the social system became subsumed under the market system. The development of capitalism globally, however, depended on its maintenance by governments. The function of capitalism acted against the society in which it operated because, in tying labor, land, and money to market exchange, it destroyed how societies were organized and the ways people interacted (Polanyi 2001, 57-71).

The market functions in its capacity to atomize individuals; production required the immiserating of the peasants. By breaking the social networks on which they relied, it forced them to engage in labor. Capitalist production must produce poverty, because it acts as a power that compels laborers to live by necessity and to meet the needs of the market. The advancement of liberalism and the articulation of a self-regulating market economy were treated as natural principles of social organization.

The state was still highly dependent on alliances with strategic classes for its capacity to finance its development. In the study of 17<sup>th</sup> century Netherland, Julia Adams demonstrates that the Dutch were able to achieve great power status in Europe in the absence of a highly centralized state. Instead, an alliance among aristocratic families and merchant groups was able to finance the colonization of territories. These institutions,

such as the Dutch East India Company, were private individuals who acted as sovereigns in the states that they conquered. In addition, they often acted in conformity with the policies adapted by the elite of the state, but their interests were never identical. The Netherland did not centralize the state. Elite interests are important factors in their own right (Adams 2005, 34-35).

It was only in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, according to Hui, that the state developed as the most powerful and unchallenged institution. It had powers of economic production, trade, taxation, and military service, as well as a trained bureaucracy formed by education and organized according to capabilities, not merely by personal loyalties and ties (Hui 2005, 33-36.). The emergence of the modern state was the result of alliances developed not only within classes, but, importantly, also across classes to resist the unmitigated economization of social life (Downing 1992, 239-42.)

Traditions, social identities, and relationships had been destroyed. In their place, national identities emerged. State populations became nationalized, with a shared culture and identity.

The state makes the society, but it does so through the ability to forge a common identity within its subjects, so that they not only recognize the state as legitimate, but also recognize themselves and others as members of a single community.

States that can raise funds and act independently of the interests of the financial classes, that can both apply coercion but also generate support and loyalty, emerge as the strongest states in the modern period. (1990 Tilly, 101-04).

The interests of the state and its elite were growing more diverse and more divergent. The efforts of the British government to bring the British East India Company under its authority were highly resisted and contested. The company, nevertheless, used its influence within the British government to subsidize its cost of operations. The Tea Act of 1773 exempted the company from having to pay taxes on the tea it sold in the American British colonies. This effectively undercut profitability to all rival suppliers and was the catalyst for the Boston Tea Party (Frank 1998, 202-04).

The economic predations of capitalist interests were increasingly threatening the ability of government to function. In addition, the forces of capitalist production were being resisted, as it acted increasingly as a threat to the constitutive nature of the society. The state, therefore, acted as an institution that both facilitated the expansion of capitalism as well as a mechanism to mitigate against the destructive powers inherent to the capitalist (Jones 1991).

Populations entered the political space because of the destructive nature of the economic system. The political sphere, as represented in the 'state,' increasingly embodied the 'social' space that formed an individual's identities and affiliations.

Governments became more responsive as the populations they governed became more mobilized. A state that was widely at variance with its society and which governed in ways that abrogated its responsibility and ties to society, were unstable or weak. This process is mirrored, though on a more limited basis, in the nature and function of the Greek polis. In both cases, the state acts as a collective representative body tied closely to and produced by the society in which it operates.



The 19<sup>th</sup> century is understood as a paradigm of the peaceable and felicitous market-based liberal international system. In fact, it is in the 19<sup>th</sup> century that the capitalist system, which economizes the social world into a market, confronted the social needs of communities. Populations increasingly mobilized to resist the market, expanding the state into a more responsive system of representation and governance. The state became increasingly embedded within the society it governed. As Polanyi aptly notes, the confrontation between the market and society would culminate in the violent wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It must be remembered, argues Polanyi, that these political movements did not grow independently; they emerged directly as a need for society to respond to the destructive forces of the market (Polanyi 2001).

