

Psychoanalysis and realism

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Abstract

International politics has always been characterised by conflict. This has been true regardless of the political systems in place or of any specific time in the history of humanity. Inter-state conflict exists today despite the fact that the vast majority of the states of the world are members of the United Nations and signatories to various treaties aimed at removing conflict as a means of state action.

The realist school of thought argues that the international system is characterised by continual state conflict, caused by competition over scarce resources. The propensity towards conflict is argued to be an essential characteristic of human nature and, as such, human nature is considered to be aggressive and conflictual. Thus, for the realist, inter-state competition, coupled with aggressive human nature, constitutes the primary cause of interstate conflict.

This thesis aims to examine two criticisms of the realist position in depth. The first concerns the attribution of human nature to states. This logical progression is problematic because it creates a type of „state-nature“ that cannot be defended without providing a logical link between the individual, the group and the state. It is therefore an aim of this thesis to provide this link, using methodological individualism, in order to provide a basis for the attribution of human nature to states.

The second aim of this thesis is to examine the notion of human nature that is offered by the realists. It is not enough to claim that human nature is aggressive and conflictual *merely* because conflict has characterised international relations throughout history. Rather, one should examine the individual's psychological development, in order to gain an understanding of aggressive instincts apparent in human nature. The thesis therefore examines psychoanalysis in order to attempt an understanding both of human nature, and of the conditions under which human nature may manifest itself in an aggressive, conflictual manner.

The intention of this thesis, then, is to provide a defence of political realism, highlighting the shortcomings of the two criticisms outlined above.

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Preface

DULCE ET DECORUM EST

“Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,
Knocked-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through the sludge,
Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs,
And towards our distant rest began to trudge.
Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots,
But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame, all blind;
Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots
Of gas shells dropping softly behind.”

- Wilfred Owen¹

This work is dedicated to those people who were there for me when everything seemed hopeless and the arguments refused to come together; most notably my supervisor Dr. A. Fluxman as well as two of my closest friends Mr J.A. Koseff and Ms S.M. de Villiers. I would also like to thank Eusebius McKaiser and Warren Solomons for their much-valued input into chapter two and three respectively.

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¹ Owen, W. in Blunden, E. 1964: 66.

Chapter One – Where Demons Tread, the political realists and interstate conflict

“Machiavelli was convinced that the state needed a morality of its own, the morality of success: success in defending itself, and thus guaranteeing the safety of its people, success in conquest when this was *necessary* to protect its own interests.”¹

The key word above is „*necessary*“. International politics has always had one constant factor that has characterised it: the notion of conflict. That is to say that conflict between states has and still is seen by policy makers to be a viable means of statecraft and the attainment of certain ends. There have been numerous attempts to explain why states have entered into conflict with one another. These models may take the form of the Marxist-Leninist school of thought that argued the inherent nature of the capitalist economic model was such that expansion was inevitable and as such was responsible for bringing competitors to a point of conflict when faced by the scarcity of resources. This is an example of a systemic or structuralist approach to conflict. However, it is wise to never forget that it is the statesmen (or at least the statesmen as well as a close circle of advisers) who ultimately decide on the foreign policy of the state. If the statesman of an aggressor state did not want conflict then it stands to reason that there would be no conflict initiated by that state. Further, if the statesman (admittedly in an open democratic model) desired conflict but the population of the state was largely against the conflict, such as occurred with the massive public demonstrations that eventually prompted the United States to withdraw from the Vietnam conflict in the early

¹ Hale, J. R. my italics for emphasis

1970"s, then how could that statesman enter into conflict? In other words, a reliance on systemic arguments has the consequence of removing agency from the individuals who actually carry out the acts. However, more will be said of this matter in chapter two. What is necessary to note at this point however is the notion that systemic arguments that do not take into account individual agency are problematic as they are not complete explanations of the event.

A brief example of a systemic argument will shed some light on my point. Stevenson (1981) gives a brief explanation of Marx"s argument. In the first instance

“man is a directly natural being ... on the one hand equipped with natural vital powers ... dispositions, capacities, instincts. On the other hand ... the objects of his instincts are exterior to him and independent of him and yet they are objects of his need, essential objects that are indispensable for the exercise and confirmation of his faculties.”²

In other words, people identify, exist and develop in relation to external objects. Stevenson lists as the first premise of argument the notion of “the existence of living human individuals.”³ People become distinguished from animals as soon as they begin producing their means of subsistence and their physical organisation. In other words, by: “producing their means of subsistence, men are indirectly producing their actual material life.”⁴ The relations of nations to each other are dictated by the extent to which they have all developed their “productive

² Stevenson, L. 1981: 138

³ Stevenson, L. 1981: 140

⁴ Stevenson, L. 1981: 140

forces, the division of labour, and internal intercourse.”⁵ Furthermore, it is not only the relations of states that are affected by this progression and development but also the entire internal structure of the state.⁶

Stevenson’s definition of the division of labour concerns the fact that the “division of labour inside a nation leads at first to the separation of industrial and commercial from agricultural labour, and hence to the separation of town and country and to the conflict of their interests.”⁷ Thus the beginnings of a structurally defined conflict are in place. However, the division of labour creates other issues such as the development of divisions between the various members within each of the productive areas; commerce, industry and agriculture. Stevenson argues that “the relative position of these individual groups *is determined* by the methods employed in agriculture, industry, and commerce.”⁸ That is to say, the way people behave and respond to situations is structurally defined or determined. As argued by Stevenson (1981) “the fact is ... that definite individuals who are productively active in a definite way enter into these definite social and political relations.”⁹

Therefore, the outcome, according to the Marxist argument, is that the very nature of capitalist society and production is inherently confrontational. However, as will be shown in chapter two this thesis is against these explanations.

⁵ Stevenson, L. 1981: 141

⁶ Stevenson, L. 1981: 141

⁷ Stevenson, L. 1981: 141

⁸ Stevenson, L. 1981: 141 my italics for emphasis

Structure alone cannot account for conflict. Fluxman (1991) argues that “Freud concludes that even if one were to eliminate the major social causes of conflict (such as private property), aggression would emerge in various [other] ways, for example in conflict over ethnic and national differences”¹⁰. Emphasis must be placed on the variable of human desires, beliefs, and nature because it is the individual that ultimately decides on a given course of action. Therefore, structuralist arguments cannot offer complete explanations of action because they premise themselves on offering accounts of the action as the reason for the action. In other words, offering an account of a given outcome in a given situation does not constitute offering the reasons why certain actions were undertaken. It is the contention of this thesis that the only way to offer complete explanations is to examine the individuals who are a part of the issue in question. Thus, in the search for a model that deals with questions such as “why is there conflict?” one must search for a model that works with the desires, beliefs, nature and agency of people themselves.

The model that was finally adopted by this thesis at least on the surface explains state behaviour and allows an illustration of why it is that states enter into periods of conflict. This chapter shall thus be structured in such a way as to illustrate what this school argues and why it argues it. The thesis will then move on to illustrate one of the central arguments against the school; that being a reliance on the notion of human nature and the attribution of that human nature to states.

⁹ Stevenson, L. 1981: 144

¹⁰ Fluxman, T. 1991: 45

Chapter two will deal with this issue i.e. the split between the individual and the state and illustrate that there is in fact no split. Finally, in chapter three, the thesis will attempt using Freud's psychoanalytical model to illustrate why the attack may be seen as hollow and ultimately resolvable.

Hans J Morgenthau (1967) argues that before political realism came to the fore, the dominant paradigmatic view when dealing with politics was known as idealism. Idealism, which shall not be discussed at length in this chapter, holds the basic view that people are essentially „good“ and peace loving. Any deviation from this peaceful essentially good world is caused exclusively by imperfect knowledge and imperfections in the structure of the international system. Thus, the idealists believe that education, reform of the defective system and force (only in so far as it is necessary to remedy any defects) are the solutions to conflict and war. In other words, the idealist mode of thought was utopian in its approach to international relations. An implementation of the principles of this school was seen in the form of the League of Nations in the post WWI era. It is a second school of thought, however, which this chapter will analyse more closely. The realist school of thought premises itself on the fact that people are not inherently good; rather they are imperfect. The imperfections of the world are argued to have arisen from the imperfections of human nature itself. “Freud¹¹ maintains that there is much evidence to support the thesis of aggression being the major difficulty facing civilization – he cites the existence of war, and the

¹¹ Freud's theories will be expanded on in chapter three.

persistence throughout history of violence.”¹² It is this concept of human nature that is so important to this thesis.

If one were to assume that human nature were such that humans were aggressive creatures prone towards using violence, then arguments such as those of the Marxists would not solve the problem we know as international conflict. This is because an aggressive nature would still find a way to manifest itself no matter what economic system was in place. Conversely, if human nature were essentially peaceful and tended away from aggression then the same Marxist arguments would still not hold as the desire for peaceful coexistence would surely override an imposed economic system (which would have been imposed by these essentially „good“ beings and thus not have an inherent ability to cause conflict). Perhaps the above argument could be accused of presenting a false dichotomy where on the one hand there exists conflict as a result of evil human nature or on the other hand there exists conflict as a result of structure. However, the argument on the side of human nature as the cause of conflict seems more convincing than structural arguments because state conflict spans across various modes of production, cultures and points of history. Therefore, it becomes important to ask what the nature of humans is. In order to find the answer to this question it will be necessary to analyse the notion of human nature and to see at what point the „nature“ aspect removes itself from the „nurture“ aspect of the nature-nurture argument. In other words, it is necessary for the analysis to extend itself a) to where the desire for or propensity

¹² Fluxman, T. 1991: 45

towards conflict stems from and b) why individuals believe that conflict can in fact be used to resolve conflicts of interest. Therefore, the question for this chapter is: Why does a state enter into a state of conflict with another state? The short answer to this question as argued by the realists is that, "Within the realist paradigm, the purpose of statecraft is national survival in a hostile environment"¹³.