*The Westphalian State System: Internal Changes in the State Transform the International System*

For international relations, the Westphalian state underwent critical shifts in its internal organization that had a profound effect on the logic of the international system. The international system produced by Westphalia cannot be understood solely in terms of the development of sovereign, territorial states. The internal organization of the state played a critical role in the nature of the international system.

Over time, Westphalian states changed from monarchical, to bourgeoisie, to the ‘socialization’ of the state with the advance of mass politics (in social democratic, communistic, or fascistic movements).

Monarchical states balanced against Napoleonic France and worked in alliance to prevent revolution within their states. The 19<sup>th</sup> century liberal order which had developed under British hegemony ended as states' internal organization shifted from bourgeois liberal control to a more democratic, representative government.

Liberalism sought to fuse the social order within the market system and to develop systems of government that function as regulatory support agencies. The advance of mass political movements, however, overturned the supremacy of the market. Society became politicized; the state became socialized, and the market was increasingly regulated. The battle between society and the state centered around control of the state.

Both E.H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau, pillars of international relations theory, recognize how important processes at work within the Westphalian state were to the nature of the international system as a whole.

The work of Carr exemplifies this awareness. The modern state in its development established a very close relationship with the society that it created as a national unit. As the state increasingly enfranchised its citizens—not only demanding military service and taxation, but also giving them greater legal protections as well as governmental representation and participation—it established the state as a powerful locus of identities, loyalties, and values. For Carr, this also hindered the capacity of communities that exist beyond the territorial dimensions of the state as ethical and cultural networks. Although they were previously international in scope, they were now brought inside the borders of the state (Carr 45, 22-34).

For Morgenthau, the balance of power worked because it was organized by the European aristocracy; they shared a common culture and ethos that collectively invested in maintaining stability (Morgenthau 1978, 226-27).

The democratization of the state radically ruptured the balance of power because the introduction of nationalism and democracy shifted the nature of the state and made domestic politics a cornerstone of foreign policy. The 'high' politics of foreign policy were not merged into, and subsumed by, the low politics of popular electioneering and factionalism (Morgenthau 1978, 253).

For both Morgenthau and Carr, the popular politics of the state and the development of a virulent nationalism were central to the increasingly violent and uncompromising nature of 20<sup>th</sup> century international relations. The state acted as the source of moral identity; the state took on its own mythological exigencies, and became the source from which people made decisions as 'nations' in a struggle for survival.

For Carr, the democratization process of continental states led to a transformation in their internal organization and their external conduct. It culminated in the development of a highly expansionistic and jingoistic nationalism that came to define and destroy the world forged by the bourgeois hegemony of the British empire. Its destructive power resided in the 'socialization' of the state's populace, with the state coming to represent the total project of its citizens. As such, it led to the adoption of protectionist economic policies and a high states zero sum competition among nations (Carr 1945, 18-34).

It is precisely in the idealized universalism of the state that the major political revolutions of the West have been revolutions within the state. The symbolic and institutional structure of the state are not only preserved but also advanced. Over time, this lead to the increased enfranchisement and incorporation of populations into a common body and states into more representative institutions. This movement is centered on the view of the state as the political embodiment of a society, and an understanding that governments are public and moral institutions.

*The State, State Autonomy, and the State in Society*

As the traditional social system, with its complex network of local, familial, and religious ties was destroyed, the states became nations, with individuals united in affiliation as members of a common political body. For the state, the closer the relationship it maintains with its society, the greater is the power of the state. Conversely, the greater the distance between the state and the society it rules, the weaker is the state.

As the state came to embody a community, the state linked social, ideological, and economic relations into a concrete social space. These processes then reinforce each other. Mann, for instance, defines power as emerging from social networks. For Mann, human interactions are organized around four basic social phenomena: ideological, military, economic, and political (Mann 1993, 2). The 'state' or 'society' is embedded within a multiplicity of such social networks. Though it could be claimed that these constitute distinct and contradictory ways of 'reasoning' (different logics and different interests), it is more often the case that these distinct social phenomena overlap and

interact in ways that are mutually supportive and reinforcing. Put another way, these are in an interdependent relationship. No social phenomena can be effectively reduced to one element of the model. No single source of power is sufficient to govern long term, nor is it effectively shielded from influence and constraint by others.

A central feature of 20<sup>th</sup> century history are revolutions within states. These are arguably more important to defining how the international system is organized, than would be simply the conflicts among states.

Theda Skocpol develops a theory of the state that grants the state its own agential and independent social power. The state could and is often transformed through social revolutions. This is a consequence of the intransigence of a ruling class unable and/or unwilling to reform the state's economic and social relations in ways that strengthen and modernize the state to meet the challenges of the international system. For Skocpol, the key feature of revolutions is the transformational power that they give to the state, centralizing power and overcoming the previous limits that were placed on its efficient operation by the particular interests of the dominant class (Skocpol 1979, 161-63).

States have achieved greater power in the modern world. This power is generated not by an increased autonomy between the state and society, but by their fusion. Neither the state nor society can be treated as bound by a single identity or rationality, however. The state does not operate as the only social institution within civil society. For Mann, the state's autonomy is achieved, not because it acts as a mechanism of control above society. It acts as an instrument within society through which cooperation can be achieved, differences negotiated and reconciled, and civil society enabled to act. The

state makes laws and enforces contracts, but its power to do so is magnified precisely because civil society participates in making laws. Subsequently, it acts in concert with the state in recognizing, obeying, and enforcing laws.

The state and social interactions are not inherently oppositional or contradictory. In fact, the power of the state can be vastly increased in its wealth, authority, and capacity to project power through its relationship to the social system it governs.

The power of a state depends on its ability to act as a public institution. It also depends on its ability to maintain autonomy and resist domination. This is particularly true in terms of the state's relationship with economics. The challenge of a state is to develop its capacity to mitigate the effects of economic dislocation brought on by capitalism as well as to organize its economic system to increase production and wealth.

Society now became organized and defined in terms of the state, and the state became an institution that regulated the interrelationship of society and the market.

The central dynamic at work is cooperation, as social interactions can achieve benefits that are collective and cumulative, rather than a set of limited and oppositional interactions between parties that are defined in terms of 'winners' and 'losers.' To understand the state, we must understand society. It is in the development of human sociality that, I believe, a cognitive theory of the state is discoverable.

### *Imperialism*

Capitalism and military conflict shape the Westphalian state. The military systems and economic processes that drove the development of the state also facilitated the ability

of Western states to project power globally and to build empires. By the 19<sup>th</sup> century, nearly all of the world was under Western political control.

The political and territorial domination of European powers over their imperial empire was facilitated by financial, technological, and scientific knowledge. Certainly, the discovery of the Americas and the vast wealth extracted from its territories were important parts of the story. However, as is now much acknowledged, the instruments of domination—such as guns, cannon, and the compass—were first invented in Asia. Economically, Asia was much wealthier than Europe historically and had comparable living standards until the 1800s. It was only with the advent of industrialization that a ‘great’ divergence in economic wealth among world systems became truly pronounced (Pomeranz 2000).

For the purposes of this paper, I want to focus on a central element of imperialism: specifically, that Western imperial control was facilitated by the ways traditional social networks were delinked from politics. Their political incorporation, therefore, was facilitated precisely because the dimensions of governmental authority, were divorced and distinct from more pronounced and determinative social, kin, and religious networks.

Colonial authorities were not strongly resisted because they were simply the newest of a series of governmental authorities that took power by force and used its position to extract resources. Traditional governments sought to extract tribute, but they were little more than piratical bands. European imperial forces were not a direct

challenge to their social systems which were organized to insulate themselves from politics.

The central element of colonialism, therefore, is not that the colonized had weak and deficient states, but that the social order's central organizing characteristics were not defined or dependent on inclusive or responsive political processes.

Military power always underpinned imperial control, but governance was exercised effectively through a shockingly small bureaucracy which was focused on resource extraction. Indeed, even among the most populated and socially complex colonies such as India, the entire Indian civil service totaled fewer than 1000 individuals at the time of independence. They oversaw a population of over 300 million (Dewey 1993, 3).