Realists observe the structure of the international system to be such that there exist inherently opposed interests and therefore, there exists an inherent potential for conflict. It will become clear throughout this thesis that the potential for conflict in the international system is exceptionally high for numerous reasons. It will also become clear at the end of chapter four what reordering of the international system may be necessary to lower this potential for conflict.

"Conflicts of interests among states are assumed to be inevitable. Realism also emphasises the ways in which the anarchical nature of international politics dictates the choices that foreign policy makers, as rational problem solvers who must calculate their interest in terms of power, must make."¹⁴

The problem essentially lies in the notion of scarcity. Writers critical of realism challenge realists as to the role of other considerations beside power that influence decisions such as economic considerations. Realists answer simply that beside the quest for and the promotion of states' power¹⁵ no other considerations are of notable consequence: "economics is less relevant to

¹³ Kegley, C. & Wittkopf, E. 2001: 32

¹⁴ Kegley, C. & Wittkopf, E. 2001: 32

national security than is military might; economic growth is important primarily as a means of acquiring national power and prestige.”¹⁶ In other words, so long as states maintain their power at a point such that they can deter attack from and exert influence over rivals they have accomplished what they need to. Therefore, a powerful economy is primarily an instrumental means towards an end: that being the creation and maintenance of a powerful military. The above makes sense in as much as the economy of a state means very little if that state has been overrun by a rival. Therefore, it could well be argued that for the realist school the possession of a strong military capability is necessary in order to ensure the security of the state from external aggression and a strong economy is usually more conducive to the maintenance of a powerful military. Once the creation of a powerful military has been completed statesmen can begin working on other projects and goals, so long as none of these interfere with the maintenance of the security of the state. The international system is one in which choices must be made in terms of national survival:

“the choice is not between moral principles and national interest devoid of moral dignity. But between one set of moral principles divorced from political reality and another set of principles derived from political reality.”¹⁷

As such, realist writers describe the international system as an anarchic battleground continually swept by the competing interests of the states that make up the international system. Krieger argues that “the international system is

¹⁵ Russett et al defines power in the following manner: “**Power** is *the ability to overcome obstacles and influence outcomes.*” (Russett et al 2000: 90)

¹⁶ Kegley, C. & Wittkopf, E. 2001: 33

¹⁷ Rosenthal, J. 1995: 319

anarchic and based on the principle of self-help. By anarchy, realists do not mean that international politics are chaotic. Indeed, some proponents argue that relations between nations do exhibit regularities and are even driven by widely accepted social norms.”¹⁸ It is this anarchy in the international system that prompts realists to argue for the methodology that they do. Because of the above imperfections, morality is seen by the realist school not as a non-existent abstract but rather as an unattainable goal, striven for but never reached. The moral principles hinted at above are indeed approximated but are, at best, only approximated through the temporary balancing of interests and the precarious settlement of conflicts.¹⁹ It is true in other words that the aim and goal of international relations amongst states is one of attempting to obtain the lesser evil more than the attainment of the absolute good. Essentially, it is the aim of political realism to: “present the theoretical construct of a rational foreign policy which experience can never achieve.”²⁰

The central principles of the realist school can be briefly outlined in the following five points, the first of which concerns the behaviour of states. Morgenthau argues that politics is governed by a set of universal laws informed by the same set of universal objectively true laws governing human nature. Indeed Burchill states it simply by arguing “politics is governed by *objective laws*.”²¹ The universality of these laws comes from the fact that they are subjected to scrutiny

¹⁸ Krieger, J. 2001: 715

¹⁹ Morgenthau, H. 1967

²⁰ Morgenthau, H. 1967: 7

²¹ Burchill, S. 1996: 74

on rational and empirical grounds²². In other words, the realist model of international relations does not premise itself on utopian conceptions such as the idealists use. The realists argue that their position stems from a far more rigorous scientific process of examination. Therefore, the objective laws that Burchill and Morgenthau refer to are not merely facts constructed out of wishful thinking as the realists accused the idealists of doing but are rather facts based on empirical scientific research.

It is this principle that lies at the basis of the realist position. Any attack on realism must by its very nature reject this principle. Various attacks are levelled against the realists concerning, for example, the state as the primary unit of analysis. Critics argue that the state, which is the central unit of analysis used by the realist, is losing its monopoly on the use of coercive force. The response to this criticism entails what the critics feel is replacing the state as the central unit of analysis in international relations. Some critics argue that transnational companies and non-governmental actors are beginning to have as great (and in some cases greater) an impact on the international system as states. Transactions (in terms of economic exchange) and interactions (in terms of communication and dealings) occur between an ever-widening range of actors of which states are but a limited few. The above statement is, argued by critics of realism to be, true and indeed reinforced by the rise of technologies such as the Internet (and the companies that operate them). Add to this the ever more

²² Because human nature does not change it stands to reason that these laws are indeed universal and objective.

liberalised nature of borders and restrictions on movements of finance and information that come together under the heading: globalisation and the critics of realism argue that the state no longer holds the primary position of importance.

The realist would counter argue using two points: first, that recent developments in both the Microsoft anti-trust case, and the proposed merger between General Electric and Honeywell in the European Union (in 2001), and the heavy regulation of the auditing industry post Enron and WorldCom (in 2002) represent the still existent power of the state over other emerging players like multinational corporations. The legal apparatus of the state is still able to exercise its will over the most powerful of corporations. Second, even if one were to accept that the state as an entity was a falling star, one would have to ask how the corporations, institutions, or whatever else would act as the units of governance of the international system would operate. What is seen at the moment is that corporations operate in a manner similar to that described by realists as regards the behaviour of states²³. Thus, it appears that chairpersons and board members would operate under the same set of principles that statesmen operate under and even if the realist conceptions of the state as the primary unit of analysis fell away this thesis would still retain its value.

²³ One only has to observe the cases of Firestone, Total, British Petroleum and ABSA Bank as examples. Firestone in 1926 obtained concessions to 45% of Liberia's land area to produce rubber for tyres. Since then firestone has supported all dictators in Liberia in order to retain those concessions. Total in 1992 was funding the military regime in Burma in return for labour, land and resource exploitation concessions. While in South Africa ABSA was found to have ties to apartheid government death squads. Thus, MNC's like states also operate in their best interests

In order to attack the concept of what the realists are arguing for one must argue against the realist conception of human nature. Not to do this would be to counter a problem with nothing. It is not enough to argue that states are no longer the dominant actors in international relations. This is because, as will be demonstrated in chapter two, even if the state were to fall away as the primary unit of analysis its place would still have to be taken by something (be it commercial conglomerates or anything else). The units that fill the void left by the state would still be controlled by individuals with the same nature as that of current statesmen. In other words, the units that fill the void would arguably present the same problems of tending towards conflict as statesmen do at the moment. This is why the realists argue that we must work with the nature of people as it is, not against it, and this is why this thesis argues for a model of international relations that highlights the problems inherent in human nature is so important. The purpose of the realist argument is not to get „boggled-down“ in what ought to be. The purpose is rather to deal with what is. In other words, no matter whether the state is the dominant unit of analysis or not, the notion of human nature must still be examined in order to deal with problems that could be seen as being constant regardless of the vehicle in which that human nature is able to manifest itself through.

The second of the points concerns the concept of national interest and its relation to the concept of power. For the realist, interest is always defined in terms of

and are driven by the same desires and drives that realists attribute to states. Thus, it becomes important to observe the nature of people; which will be done in chapter three.

power. The realist definition of power is the ability to control the actions of other states. In other words,

“statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power ... the „national interest“, in this view, is too maximise power. Because power exists only relationally, it follows that world politics is inherently conflictual; all countries cannot increase their power or satisfy their national interest simultaneously.”²⁴

Political realism can thus be seen to “present the theoretical construct of a rational foreign policy”²⁵.

“Of all people’s evil ways, none are more prevalent ... than their instinctive lust for power ... and their desire to dominate others.”²⁶ It is necessarily because of the notion of power defining interest that the true motives of statesmen can be judged and analysed. In other words, notions of morality and ethics can cloud an analysis of a decision or potential action that a state can undertake. The notion of national interest allows analysts to cut through this cloud and find the root of the motivation “the primary obligation of every state ... is to promote its **national interest**, and to acquire power for this purpose”²⁷.

However, it is important that one remember that „political power“ must never be misconstrued as being necessarily synonymous with the term „force“. It is always possible for a state to use the threat of violence against other states. That is part and parcel of the realist conception of international politics, such as when the USA ordered Iraq’s withdrawal from Kuwait. However, it is the actualisation or resort to physical violence, that signifies the move away from political power which is used by states in influencing other states” foreign policy and as such to improve one’s state’s standing in the international system, such as when the

²⁴ Krieger, J. 2001: 715

²⁵ Morgenthau, H. 1967: 7

²⁶ Kegley, C. & Wittkopf, E. 2001: 32

²⁷ Kegley, C. & Wittkopf, E. 2001: 32

USA initiated operation Desert Storm. Thus, both political power and the ability to utilise force fall into the set named power.

Russett et al (2000) argues that power exists as a relationship. That is to say: “it takes on meaning only as it affects a state’s behaviour to another state.”²⁸ In other words, states only have power if other states perceive them to have power. Lesotho could not dictate South African foreign policy unless South Africa comes across intelligence that Lesotho has secretly been building up a vast military arsenal that South Africa could not match. Political power is, thus, essentially: “a psychological phenomenon”²⁹ between interacting states. The reasons for state action are simply portrayed as the state promoting its power (and linked to that its status) in the above-mentioned anarchic international system. Morgenthau argues in Politics Among Nations that statesmen think and act in terms of interest defined as power³⁰. The realist school thus feels that they are able to predict in which direction foreign policy will move for a given state, given the inherent need for the state always to act in a manner that will promote its power in the international system. Realists are therefore able to dispel the notions of motives and ideological preference in foreign policy formation in terms of the above arguments. This is because the foreign policy analyst will be compelled to evaluate state action on the basis of how certain actions help the state to maintain its national interest and power.

²⁸ Russett et al 2000: 88

²⁹ Russett et al 2000: 89

In terms of ideological arguments for foreign policy the realist would simply answer that statesmen can and will distinguish between their role as a person and their role as a statesman. Thus, it is arguable from the realist point of view that any president of the USA, regardless of Democratic or Republican leanings, would intervene in a conflict in the Middle East. This is because of that region's importance (with its vast oil reserves) to the USA's domestic economy and also to the primary tool of US political power³¹. In other words, they are able to remember their official duties and will not allow personal preference to cloud their decisions.

The third point concerns the issue of greatest contention between the realist school and those of its opponents. Essentially the realist will argue that the given concept of power and its necessary ties to the concept of national interest will inform foreign policy. These are universal laws and as such must necessarily hold across both time and location, in other words – they will always be the driving forces of foreign policy formation.

Where the idealist argued that education and a physical reordering of the faulty system would end the need for conflict, the realist argues that there will never be a change to the laws governing the international system. Furthermore, there will

³⁰ Among the most fundamental principles of realism argues that it is “to this end, no means is more important than the acquisition of **power**, and no principle is more important than **self-help**” (Kegley, C. & Wittkopf, E. 2001: 32).

never be an end to conflict if one continually ignores the fundamental forces at work, those being the driving forces of human nature. The goal of the international relations theorist in terms of the realist school should in fact be the creation of a theory that takes into account the fact that the forces cannot be changed and instead must be used to promote stability in the system governed by those laws. It is these laws, of human nature, that form the focus of this thesis.

The fourth point illustrates the ability of states to act in certain ways when confronted by dilemmas such as those caused by moral issues³². The realist argues that an individual has the right to sacrifice his/her life for a moral principle like liberty. A state on the other hand is not in a position to do this. The statesman must ensure that any act undertaken by the state does not threaten the state. The basic point that the realists are trying to illustrate here is that states cannot allow moral or other issues to impede their successful political actions. Moral principles can, at best, be approximated through the temporary balancing of interests and the precarious settlement of conflicts. It is the role of the statesman to make policy decisions based on their role as leader of state and protector of those within the state. The above is not to say that states will never undertake a moral course of action. It is in fact quite plausible that the foreign policy chosen by a state in order to promote its national interest may well overlap with what could be termed a moral foreign policy. What the above does argue,

³¹ The United States armed forces and their ability to rapidly deploy in times of need. The oil needed for one carrier battle group in one day is 1, 589, 700 litres. (Renner, M 1991).

however, is that the moral aspect of foreign policy must come second to the pragmatic aspect of foreign policy. Moral actions are essentially beneficial by-products.

The fifth point essentially concludes the moral aspect of state action. A state must never assume that its moral values and ideals are in any way superior to those of any other state. The reasons given by the realist school are not clear on the purpose of this argument. However it would appear that the general idea concerns acts like the Crusades, the Soviet experience during the Cold War, and the US experience in Vietnam. Embarkation on an act that may well jeopardise the very existence of your state over something as seemingly trivial as a passing and ever changing ideology can never be seen as an acceptable political act.

To conclude the realist school of thought it can be noted that – it is the threat of armed force more than the actual act of armed conflict, which is used by states to enhance their positions in an otherwise anarchic system. The purpose of the threats and or eventual conflict is not only about conquering territory but rather it is about changing the mind of current, and indeed future, enemies and to forcing them to yield to one's will.

It is clear from the above arguments that the central units of analysis for the realist school are the states which make up the international system and which

³² Morgenthau, H. 1967: 30

are governed by the same forces and inherent defects as exist within a study of human nature.

It must be remembered that the empirical study argued by the realists as being the reason for their success also acts as a double-edged sword. Critics argue that the major industrialised countries (notably the traditional enemies of Western Europe) have not in the last 50 years displayed the characteristic moves illustrated by the realist school of thought: “the realist view”’s emphasis on power does not appear to be applicable to ... industrialised countries.”³³ There are various responses that the realist may use here. On the one hand, the realist could argue that the notion of balance of power³⁴ is much easier to define amongst the industrialised countries of Western Europe and North America. Therefore, these states are in a position where the balance of power theory can operate properly. This is not the case in many developing states (such as those in Africa) where balance of power theory does not operate properly due to many factors that distort how states perceive others relative to themselves (such as poor intelligence, poor economies etc). Another possible response to this criticism is that the industrialised states in Western Europe and North America cooperate with each other because it serves their national interest to do so. This is not to say that in the future cooperation will still serve their national interest.

³³ Russett et al 2000: 90

³⁴ Balance of power theory states that states in the international system will band together in order to prevent one state gaining a clear preponderance in terms of its power. States do this through such mechanisms as military treaties. Therefore, European states operate together in order to minimise the United States’ preponderance of power. Balance of power theory also operates in regional contexts. Thus, one observes the continual posturing of India and Pakistan as each tries to stop the other gaining a regional preponderance of power.

In order to find the answers to the questions we seek it is necessary to look at the two fundamental aspects of the realist argument. First, one needs to know what the state is. This will be discussed in chapter two. One needs to understand how people relate together and why they live together. There are many possible answers to this question. One concerns the notion of people grouping together for mutual defence and security. The second concerns arguments such as those offered by Grotius stating that people are: “not wholly self-interested beings. They are of their nature also social beings.”³⁵ Second, one needs to examine whether the state is an abstract entity that operates under its own rules regardless of the individuals that inhabit that state. Or, on the other hand, is the state nothing more than the individuals who inhabit a region and identify with each other on certain levels where, as stated by Grotius there is no distinction between people and states because both are subjected to the same natural law (Williams, H. 1996)?

The second chapter of this thesis aims to resolve these two questions. First, using methodological individualism the thesis will argue that the state in fact consists of little more than the individuals that constitute the area in which the individuals live. Chapter three, using psychoanalysis as a model, will investigate how individuals and groups relate to each other. Further, the thesis will attempt to illustrate how the larger group can influence the behaviour of individuals. Using these goals one is thus able to illustrate how the realist argument holds in terms

of their primary premise: the notion of human nature is aggressive and leans towards conflict.

³⁵ Williams, H. 1996: 79

Chapter Two – Individuals and Groups

“No explanation in social science or history can be fundamental or „rock-bottom“ unless couched wholly in terms of facts about or features of individuals: their properties, goals, beliefs and actions.”³⁶

What came out of the last chapter was that realism is premised on notions of human nature, and thence applies those notions of human nature to abstract entities called states. This is, of course, problematic given that states are abstract entities that do not lend themselves well to personification. This chapter will discuss this problem and attempt to resolve the inherent issues of giving abstract entities, such as states, human qualities, such as human nature. By the conclusion, this chapter will have demonstrated that methodological individualism illustrates why individuals behave in certain ways when confronted by certain contexts and that state action can be analysed by referring to the individuals involved in governing the state.

Before proceeding with how methodological individualism works, it is first necessary to understand what it is. Methodological Individualism first appears in Thomas Hobbes: “it is necessary that we know the things that are to be compounded before we can know the compound.”³⁷ Watkins argues that methodological individualism is a principle where

“the ultimate constituents of the social world are individual people who act more or less appropriately in the light of their dispositions and understanding of the

³⁶ Miller, D, Coleman, J, Connolly, W, Ryan, A 1991:240

³⁷ Lukes, S. 451

situation. Every complex social situation, institution, or event is the result of a particular configuration of individuals, their dispositions, situations, beliefs and physical resources and environment.”³⁸

It is only when these conditions are met that an explanation can be considered to be rock bottom³⁹. Hayek extends Watkins by arguing that “there is no other way towards an understanding of social phenomena but through our understanding of individual actions ... guided by their expected behaviour.”⁴⁰ Popper agrees with all the above writers by stating that “all social phenomena, and especially the functioning of all social institutions, should always be understood as resulting from the decisions, actions, attitudes, etc. of human individuals.”⁴¹ Miller argues that methodological individualism is a doctrine whereby: “social phenomena must be explainable in terms of the psychologies and situations of the participants in those phenomena.”⁴² In other words, people believe certain things and act in certain ways because of their beliefs and where those beliefs and desires are articulated throughout social situations and social institutions.