From the inception of European overseas empires until the end of the Second World War, Japan was the only society that not only successfully resisted imperial domination, but also developed and modernized to challenge Western military and economy domination directly. Indeed, within a few decades of the Meiji revolution (1868), Japan defeated Russia in direct military confrontation (1904-1905) (Buzan and Lawson, 2015, 154-61).

The power of the Western nations and Japan was the result of a politically ordered society. By this I mean the emergence of the state and the incorporation of the social sphere into a political sphere. Functionally, this was achieved by the ability of the state to merge into a national identity strong enough to incorporate and subsume the various



ethnic, regional, and religious differences among its population and to introduce a broader national identity.

The state could act as the central point of reference and affiliation for its subjects. This required the capacity of the political space to become the hegemonic point of reference and affiliation among a state's subjects. It also required the capacity of the state to structure the economic systems of production.

### *Post-Colonialism*

The territorial boundaries of Western empires were arbitrarily chosen at European conferences that divided tribes and communities into separate countries. Furthermore, the post-colonial states were created out of the administrative units of Western empires who never developed positive instruments of governance.

The state, however, as an institution has become the most prominent social institution in the world. In the wake of the Second World War, Western empires were overturned and the world was organized into a global, postcolonial system of nation states. Sovereign states form the basis of the international system. Identities are now primarily 'national,' if only in name. Who you are and where you come from always is answered by 'nationality.'

With the advent of post-colonialism, the juridical definition of statehood became central. The legal recognition of sovereignty is procedural rather than a result of the power and capacities of the state to demand recognition. As Robert Jackson has recognized, in much of sub-Saharan Africa, the state exists primarily by the legal

authority that has been granted to it by the international community, irrespective of the character or capacity of the state to govern.

In general this juridical foundation of statehood is a reversal of the classical historical pattern in which external recognition is based on empirical statehood, usually achieved in alliance with other statesmen under strenuous conditions of international rivalry. For example, credibility and competition—often under conditions of war—was the historical context for the formation and development of states in Europe. (Jackson 1992, 2)

As a corollary to that, today, many states have limited authority and often lack the capacity to govern in large parts of their territory. Because of the normative underpinnings of state sovereignty, however, many de facto independent regions, though capable of acting as independent states, are not granted legal recognition as sovereign states (Englebert 2009).

As a result, approaches to international relations that use a ‘black box’ blanket conception of the state are dubious and of limited value.

The state as an analytical category, particularly in international relations, assumed a relationship with its underlying social system.

The distinction between weak and strong states is identified in the authoritative legitimacy of the state in relation to society. Strong states have a large degree of power to act, transform, and shift the society it governs. In other words, they organize the social system in ways that help it meet state needs and realize state objectives. Weak states lack the institutional capability and the socially-invested authority to act in ways that

transform the nature of the society. They often govern by coercion and serve a narrow set of interests (Midgal, 1988).

Therefore, the 'state-in-society' is an important component of the state according to Huntington's *Political Order and Changing Societies* (1968). Indeed, in many states, the military remains the best organized and the most capable governmental body.

Many state governments are captured by a specific ethnic group which exercises governmental authority over other communities. The nature of the state, in how and for whom it is organized to exercise power, has played a critical role in often limiting the development of states.

Therefore, in many African states, the government has been able to avoid providing services. It insulates itself from challenges from the broader society, and shifts its own responsibility to international aid organizations; thus, it does not have to develop positive institutions of governance.

Latin American nations have experienced independence and sovereignty for hundreds of years. The relationship of Latin American states has been characterized by the nature of the ruling government. The social differences, expressed between the wealthy elites and the marginalized majority, often have racial characteristics between white and indigenous communities, and have played a central role. War and conflict in Latin America have been characterized by civil war, not by international conflict (McSherry 2002).

In addition, the overthrow of established governments can lead to governments that do not, as it were, advance and modernize the state, but instead they make the state a mechanism to transform society along religious lines.