The truthfulness of the belief is not an important factor. People often make decisions based on faulty, incorrect or partially correct beliefs. The military illustrates a good example of this. The military will send out scouts and accumulate intelligence in order to enable them to plan and conduct operations.

³⁸ Watkins, JWN: 442

³⁹ By rock bottom Watkins refers to the ultimate explanation. The origins of World War II may have been characterised by dire economic times, dissatisfaction over the treaty of Versailles and numerous other factors. However, the war began when individuals invaded Poland and individuals responded to that invasion. It is this type of explanation that Watkins believes is necessary in the study of social phenomena, which in the context of this paper is state action.

⁴⁰ Lukes, S. 452

⁴¹ Lukes, S. 452

They plan and conduct these operations as if their intelligence were 100 percent correct. This is so, even if they later find out that the intelligence that formed their beliefs and encouraged them to act in a certain way was faulty. Furthermore, the „rationality“ of the act cannot come under question. It is more than enough of an explanation to say that I have an irrational fear of all snakes⁴³ to explain why I ran away from what was a harmless snake. The important factor is the belief itself and the fact that X acts on that belief. It is this argument that leads Watkins to claim that “no social tendency is imposed on human beings „from above“ (or „from below“) – social tendencies are the product ... of human characteristics as well as of their knowledge and ambition.”⁴⁴ What Watkins is essentially arguing is that agency for an act, or an event must ultimately be ascribed to the individual or the individuals responsible for the act or event. The agency for the act cannot be attributed to areas that can have no agency, such as economic systems etc. In other words, “an explanation which begins by imputing some social phenomenon to human factors cannot go on to explain those factors in terms of some inhuman determinant of them.”⁴⁵ Thus it can be seen that Marxist arguments concerning, for example, the development of history run against methodological individualism, as they do not offer rock bottom explanations.

⁴² Miller, R.W.: 459

⁴³ R. W. Miller 462

⁴⁴ Watkins, JWN: 443

⁴⁵ Watkins, JWN 445

Methodological individualism, therefore, is a theory that argues for explanations of behaviour, events or actions in terms of the individuals that carried out those events or actions. Watkins also illustrates what methodological individualism is not. First, methodological individualism “does not prohibit attempts to explain the formation of psychological characteristics; it only requires that such explanations should in turn be individualistic, explaining the formation as a result of a series of conscious or unconscious responses by an individual to his changing situation.”⁴⁶ In other words, methodological individualism is about sociological, historical explanation. However, one must never forget, during explanations of the above nature, to include individual psychological terms. Second, methodological individualism is not about conspiracy theories. All too often methodological individualism gets confused with similar theories which are themselves implausible because of their narrow nature. “The conspiracy theory says that all large-scale social phenomena (do not merely reflect individual characteristics) but are deliberately brought about by individuals or groups of individuals.”⁴⁷ Thus, a high unemployment rate may be argued to have been deliberately brought about by the government of a country in order to keep the mass of people unemployed, uneducated and unable to effectively combine to remove that government. This could be contrasted with the more plausible explanation that given prevailing economic conditions at the time the government had to reduce the size of the civil service and as such unemployment rose. This

⁴⁶ Watkins, JWN: 444

⁴⁷ Watkins, JWN 1994: 445

is line with the concept of Occam's Razor: where all things being equal the simplest explanation is usually the correct one.

Thus, to sum up methodological individualism, one must look at its basic precepts. The central assumption of the individualist position concerns the fact that: "no social tendency exists which could not be altered if the individuals concerned both wanted to alter it and possessed the appropriate information."⁴⁸ Furthermore, regularities in social life should be explained: "in terms of individuals and [the situations in which they find themselves]."⁴⁹ Finally, methodological individualism involves the reconstruction of historical situations in ways that show how the beliefs and dispositions of a given individual or group of individuals fit in with the existing set of actions (Watkins, JWN: 448).

Miller argues along similar lines to Watkins when he argues for his first proposition of methodological individualism. "Proposition one (the individualist constraint on explanation): there must be a rock bottom explanation of every large-scale social phenomenon which explains the phenomenon as solely due to the beliefs and dispositions of actual typical individuals and the situations to which they respond in accordance with their beliefs and dispositions."⁵⁰ Thus, constraints are placed on explanation due to the beliefs of the individual and the resultant acts that the individual then undertakes. The above notion of beliefs is known under various names. However, for ease of explanation, and given that

⁴⁸ Watkins, JWN 1994: 443

⁴⁹ Watkins, JWN 1994: 447

we are dealing with desires and beliefs I will label it desire-belief theory. Consider that *X* feels thirsty, and is sure that the shop on the corner sells water. It would be reasonable to assume that *X* would go to the shop in order to satisfy his thirst based on *X*'s belief that there is water in the shop⁵¹. However, Miller argues that the desire-belief theory can only be valid if, when asked about the reason for undertaking an action, an individual's answer were such that: "he were sincere, his memory sufficiently clear and sharp, his analytical skills adequate, and if no psychological mechanism of repression were operating. I shall assume ... the attribution of repression is otiose if it is not reflected in felt tension, or some other symptom."⁵² Or, in Miller's words, "there is no individualistic definition of marriage ... but if a marriage custom can be explained as due to participants' beliefs about marriage, the individualistic constraint on explanation is still satisfied."⁵³ Thus Watkins deals with large-scale social phenomena (Miller, R. W. 460) such as banks, legal systems and indeed states or: "long lived institutions that affect the life of many people."⁵⁴

Watkins argues for a Weberian conception of sociology. "Sociology, for Weber, is the science „which attempts the interpretive understanding of social action ... to arrive at a causal interpretation of its course and effects."⁵⁵ Action in this context is defined as *all* human behaviour that "the individual attaches subjective

⁵⁰ Miller, R.W 1994: 460

⁵¹ This also assumes that *X* believes that he has enough money to purchase water at the shop, or that *X* believes (correctly or not) that he can get away with stealing the water.

⁵² Miller, R. W. 1994: 462

⁵³ Miller, R.W 1994: 460

⁵⁴ Miller, R. W. 1994: 460

⁵⁵ Miller, R. W. 1994 462

meaning to.”⁵⁶ Furthermore, the action can be considered social by virtue of the fact that: “subjective meaning attached to it by the (individual or individuals) ... takes account of the behaviour of others and is thereby oriented in its course.”⁵⁷ In other words, in order to reach a rock bottom explanation of an action one must understand the factors that shape the individual's desires and beliefs. It is important to note that this thesis is not arguing that the above factors *determine* the desires and beliefs of the individual; rather the factors merely *shape* or *influence* the desires and beliefs of the individual. Furthermore, one must also attempt an understanding of the desires and beliefs of other individuals who would have played a part in shaping the options available to the individual in terms of his/her desires and beliefs. This is important because interactions between individuals seldom occur in isolation. It is the case that individuals will interact with other individuals on a number of occasions and these interactions will in turn influence how the individuals act in certain contexts⁵⁸. One must therefore understand not only the desires and beliefs of the individual in question but also the desires and beliefs of those individuals with which the individual was interacting at the time of the act in question.

Kinkaid invokes Danto who “reads Methodological Individualism as the claim that social events and entities „can only be explained by reference to [individuals]”⁵⁹. Kinkaid does not have a problem with this definition. The problem for Kinkaid

⁵⁶ Miller, R. W. 1994: 462

⁵⁷ Miller, R. W. 1994: 462

⁵⁸ If an individual liked another individual their interactions would be vastly different to those of two individuals who did not like each other.

seems to come to the fore in what he terms thesis two of methodological individualism. Thesis two states “any explanation of social phenomena must refer solely to individuals.”⁶⁰ Kinkaid holds that advocates of this thesis are radical individualists who create problems for the school as a whole by reducing such disciplines as microeconomics, sociology, anthropology etc to little more than pseudo-explanations. While this may indeed be seen as problematic, this chapter will attempt to illustrate that disciplines such as sociology and anthropology are not as marginalised as Kinkaid makes them out to be. The brief answer that I will offer at this point concerns the notion of what I have labelled desire-belief theory. People act on desires in a way that they believe will satisfy those desires. Therefore, a discipline such as anthropology will serve to inform one of what factors were in place at a given time in a given culture and, as such, will give valuable insight into the belief shaping process of the individuals concerned. It will thus be possible for these „marginalised“ disciplines to allow one to achieve the rock bottom explanations that Watkins argues for.

Kinkaid goes on to outline two further concerns that he has with methodological individualism⁶¹. First, he argues that individualists all too often feel that they can fully describe social phenomena through the individuals involved. In other words, individualists feel that by merely observing individuals, their interrelations and their interconnections, a complete explanation of social phenomena will suddenly materialise. This argument does not, in and of itself, convince me of the invalidity

⁵⁹ Kinkaid, H. 1994: 504

⁶⁰ Kinkaid, H. 1994: 505

of individualism. One example in particular comes to mind that explains my point. This example is the October 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis. U.S. President Kennedy and Soviet Premier Khrushchev along with a very close circle of advisors held the fate of over 200 million people in their hands. It was the active decision to avoid nuclear war from both parties that led to the resolution of the crisis. There are no other explanations available to suggest that some greater systemic pressure „hustled“ the parties towards a peaceful resolution of the crisis. If anything the systemic arguments all point towards the Cuban Missile Crisis leading to war. The resolution of the crisis can only be explained by referring to the individuals and their relations with each other. In other words, explanations of the resolution of the Cuban Missile Crisis are individual specific.