In many states, the conflation of cultural and ethnic identity with national identity as a referential category is underdeveloped or completely absent. Furthermore, politics within the state is operationalized as a competitive system of domination and bargaining among its diverse social communities.

The boundaries of difference within the state are more pronounced and often override any conception of the state as the embodiment and expression of its collective members as a central point of identification and orientation.

The state does not function, symbolically or conceptually. As such, both the institution of government and the society over which it governs both lack fundamental agency.

The states that have managed to obtain the greatest levels of economic development have been those that develop state institutions that are closely tied to their societies but which are able to function autonomously. This is most clearly demonstrated in the East Asian model of industrialization. As the forces of capitalism alter traditional social relations and forms of economic activity, the state becomes both the embodiment of the society as a whole as well as the mediating agency between the people and the market.

*Failed States: Ungovernable and Unconquerable*

Paradoxically, while many states have failed to develop into functional and responsive governmental institutions, the ethos of nationalism and sovereign independence has become an increasingly universal political value. As such, the capacity of powerful states to use military force to directly rule over less developed societies has greatly diminished. This is clearly evident in the United States' failures in Afghanistan and Iraq. The military disparities between the United States and the actors with whom it engaged in war are far greater than anything enjoyed by the British at the height of their empire. Though vastly more powerful in economic and military terms, and despite states lacking cohesion, the United States cannot meaningfully exercise control over nations with which it goes to war. Globally, social networks have been politicized, often in the absence of a state and in ways that directly hinder its emergence.

*Technocratic Globalization: Can Society Be Depoliticized?*

Once again, the state has been subsumed and converted into a tool of the market. Globalization has concentrated wealth and actively developed ways to insulate itself from control by the state.

In international relations, the role of the state and its future has been continuously debated. Even in early years as a discipline, individuals such as Carr, Morgenthau, Mitrany, and Haas believed that the state could be replaced as an institution.

The relationship of individual interests and the state is not fixed and permanent. For Morgenthau, there might come a point where the interests of individuals rest on other

forms of organization, and, with them, the development of a new and potentially broader 'state.' These new states will address distinct 'moral requirements' and be facilitated by technological developments (Morgenthau 1978: 10).

For Carr, a 'world state' might develop so that individuals shift their loyalties, and individual rights and freedoms emerge from a single global community (Carr 1945, 43-44).

For Mitrany, the state is but one institutional mechanism by which human developmental needs and potential are realized. The state has expanded into greater forms of inclusion over time, and, with it, it has become more responsive to the needs and capacities of its subjects. The state is a mechanism by which humans, individually and collectively, can organize to address their fundamental needs as well as to develop further (Mitrany 1933, 17-53). The state boundaries, however, also limit this ability because they tie the rights of individuals narrowly to the domain of the state. Furthermore, the state can come to take precedence over the needs of individuals, with 'interests' being transferred to a highly authoritarian state that limits and undermines the development of its subjects.

The rise of the bourgeois state also enabled the development of positive institutions. This came about first by expanding franchisement domestically and by making the state responsive to the needs of its citizens. Second, it helped foster cooperation and addressed needs of citizens by forging agreements at an international level among states. International organizations and treaties render services and address needs that are fundamental to the development of individuals.

The transformation of the international arena need not come from the development of greater forms of 'sovereign' states, but through the erosion of the state as other institutional mechanisms come to play the role of provider of goods and services in the way that the state apparatus once did.

The West is no longer the single or principle economic power in the world. In addition, there are a multiplicity of processes by which countries are modernizing without westernizing, and developing economically in the absence of democratic institutions. Traditional social structures have been revitalized, as seen in the resurgence of religious identity.