The second issue concerns the fact that individualists may have laws describing human behaviour that may in fact be, or are, social event specific. Kinkaid does, however, in this case overstate his point. It is plausible, for example, to argue that the „laws“ in question are at best only tendencies. It could, for example, be argued that a tendency exists where individuals enter into a state of conflict when confronted by scarce resources; there is also a tendency for people to negotiate and try to work out a compromise for the exploitation of those scarce resources. The important question is why, in the final analysis, is one tendency acted on and another ignored? An answer that seems plausible comes to mind. Tendencies for any act in a given situation are numerous. Consider two farmers each with a herd of cows laying equal claim to a piece of land that can only support one of

⁶¹ Kinkaid, H. 1994: 506

the herds at a time. The options open to the farmers could encompass such things as negotiating that one farmer moves to new land, or that both farmers use the land until it is barren and then both move. Finally, one farmer may drive the other from the land. The desire of both farmers is to utilise the land. The beliefs of the farmers may very well be different. One farmer may well believe that he is stronger than the other, and thus able to drive him from the land using force. One of the farmers may for one reason or another dislike the other and thus feels that compromise is not an option. One of the farmers may have been raised in a society that shied away from aggressive confrontation and felt that peaceful compromise was the only realistic solution to any dispute. All these beliefs inform the farmers of the options available to them in order to achieve their desire. The outcome of the situation may be described by an observer to indicate a social event specific act when this is in fact not the case. The cognitive functioning of the farmers sifts through the options available, and these available options are based on the beliefs that the farmers hold. The beliefs are gained through such aspects of life as the farmer has experienced. The options available to each farmer are thus different, and so, too, are the tendencies that can be observed in one or the other's actions. In other words, while an act may seem event specific (or event dictated) the options available to the actors are still dictated on an individual specific basis according to the formation of individual beliefs. The fact that the action occurs in a given context does not imply that individuals lack the agency to make decisions as individuals.

Kinkaid argues that

“we can describe what individuals did, for example, in bringing about the French revolution and we might go on to evoke laws of psychology or other laws about individuals to say why they behaved like they did. Such a story would be explanatory, but it surely would fall far short of being a full explanation ... we could not explain its causal connection to preceding changes in classes, religious institutions etc., of French society.”⁶²

One should take into account that: “Homans demands that societal explanation cites „the underlying mechanisms of human behaviour” and Popper argues that „we should never be satisfied with an explanation in terms of so called collectives.”⁶³ One would, therefore, have to argue against Kinkaid on grounds of sloppiness in the work of social scientists. The fact that many researchers do not take into account Kinkaid’s arguments is not in and of itself an indictment against the individualist school. I agree with Kinkaid’s above argument. The above is exactly what individualist researchers should be attempting to accomplish. The French revolution came about because people desired it and acted on those desires. A complete explanation of the French revolution would by necessity have to analyse each factor and then tie them together in order to achieve a fuller picture of an individualist explanation of the French revolution. However, as stated above, this does not become an indictment of the individualist school so much as a call for a more comprehensive account. The account called for would have to comprise an in-depth study of the individuals. This is true, first, in terms of their desires (why they desired change). Second, in

⁶² Kinkaid, H. 1994: 507

⁶³ Kinkaid, H. 1994: 510

terms of their beliefs, at what point they felt they could a) bring about change and b) why they chose violent revolution as a means. While Kinkaid may, perhaps, be forgiven for labelling methodological individualism at worst implausible⁶⁴ and at best difficult to implement, he may not be forgiven for labelling it invalid.

Miller's attacks come from a separate quarter and are directed against the methodological validity of the individualist school. In other words, Miller queries whether proposition I⁶⁵ is, or is not, viable. Miller argues from two premises. First, he argues that a valid principle must, by virtue of the fact that it is valid, be able to explain phenomena that fall within its realm. Proposition I would therefore stand if and only if it could explain a theory without violating its original principle. Therefore, in Miller's words, "[the] typical capitalist equates the bourgeois and the national interests as a result of his encounters with evidence that this identity holds."⁶⁶ In this case it is easy to explain the desires, beliefs and actions of the businessman when viewed from a capitalist viewpoint. If on the other hand Marxist socio-economic explanations were correct then Miller's claim about capitalists would not hold, "Marxists cannot explain the formation of the belief [the equation of the bourgeois and national interests] in question."⁶⁷ Proposition I is therefore, according to Miller, invalid.

⁶⁴ Given the massive amount of data that would have to be collected in order to constitute an in depth and complete individualist explanation.

⁶⁵ "Proposition I (the individualist constraint on explanation): there must be a rock-bottom explanation of every large-scale social phenomenon which explains the phenomenon as solely due to the beliefs and dispositions of actual or typical individuals and the situations to which they respond in accordance with their beliefs and dispositions." (Miller, R. W. 1994: 460)

⁶⁶ Miller, R. W. 1994: 466

Miller's second premise concerns what Watkins calls the central assumption of the individualist school or the alteration principle. The alteration principle states that "[No] social tendency exists which could not be altered if the individuals concerned both wanted to alter it and possessed the appropriate information."⁶⁸ As a counter to this assumption, Miller highlights the plight of smokers. Miller argues that smokers possess relevant information on the harms of smoking, and the methods of quitting smoking that seem to work best, and yet they still do not, or cannot, quit smoking. Had Miller found a reasonable example of a social phenomenon (for example conflict) he may have been able to build a case. However, the use of smokers as a social phenomenon is problematic because smokers suffer an addiction to a drug. It would be like arguing that heroin is bad for people who know it is bad for them, and because they do not stop using heroin, the central assumption of the methodological individualists is flawed. A better example that could have been used would have been the continuing crisis in the Middle East and why there is still a conflict after calls from both sides to end the conflict⁶⁹. There are many possible reasons for the continuing crisis in the Middle East. However it is true that both sides have called for peace and yet there is still conflict. The individualist response to my counter-example would have to take the following form. The Palestinians and the Israelis have different desires (which act as preconditions to peace). The Palestinians desire their own state and the removal of Israeli troops from the West Bank and Gaza. The

⁶⁷ Miller, R. W. 1994: 466

⁶⁸ Miller, R. W. 1994: 466

⁶⁹ It is a question of this nature that this thesis is attempting to address. It is both an in depth answer as well as a far more relevant counter to the alteration principle than smokers.

Israelis on the other hand desire guarantees for security (such as guarantees that Palestine will not remain a terrorist haven for attacks against Israel). Palestine cannot provide guarantees to this end that Israel finds acceptable. The desires of the two sides conflict with each other and as such create an environment that is not conducive to peace. The Palestinians believe that the means for realising their desires are attacks on Israel while the Israelis believe that the means for realising their desires is a continued military presence in the West bank and Gaza and raids against terrorist bases in Palestinian territory.

Both premises used by Miller could be condensed into one point. Are there some social phenomena that exist and yet cannot be explained by people's desires and beliefs? This argument seems to run along the lines of the chicken and the egg – which one came first? One could, I feel, quite plausibly argue that it comes down to where individuals obtain their beliefs from, where their desires arise and if their beliefs can be influenced from an external source (be it propaganda or socialisation). Thus we return to Miller's first premise. Miller poses the question: If the formation of a belief, such as the equation of the bourgeois and the national interest, could be explained by adopting a capitalist viewpoint but could not be explained by adopting a Marxist viewpoint then is it not reasonable to assume that the principle outlined above is mistaken in how it formulates explanations of desires, beliefs and actions? However, in order to rescue the principle one would just have to show that Miller's arguments concerning the inability of the principle to explain belief formulation from both a

Marxist and a capitalist standpoint does not impede the value of the individualist position or the validity of the principle.

Methodological individualism is based on the premise that actions and social events ultimately reside in the agency of individuals. The individuals act in certain ways based on certain desires and beliefs. The development of the belief is the important factor. The belief is a product of many factors. Methodological individualism does not argue that different people in different places and under different circumstances have to have the same set of beliefs. Therefore, to argue that a capitalist is able to equate the national interest with that of the bourgeois interest while a Marxist cannot, is merely to argue the point that the belief formulation, and therefore the actions taken by a capitalist, are different from that of the Marxist. This does not amount to arguing that proposition I of methodological individualism is invalid because it, as a principle, does not fulfil the above-mentioned plausibility criterion.

Proposition IV (the necessity constraint) of methodological individualism states: "if, given conditions obtaining at the time, x would have happened anyway, even in the absence of the sequence of individual actions, beliefs or dispositions which actually did cause x, then an explanation of x must explain why x would have happened under the circumstances, even in the absence of that particular sequence."⁷⁰ Miller argues along the lines of actions being necessary and the individuals being contingent to those actions. He seems to be arguing that there

are circumstances where acts would occur regardless of the beliefs and acts of the individuals, even in the circumstance that a description of the events may point to the act being based on the actions and beliefs of individuals. In other words: “an explanation must show why the phenomenon would have happened anyway, even if that description were false.”⁷¹

For Miller, social and economic factors around the time of the event are the determining factors as to the cause of the event. I do not think that many people would dispute this point; certainly individualists would not. I do think, however, that Miller’s use of the term *determining* is perhaps a bit strong. To argue that these factors determine how individuals act is to remove the role of agency from an individual. It would be more useful to argue that these factors *shape* and *influence* the desires and beliefs of individuals but the concept of individual agency still allows individuals to act in a certain way that is dictated by those individuals⁷². Technological changes led to the industrial evolution which, in turn, began the full transition of societies towards capitalism. Throughout these changes, beliefs changed as certain progressions occurred. It is hardly implausible to argue that these ever-changing beliefs give rise to the ever-changing acts that constitute social phenomena. Furthermore, there do not necessarily have to be one set of beliefs in existence at any one time. The beliefs of an ardent capitalist would lead him to act in certain ways while, at the same time, any exploitation that arises out of those staunch capitalist beliefs

⁷⁰ Miller, R. W. 1994: 470

⁷¹ Miller, R. W. 1994: 470

would, in turn, give rise to a set of beliefs that would lead an individual to either join or start a trade union to counter that exploitation. Thus what we see is a duality in the nature of individual beliefs and actions. On the one hand those beliefs inform one how to act in order to change the *status quo*, while on the other hand beliefs that agree with the *status quo* encourage actors to behave in a way that coincides with, for example, the capitalist mindset. This is why one sees in any modern state such a plurality of beliefs and therefore plurality of perceived options for action.