*How Does One Effectively Limit the Power of the State?*

As a discipline, international relations has uncritically accepted the radical resurgence of the supremacy of the market system. Intellectually, realists have failed to see the erosion of the state's ability to act as an autonomous agent in mediating market and social relations or in recognizing how state sovereignty has been eroded. Neoliberals embrace global governance as a natural and progressive stage in human development. Marxism as an intellectual praxis has been replaced by postmodernist theorists that dispute the assertion that humanity can or should understand itself as participating in a broader historical set of developments such as "the march of history," or capable of making any general claims to truth. Intellectuals should act to undermine grand narratives, but it is only from such actions that societies can unite and be mobilized. In a critique of grand narratives, they prevent individuals and societies from seeing

themselves as having a particular end and purpose. Postmodernist theory is atomistic; individual forms of emancipation have no claims upon others.

For the state to lose its functional independence, however, the political and social space must be unlinked. Indeed, this is precisely what is developing in contemporary international relations.

At the end of the Cold War, two seemingly contradictory arguments were advanced about the future of the international system: *The Clash of Civilizations* by Samuel Huntington and *The End of History and the Last Man* by Francis Fukuyama.

Huntington argues for the centrality of religious differences as the driver of conflict in the international arena. Huntington proposes that civilizations will become the most significant feature of international relations and religious antagonisms and the source of greatest conflict. In contrast, Fukuyama maintains that a liberal democratic political system plus capitalist free-market economics is the only real choice remaining for how to organize society. To ensure the autonomy and predominance of the economic system, however, requires that the political space be narrowed and the state operate as an institution that manages a plural set of social communities.

Far from two contradictory arguments, however, they serve as interdependent elements of capitalist strategy. State autonomy is reduced as the social system develops into irreconcilable relationships of difference and opposition.

In the United States, both dominant parties were incorporated into a neoliberal ethos that placed the exigencies of capitalism above the interest of workers. The intransigence in Washington does not represent a failure of governance, but a strategy of



the deliberate abrogation of governance by Republicans. Effective and responsive social policies are not developed, the social services of the state are undermined. Unmitigated and unending wars and interventions, enthusiastically supported and funded by both parties are perpetuated and the expansion for the surveillance state operates with total impunity.

Internationally, the central cultural discourse of the American state rests on its systematic destabilization of the secular regimes of the Middle East, supporting Islamic partisans, while at the same time using the specter of terrorism to continue to justify military engagements globally. Doing so gives support to the United States' continuous interventions in the Middle East.

The targets of American foreign policy (Iraq, Syria, Libya, Iran) are not failed states. In fact, Iran has well developed civil institutions and elections. Libya and Syria were secular and provided their citizens with education, gave rights to women, and protected minorities. Though highly authoritarian, they had the basic foundation upon which the social systems within the state could develop a comprehensive sociopolitical identity.

Governmental rule loses its universal characteristic, that is, its capacity to incorporate and act for larger segments of the population. Politics becomes dominated by normative principles lacking in political content, and social space of difference and identity becomes increasingly the dominant element of social discourse and the most active point of political action.

Sectarian and religious distinctions are increasing, and the public forum of discourse is actively making religious distinctions important and unquestionable differences that must be both respected and left unreconciled.

At the same time, discourse of domestic social order centers on multiculturalism.

As Eriksen and Stjernfelt note:

...multiculturalism is understood as a definition of an already existing condition, a coming development or a declaration of political intent, the concept implies a historically determined condition in which political decisions are already fixed. It presents itself as a historical imperative; that is, a concept we are morally compelled to seek, simply because it represents an inexorable tendency in human history that will be realized no matter what (2012).

The state retreats from actively organizing the economy to aid its citizens, but politics becomes defined by communal and religious concerns. The future is determined, and the past counts transgressions and wrongs among different 'peoples.' Claims within the state are made between groups on the basis of perceived wrongs and not from an ethos of communal solidarity.

Politics is transformed into governance, and traditional communities become the central market of individual membership. Multiculturalism requires that communities not be 'assimilated' because it prevents them from being nationalized.

The perceived 'resurgence' of nativist politics is often treated as a 'reaction' to multiculturalism, a racist resistance to a more ethnically diverse political space. While true in certain details, it misses the point that such movements inherently arise from the normative assumptions advanced by multiculturalism as a political doctrine. Specifically,

it assumes that identity, race, religion, and ethnicity are a central and legitimate basis from which to organize communities and act politically.

Strong states represent the greatest threat to the capitalist system. Russia, paradigmatically, has failed to conform to the market-based fundamentalism of Western capitalism. To counter the globalist system, Russia has concentrated its efforts on reviving the political sphere of Western states. It has done this by releasing confidential and classified documents that unmask the ways that Western governments are ruled and the interest they serve.

In the European Union, it has funded nationalist parties. Within the European Union, the rise of nationalist movements such as Brexit, though often portrayed principally in terms of a new ‘nationalism’ and racism,’ are symptomatic of the failure of the European Union and its anti-democratic governance, far more than they are symptomatic of creeping fascism.

Moravcsik has developed a liberal international relations theory that recognizes that state policies are reflective of entrenched domestic elites. As an IR scholar, he has called on the field to ‘take preferences seriously,’ and to recognize that state actions, goals, and policies are distinct and reflect differences among the states’ ruling classes and interest. Moravcsik argues that the character of rule by a state’s elite should be treated as a central variable in international relations (Moravcsik 1997, 513-15). However, Moravcsik seems completely blind to this in his defense of the European Union against claims that it is deficient in its democratic characteristics. He outlines three central roles of the European Union: to form policies in technical areas in which populations are

“rationally ignorant,” such as medial and technical policy; to ensure individual and minority rights, and to “afford majorities fair and unbiased representation.” This is necessary because of “the capture of government policy by narrow but powerful interest groups who oppose the interests of majorities with diffuse, longer-term, less self-conscious concerns” (Moravcsik 2003, 42-43).

As mentioned in a previous chapter, this contradiction is central to the claims of liberalism. Moravcsik defends the European Union as an institution because it can act against narrow interests that often control state policy, while the European Union miraculously neither reflects particular interests nor is seemingly in danger of its own capture.

The integration of Europe into an economic zone and regulatory authority has not included its integration as a political or social sphere. This is partially a result of the timescale between the two processes, but also of the need for a depoliticization and reorientation of policy towards identities and difference, cosmopolitan particularism. The European state, as a neoliberal program, must build a state and not a society.

The restrictions on speech within the European Union are indicative of its unwillingness to allow for true debate and engagement. Infamously, Angela Merkel was recorded insisting that Mark Zuckerberg do more to censor any Facebook comments that were negative of her immigration policies, as the state uses multiculturalism as a principle to shield itself from challenge and resistance.

As such, there has been a large shift from government to governance. States are seeming to act as political institutions, organized to service and expand the market, and to

see their mandate as based on a utilitarian policy of wealth creation (at least at an ideological level). As such, the society is now limited in its capacity to shape and interact with the political system at the same time it is being transformed by capitalist policies.

Populations are, however, organized around political identities. The internet and social networks have linked global society into a common cultural system. Donald Trump's campaign for the presidency provided a source of fascination and entertainment, a regular part of discussion and debate around the world.

Failed states in the developing world reflect the inability of its social system to organize as a common body. With the resurgence of neoliberalism, failed states are now being produced by the growing fissures between the state and the people, the divergence between government action and social well-being.

A central question of the future of the state will depend on the capacity of states to advance political programs that are nationalistic but not nativist, socially positive and directed at increasing the wellbeing of its members. This is only possible by maintaining a close relationship between the political and social identities of communities, that while aware and respectful of differences, can build alliances across communities that mobilize for common interests.

If not, the extreme reactions of late 19th and early 20th century social movements that arose as a product of, and a response to, global capitalism might return with even more devastating consequences.

## Conclusion

For international relations, the state remains foundational, yet, the criteria of the state lack any formal definition. In addition, the ways that international relations conceptualizes history is problematic.

International relations theory depends on history as the basis of its theoretical analysis with important facets at work in the study of history and its relationship to international relations theory. In this chapter, I attempted to address several pertinent questions, among them: Can the ahistorical universalism of realist theory apply to all state systems? How can the modern state's relation to colonialism and decolonization help us broaden our understanding of the state as a socioeconomic institution? What will the consequences be of neoliberal functions that weaken the state in order to actively regulate and intervene in the economic environment? Can this transformation of social and political order into a civilization of economic consumerism sustain itself? Will the state become reinvigorated as a zone of social action, or will forms of social solidarity shift away from states?