Thus, when Miller cites Meyer's example of the 1848 Berlin workers' uprising⁷³ he is attempting to illustrate that the necessity constraint is, in fact, the principle that governs social science. Miller argues that the firing of the two shots were contingent causes of the uprising because the tensions of the people were already so high. Miller feels that the purpose of social science is to predict what will happen and feels that the individualist fails to do this. Miller therefore argues that "the necessity constraint governs social science."⁷⁴ However, the argument of this chapter holds that Miller is incorrect when he states that the two shots were contingent causes. The argument that tensions were high and therefore the uprising would have occurred regardless of the two shots being fired does not hold if one were to superimpose a similar example over the 1848 Berlin workers' uprising. The example in mind is that of the above-mentioned Cuban Missile crisis. In both cases tensions were extremely high and conflict appeared to be

⁷² I would like to thank Eusebius McKaiser for his valuable input concerning this problem.

⁷³ Miller, R. W. 1994: 474

inevitable. If shots were fired in the Cuban Missile Crisis Miller would probably have argued that those shots were also contingent and that conflict would have ultimately occurred in any case. However, what we saw in the Cuban Missile Crisis was an eleventh hour resolution of the issue. As stated above it was because the individuals concerned opted against conflict. This opting against conflict was witnessed at the height of the cold war when conflict seemed inevitable.

The social situation apparent in the Cuban Missile Crisis parallels that of the 1848 uprising and yet conflict that seemed so inevitable was averted. Therefore, it could well be argued that the two shots that were considered to be the contingent cause could well have been the actual cause of the uprising. If Miller feels that the role of social science is that of predictor, then one has to surely shy away from assumptions of what may happen, and focus on what actually happened. The focus on what happened is what will allow social science to construct itself in a way that allows it to assume the role of predictor. Therefore, the individualist position is in fact a more powerful tool than that proposed by Miller when he argued in favour of proposition IV of methodological individualism.

Lukes breaks the two sides to the present debate into two neat parts. On the one hand, he cites De Bonald who wrote that “it is society that constitutes man, that is, it forms him by social education.”⁷⁵ On the other hand, writers such as Mill

⁷⁴ Miller, R. W. 1994: 475

⁷⁵ Lukes, S. 1994: 451

state that “the laws of the phenomena of society are, and can be, nothing but the actions and passions of human beings.”⁷⁶ Lukes attacks the individualist position in a more outright manner. Lukes argues that the individualist position, as put forward by Watkins, will not see any explanations as rock-bottom unless they are: “couched wholly in terms of facts about individuals.”⁷⁷ This leads to what Lukes terms “truistic social atomism”⁷⁸ or TSA.

Lukes arrives at TSA by means of five, what he terms, truisms⁷⁹. 1) Society consists of people. 2) Groups consist of people. 3) Institutions consist of peoples, rules and roles. 4) Rules are followed (or not) by people. 5) Traditions, customs, and ideologies are ways people act think and talk. These five propositions are termed analytically true. Lukes argues that Watkins draws methodological individualism too close to TSA and, therefore, sees explanations not based on individuals as not being intelligible. Lukes argues that methodological individualism only sees individuals as observable entities in the social world. In reality, some social phenomena: “can simply be observed (as both trees and forests can) and indeed many features of social phenomena are observable (e.g. the procedure of court) while many features of individuals are not (e.g. intentions).”⁸⁰ Essentially Lukes is arguing that methodological individualism could be valid if there was some way that we could know about the web of complex individual desires and beliefs when attempting an explanation of

⁷⁶ Lukes, S. 1994: 451

⁷⁷ Lukes, S. 1994: 452

⁷⁸ Lukes, S. 1994: 452

⁷⁹ Lukes, S. 1994: 451

a social phenomenon or act. However, as I have already demonstrated against Kinkaid, it does not hold that methodological individualism is invalid *merely* because we do not have the means, at present, to identify all the necessary variables. This would be like saying that gravity did not exist before the apple hit Newton's head.

Either methodological individualism is valid, in and of itself, or it is not. To be invalid, it must be because there is a flaw in the principles and arguments that the school espouses. It is not enough to argue that the web of human interactions, desires and beliefs is too complex for a social theory to explain. This is especially true when that very theory itself argues that more comprehensive work must be done in order to unravel this very web. These arguments become all the more powerful when Lukes' arguments are examined at a closer level. For Lukes, there are both observable and non-observable features to social phenomena. Therefore, we cannot form explanations based on those factors that we can observe, when there are others that we cannot observe. Again, this thesis has to ask whether methodological individualism asks the social scientist to ignore those features that are not observable. As Lukes' arguments already state, intention is not a visible entity. Yet, it would be implausible to argue for an individualist theory that does not take an issue like intention into account. The majority of arguments for methodological individualism that I have already offered are based on an acceptance of desire-

⁸⁰ Lukes, S. 453

belief theory. In other words, it is entirely plausible to argue that methodological individualism addresses many of the issues laid at its doorstep by its critics.

Lukes defines what he means by the term „facts about people“⁸¹. The list that Lukes puts forward ranges across four categories, along a continuum, from non-social to social acts. The first category includes genetic makeup and brain-states. The second is aggression, gratification and stimulus response. The third is cooperation, power and esteem. The fourth category includes cashing cheques, saluting and voting. Lukes argues that an explanation from category one removes it from the realm of social explanation. This categorising again does not hinder the aims or actual workings of the individualist position. A complete, rock-bottom explanation has to, by definition, look at categories one to four.

What we have in methodological individualism is a plausible explanation of action. If the above arguments are accepted then a tool is present that illustrates why individuals act as they do. Furthermore, we have a tool that illustrates that there is little difference between social groupings (i.e. groups of individuals) and individuals themselves. They both act according to desires that they possess and beliefs that certain actions will achieve those desires. We also have a tool that argues that individuals with their desires and beliefs comprise the social institutions that operate in any society. More importantly, however, in terms of

this thesis we see that the social entities or institutions in question comprise corporations, industries, households, government institutions and Nation states themselves. We therefore have the starting point with which to look at the notion of interstate conflict from the perspective of individuals.

The aim of methodological individualism is to explain why individuals behave and act in a certain way in certain situations. On some occasions desires and beliefs can be influenced by social contexts. It is, however, important to note that social events and social contexts do not remove agency from the individual. Individuals do not lack the requisite agency to make decisions as individuals merely because there are factors that influence their desires and beliefs. It is therefore perfectly plausible to argue that merely because there are times where social contexts may influence individual desires and beliefs the ability of the individual to act as an agent is not removed. The individual agent still decides how to act. In other words the individual's actions are not *determined* by social contexts. The individualist position does not argue that there can be only one set of beliefs in a given group of individuals or society. There is ample room in the school for dissenting beliefs to arise and take hold. This is why we observe some individuals or groups that are so dogmatic in their views while in the same societies we see individuals changing the very institutions that govern that society. If societies operated in a context-bound state, we would never have seen changes such as the women's rights movement. Thus, methodological

⁸¹ Lukes, S. 454

individualism seeks to explain events by looking at the lowest common denominator of those events: the individuals involved.

Thus, if one accepts methodological individualism, one must also accept that the desires and beliefs of individuals exist in the institutions that exist within a state, and that those institutions include the executive and legislative branches of government as well as institutions such as the departments concerned with foreign affairs. It is these institutions that facilitate the articulation of desires and beliefs in a domestic context through state action and into the international context⁸². “In every society some sanction is required to produce the measure of solidarity requisite for its [the group’s] maintenance; and this sanction is applied by a controlling group or individual acting in the name of the society.”⁸³ The next question for this thesis concerns where desires and beliefs arise from. In other words, if there are unobservable desires that individuals are not aware of then how could the social scientist A) Discover what they are? B) Incorporate them into a coherent, rock-bottom, explanation of action? How do individuals respond to an authority figure? How are social groupings arrived at? How are desires and beliefs expressed or repressed in groups? This thesis argues that psychoanalysis will be able to shed light on these, as well as other, questions.

⁸² In a democratic state this would occur through democratic principles such as elections of representatives that share the desires and beliefs of the electorate. In non democratic states this includes the desires and beliefs of the executive as well as those of his/her trusted associates that enact policy.

⁸³ Carr, E. H. 1942: 123

Chapter Three - Psychoanalysis

The previous two chapters have carried us a long way in terms of the arguments of this thesis. In chapter one realism was highlighted in terms of its ability to serve as a tool for the analysis of state action. However, central problems were brought forward. The first of these issues concerning this tool was its reliance on the concept of human nature as being inherently conflictual. The second concerned the progression from the human nature of the individual to that human nature being attributed to states. Chapter two focussed its energies on the resolution of the second concern (state nature versus human nature) by showing that human nature can indeed, logically, complete the transition to a type of state nature. This thesis now has a further task to accomplish. It is not enough to show, as in chapter two, that something is logically correct but it must also be shown to be the case practically. With this in mind, this chapter proposes to illustrate how psychoanalysis argues the more practical aspects of the arguments outlined in chapter two as well as dealing with the first problem concerning what qualities human nature encompasses.

When dealing with psychoanalysis it is important to remember that: “any given process originates in an unpleasant state of tension and thereupon determines for itself such a path that its ultimate issue coincides with a relaxation of this

tension, i.e. with an avoidance of „pain“ or with production of pleasure.”⁸⁴ In other words, an individual will always attempt actions that remove, or at the very least reduce, this state of tension. The constancy principle which informs the above quote will be elaborated on shortly. It is however crucial to bear this principle in mind while the pieces of the puzzle are being laid out in preparation for the discussion of Freud’s group psychology.

Before one can begin arguments concerning the various „layers“ in the mental structure of an individual, one must first become acquainted with what Freud names the passions or, as they subsequently became known, the instincts⁸⁵. Freud refers to two classes of instincts. The first of these is Eros, which: “comprises not merely the uninhibited sexual instinct proper ... but also the self-preservative instinct.”⁸⁶ Eros is described as a creative instinct, a life instinct. Eros aims at the constant introduction of and maintenance of life. In other words: “Eros aims at complicating life by bringing about a ... more far-reaching coalescence of the particles into which living matter has been dispersed, thus ... aiming at the maintenance of life.”⁸⁷ The second instinct, identified by Freud, is the death instinct: Thanatos. This instinct strives to return all matter back to its original state; that being inorganic. Thus, the task of the death instinct: “is to lead organic matter back into the inorganic state.”⁸⁸ Freud conceives of the instincts

⁸⁴ Freud, S. 1922: 3-4

⁸⁵ An instinct is defined as “the tendency to react to an emotional stimulus ... thus bringing the stimulus under the influence of the three polarities which govern mental life.” (Warren, H. 1935: 139)

⁸⁶ Freud, S 1923: 55

⁸⁷ Freud, S 1923: 55

⁸⁸ Freud, S 1923: 55

as being in a constant state of struggle with each other, the one aiming at creating and sustaining life, the other at ending that life. The instincts are not always present in equal quantities, that is to say, that they do not always cancel each other out. The reality is more along the lines of the principle of yin and yang where there is always a bit of one mixed in with the other. While there is a fusion of sorts between the instincts it is not complete. Thus, two aspects concerning the operation of the instincts have been isolated a) each strives for the satisfaction of an impulse –Thanatos strives towards destruction while Eros strives towards creation b) the ends that they strive to achieve are mutually exclusive.

One may consider the instincts as dynamos of sorts – the dynamo generates considerable amounts of energy which must eventually be discharged. The organism feels the increase of this energy in terms of what could be termed „pain“ or tension. As such, the organism acts in such a way as to facilitate the discharge of this energy. The process governing this movement away from „pain“ is the constancy principle. Freud argues that the constancy principle is based on the fact that: “sensations of a pleasurable nature are not characterised by any impelling quality, whereas „painful“ ones possess this quality in a high degree.”⁸⁹ The „painful“ sensation prompts the organism to act in such a way as to rid itself of the „painful“ sensation. In other words, the constancy principle impels the

⁸⁹ Freud, S. 1923: 24 - 25

organism towards: “discharge, and that is why we interpret „pain“ as implying a heightening and pleasure a lowering of energetic cathexis⁹⁰.”⁹¹

The two instincts (Eros and Thanatos) are housed in the „bottom-most⁹²“ layer of the mental structure; the id. The id is that part of the mind – the unconscious - that contains: “the passions”⁹³. Before delving into the role of the id, it must first be mentioned that both the id and the ego are governed by their own separate principles. The id is governed by what Freud named the “pleasure principle”⁹⁴. The pleasure principle is that part of the mind that deals with the sexual impulses irrespective of the consequences, which are: “often to the detriment of the organism”.⁹⁵ In other words, the role of the pleasure principle involves

“[serving] the id as a compass in its struggle against the libido – the force that introduces such disturbances into the process of life ... The id, guided by the pleasure principle, that is, by the perception of „pain“, guards itself against these tensions ... by complying as swiftly as possible with the demands of non-desexualised libido, i.e. by striving for the gratification of the directly sexual needs.”⁹⁶

Abel (1989) describes the id as being not far removed from the Hobbesian state of nature. The pleasure principle thus guides the id towards a „want-need-must-have-now“ system of gratification, untempered by any rules or regulations. The

⁹⁰ Cathexes are defined as “a concentration or accumulation of mental energy on some particular idea or object.” (Warren, H. C. 1935: 39)

⁹¹ Freud, S. 1923: 25

⁹² For ease of clarity I will explain the various areas of the mental structure as layered. The bottom layer is not the least important; rather it is the oldest layer in terms of individual mental development.

⁹³ Freud, S. 1923: 30

⁹⁴ The pleasure principle is “the automatic regulation ... of mental activity, whose object is to avoid pain and procure pleasure.” (Warren, H. C. 1935: 204)

⁹⁵ Freud, S. 1922: 5

stimuli is itself unpleasant and: “the nervous system strives to reduce or eliminate stimulation because an organism always experiences stimulation (excitation, tension) as unpleasurable.”⁹⁷ In other words, as argued by Marcuse (1966), “the largest layer [of the mental apparatus] is the id, the domain of the unconscious, of the primary instincts. The id is free from the forms and principles which constitute the conscious social individual ... it knows no values, no good and evil, no morality.”⁹⁸ Thus the pleasure principle acts in accordance with the constancy principle as they both strive to keep the levels of excitation as low as possible⁹⁹.

The basic instincts are concerned only with gratification. However, this is not always desirable as instant gratification of a given desire at time *A* may have the consequence in reality of destroying the organism. Thus the organism must come to the realisation that the natural environment is not necessarily receptive to the pleasure principle’s maxim of instant gratification and that gratification would be better received at some other time. In other words: “[the] unconscious ruled by the pleasure principle, comprises „the older primary processes, the residues of a phase of development in which they were the only kind of processes ... But the unrestrained pleasure principle comes into conflict with the natural and human environment.”¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶ Freud, S. 1923: 66 - 67

⁹⁷ Abel, D. C. 1989: 5

⁹⁸ Marcuse, H. 1966: 29

⁹⁹ Freud, S. 1922: 3 - 4

¹⁰⁰ Marcuse, H. 1966: 12

It makes sense then that the next level in the development of the mental apparatus – the ego – would have to take into account the external world and how that world impacts on the organism’s desire for gratification of the instinctual impulses. Perceptions, in terms of how the external world is experienced and understood, have the same significance for the ego as the instincts do for the id¹⁰¹. In Freud’s words: “in the ego perception plays the part which in the id devolves upon instinct.”¹⁰² In other words, the id understands the world only in so far as its instinctual impulses are concerned. For example; organism A feels a certain amount of stimulation through Eros. This stimulation is felt by the organism as excitement or tension which is experienced as „pain“ by the organism. The organism thus acts under the constancy principle to attain equilibrium and the release or satisfaction of the impulse under the pleasure principle attains that equilibrium. The role of the ego: “representing what we call reason and sanity”¹⁰³ is to delay the removal of the „painful“ tension indefinitely or at least until such time as the release of that tension can be safely accomplished under the conditions present in the external world. Thus, the ego must interfere or block the pleasure principle

“for the preservation of the organism amid the difficulties of the external world ... [the pleasure principle] is replaced by the reality-principle, which without giving up the intention of ultimately attaining pleasure ... demands and enforces the postponement of satisfaction ... and the temporary endurance of „pain“ ... on the road to pleasure.”¹⁰⁴

¹⁰¹ Freud, S. 1923: 54

¹⁰² Freud, S. 1923: 30

¹⁰³ Freud, S. 1923: 30

¹⁰⁴ Freud, S. 1922: 5

The realm of the ego is that of the conscious mind. Consciousness is: “a function [of] the system that is nearest to the external world.”¹⁰⁵ The ego therefore developed in order to deal with that part of the world in which sensations originate from outside the body¹⁰⁶. It is, in fact: “by virtue of its [the ego’s] relation to the perceptual system it [the ego] arranges the processes of the mind in a temporal order and tests their correspondence with reality.”¹⁰⁷ Due to the external location of perceptions which the ego deals with, it can be said that the ego “has the task of bringing the influence of the external world to bear upon the id, and its tendencies, and endeavours to substitute the reality-principle for the pleasure principle which reigns supreme in the id.”¹⁰⁸ In other words, the role of the ego is to subjugate and control the id.

In order to understand how the ego operates it is necessary to understand the term “object cathexis”. An „object cathexis“ can be defined as: “[the] diversion of the love or sexual instinct from its primary sexual aim.”¹⁰⁹ According to Freud (1923) when the individual decides that it wants object A, an object cathexis for that object A is formed. Once these object cathexes are formed (by the id) the ego: “withdraws libido from the id and transforms the object cathexes of the id into ego constructions.”¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁵ Freud, S. 1923: 20

¹⁰⁶ This is in contrast to the id which obtains its impulses and sensations from the instincts. In other words, the id obtains sensations from inside the body.