Finally, I provided some possible ways to address this issues. I stated that a central question of the future of the state will depend on the capacity of states to advance political programs that are nationalistic but not nativist, and socially positive and directed at increasing the wellbeing of its members. This, I asserted, is only possible by maintaining a close relationship between the political and social identities of communities, that while aware and respectful of differences, can build alliances across

communities that mobilize for common interests. Finally, I predicted that not taking these measures could lead to dire consequences from extreme reactions within social movement to global capitalism.

## FINAL THOUGHTS

The human species has evolved as a cooperative one. Our desire for equality and our ability to create networks of support and affiliation are strong. The group orientation of human beings, however, can also reinforce conflict and perpetuate division. Human social complexity and hierarchy emerged with the rise of cities. Today, we have for the first time in our history reached a point where over half of the world's population lives in cities. In cities, we are able to extend our relationships beyond a small network of kin, detach ourselves from primordial bigotry, and encounter people from many different walks of life and beliefs.

Today, the world is a connected form of exchange and communication. At the same time, we have also arrived at the Anthropocene, a period of time where the world's ecological systems are all challenged by ecological destruction. We are in the midst of a great extinction on our planet for which we are responsible. The answer to our global challenges are complex, but they require that we work towards a common interest that ensures a better world for both our species and the planet as a whole. The rise of capitalism and the limiting of the capacity of communities to redress social inequality has become more pronounced.



Human needs for community and affiliation are being misdirected to serve consumerism, Our biological needs have been shifted to the consumption of pornography; our communal membership now is directed towards sports teams; our entertainment is more a form of escape from reality than a means by which to confront it. Our moral outrage is seemingly reserved for reality TV stars and is not channeled into demanding programs to redress the stark inequalities in basic needs, health, opportunities, and other contemporary injustices.

The answer to our collective challenges are not easy, but they are all founded on our innate capacity to unite in solidarity for a moral good. International relations needs to develop into a more mature field which can distinguish between policies that are truly serving the needs of a state's people and those that are private or merely the product of a juvenile enthusiasm for the 'great game,' played with the lives of innocents, soldiers, and communities who suffer terribly as a result.

The state must continue to be a dynamic institution of social engagement, a community of dialogue, negotiation, and active participation. A technocratic governmental system will return us into forms of enclosed social orders or leave us as individual hedonists forming our identity and meaning through consumption.

This thesis has examined theories of the state in international relations. Most of these theories have been found wanting. The sophistic view of human nature and rationality is still the dominant paradigm in the social sciences. It cannot study society because it cannot explain how it was formed. This approach is at wide variance with recent advances in biology, archeology, and psychology. International relations needs to

turn towards more comprehensive views of how communities are formed and what constitutes statesmanship. The theories should look at human beings in multiple dimensions, understanding the importance of socialization and education. They should also recognize something innate about morality. Such theories would be much more grounded in science than the rationalist or cynical models that are currently framed as true presentations of human nature. I believe that by developing a new approach to international relations, by bridging culture and science, our field would be taking a step in the right direction. My attempt at outlining a cognitive theory of the state was my modest effort to do so. Herodotus and Plato, thousands of years ago, were able to see beyond the times in which they lived and recognize the true purpose of the state. Politics and the state represent our capacity to increase the well-being and encourage the flourishing of all members of human society.

Human cooperation and sociality, our emotions and our capacity for empathy are not distinct from 'rationality,' but are representative of the most profound rationality at work in our biological species. It is this form of rationality, empathic and cooperative, that has allowed us to become the dominant species on the planet. Let us strive to see that this articulation of rationality, and not a form of egoism that produces a social catastrophe, is recognized as the true representative of rationality.

We must heed the call of Herodotus and look to the ends of things. Like Odysseus, we must learn from our experiences and those of others and chose well.

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