¹⁰⁷ Freud, S. 1923: 81

¹⁰⁸ Freud, S. 1923: 29 - 30

¹⁰⁹ Warren, H. C. 1935: 183

¹¹⁰ Freud, S. 1923: 82

There are two main avenues open to the ego in its bid to subjugate the id. In the first instance, the ego may use repression which is: “[the] rejection, by the ego, of impulses [painful to consciousness] emanating from the id.”¹¹¹ The role of the ego is to coordinate all the individual’s feelings and impulses and to inform the individual when it is safe to satisfy those feelings and impulses. However, it is true that all the impulses do not necessarily reconcile themselves very well to not being immediately satisfied. In this instance the ego splits these impulses off from the rest by “the process of repression.”¹¹² These impulses are essentially removed from the conscious rational level of the mental apparatus and are pushed down into the unconscious level. In effect, these impulses are removed from the possibility of gratification (unless the impulses are able to fight their way back to the conscious level). In the second instance, the ego may use the process of sublimation which is: “[the] unconscious process of deflecting the energy of the sexual impulse (i.e. libido) to new objects or aims of a non-sexual or socially useful goal”¹¹³. The ego does, as was argued above, attempt to subjugate the id. However, the ego also attempts to aid the id in mastering the tensions. In other words: “the ego, by sublimating some of the libido for itself and its purposes, assists the id in its work of mastering the tensions.”¹¹⁴

The primal instincts (Eros and Thanatos) are housed in the id and are governed by the pleasure principle. The reality principle, housed in the ego, mediates

¹¹¹ Warren, H. C. 1935: 231

¹¹² Freud, S. 1922: 6

¹¹³ Warren, H. C. 1935: 265

¹¹⁴ Freud, S. 1923: 67

between the id and the constraints of the real world in order to protect the individual lest instinctual gratification occur at a time that could endanger the individual. Thus,

“under the influence of the external world ... a part of the id, which is equipped with the organs for the reception of and the protection from stimuli, gradually developed into the ego, it is the mediator between the id and the external world ...[the] chief function of the ego is ... controlling the instinctual impulses of the id.”¹¹⁵

There is, however, a third layer in the mental structure of the individual. This third layer is known as the superego. As Freud argues, there is a “differentiating grade within the ego, which may be called the ego ideal or superego.”¹¹⁶

The superego: “arises from the long dependency of the infant on his parents; the parental influence remains the core of the superego. Subsequently, a number of societal and cultural influences are taken in by the superego until it coagulates into the powerful representative of established morality.”¹¹⁷ The superego thus becomes the individual’s conscience due to the restrictions, taboos and the like, instilled first by the parents and then by various other socializing factors in society¹¹⁸. It is, however, impossible to fully understand the superego without understanding Freud’s use of the Oedipus complex. It is the resolution of this complex that successfully completes the creation of the superego.

¹¹⁵ Marcuse, H. 1966: 30

¹¹⁶ Freud, S. 1923: 34

¹¹⁷ Marcuse, H. 1966: 32

¹¹⁸ Marcuse, H. 1966: 32

Freud¹¹⁹ argues that a boy from birth develops an object cathexis for the mother. The boy sees the father as something to be emulated and admired and, as such, the boy identifies with the father. At first, these relationships are satisfactory. However, there comes a point in the boy's biological maturation where sexual urges begin to occur. At this point, the mother becomes desired as a sexual object and the father comes to be seen as an obstacle to the sexual attainment of the mother. It is because of the perception of the father as an obstacle that the boy wishes to totally replace him and assume his place in the mother-father relationship. The identification with the father begins to become hostile in nature. "With the dissolution of the Oedipus complex the object-cathexis of the mother must be given up. Its place may be filled by ... an identification with the mother or an intensified identification with the father ... the latter outcome is more normal; it permits the affectionate relation to the mother to be retained ... the boy's masculinity is consolidated."¹²⁰ Thus there is a duality in the nature of the Oedipus complex with both love and hate of the father playing a role in the resolution of the complex.

The Oedipus complex is resolved when the boy realises that he must abandon the object-cathexis for the mother and thus begins to identify with the father as opposed to seeing the father solely as a threat and a barrier to the son's acquisition of the mother. There is a duality to the resolution of the complex. According to Freud the superego's "relation to the ego is not exhausted by the

¹¹⁹ Freud, S. 1923: 40 – 41

¹²⁰ Freud, S. 1923: 41

precept: „*you ought to be* such and such (like your father)“; it also comprises the prohibition: „*you must not be* such and such (like your father).“¹²¹ Therefore, one can readily observe how the superego is so heavily influenced by the father’s character¹²². Furthermore, the more intense the Oedipus complex and the longer it takes for the various societal socializing agents to repress the more intense and dominant will be the superego that is created¹²³.

Therefore, it may be said of the id: “that it is totally non-moral, of the ego that it strives to be moral, and of the superego that it can be hyper-moral and then becomes as ruthless as only the id can be.”¹²⁴ The superego does not contain our conscience, rather it is our conscience. The superego is that part of the mental structure that houses our moral norms and values and creates in us the feeling of guilt and failure when we act (or even entertain thoughts) that run against the grain of these morals and values. These acts and thoughts stem all the way back to the oldest instinctual wishes that all individuals entertain: “those of incest, of cannibalism, and of murder.”¹²⁵ These instinctual wishes stretch back to the era of the primal horde.

Brunner (1998) offers an outline of Freud’s thoughts as regards the primal horde i.e. Freud’s conception of humanity’s original state. In the primal horde, there was a single all-powerful male who kept all the females in the group for his

¹²¹ Freud, S. 1923: 44

¹²² Freud, S. 1923: 45

¹²³ This may of course take forms such as a heightened unconscious sense of guilt.

¹²⁴ Freud, S. 1923: 79

exclusive sexual pleasure. As the sons matured they were left only two options. First, they could leave the group and attempt to find another group. Second, they could remain with their father's group but would have to undergo castration by the father in order to remove their sexual competitiveness. The sons therefore decided to band together and in this way become stronger than the father and were able to kill the father. However, after killing the father, the sons realise that no single one of them could take the father's place and keep all the females in the group because of all the future strife that would occur as the cycle of sons rising against fathers repeated itself. As such, the sons agreed on certain taboos a) there was a taboo placed on murder, b) there was a taboo placed on incest¹²⁶.

The resolutions that were adopted by the primal father's sons (bans on incest and murder) were in fact: "the beginnings of civilisation ... starting with the transition from an original state, in which obedience was imposed externally by the paternal, physical coercion, to a new form of obedience based on the internalisation of rules."¹²⁷ Civilisation removed the sole agent of coercion from an external to an internal position. In other words, as civilisation grew and evolved so too did the morals, values and norms that were necessary for its maintenance. Accordingly, the development of the superego, and its role as conscience, allowed people to begin policing themselves¹²⁸.

¹²⁵ Freud, S. 1943: 17

¹²⁶ Brunner, J. 1998: 89 – 90

¹²⁷ Brunner, J. 1998: 89 - 90

¹²⁸ Obviously external coercion was not entirely removed. There are still prison terms for breaking society's rules. There is still the risk of being killed by another man for gratifying instinctual urges with his wife. What did happen though is that external coercion ceased to be the sole method of policing an individual's behavior.

According to Freud (1943), culture is that way of life that encompasses: “all those respects in which human life has raised itself above animal conditions and in which it differs from the life of beasts.”¹²⁹ Among the prime reasons (although it is definitely not the sole reason) for humans entering into a group are the notions of a) scarcity of resources and b) mutual defence. In terms of scarcity of resources, Freud argues that the ability of humans to master nature is important but civilisation: “also includes all the necessary arrangements whereby men’s relations to each other, and in particular [so that] *the distribution of attainable riches, may be regulated.*”¹³⁰ In terms of mutual defence it appears that Freud felt that human nature is not gentle and loving. In fact, Brunner (1998) quotes the following from Freud’s *Civilisation and its Discontents*:

“Men are not gentle creatures, who want to be loved, and who at most can defend themselves if they are attacked; they are, on the contrary, creatures among whose instinctual endowments is to be reckoned a powerful share of aggressiveness. As a result, their neighbour is for them not only a potential helper or sexual object, but also someone who tempts them to satisfy their aggressiveness on him, to exploit his capacity for work without compensation, to use him sexually without his consent, to seize his possessions, to humiliate him, to cause him pain, to torture and kill him. *Homo homini lupus.*”¹³¹

For Freud, the nature of humans cannot be seen as benign and wholly peaceful. Thus, in order for people to live together in a group environment, these natural urges must be curbed. Within the group, people become others’ property because of their capacity and ability to work, as a sexual object to be used, or

¹²⁹ Freud, S. 1943: 8

¹³⁰ Freud, S. 1943: 9 my italics for emphasis

because: “[the] relations of men are profoundly influenced by the measure of instinctual satisfaction that the existing resources make possible.”¹³² Thus, every individual is virtually an enemy of culture.¹³³

What can be seen from the above discussion of civilisation and culture is that the moment people enter into a group they have to curb certain instinctual impulses which, as has been illustrated above, allow tension and excitement to build up in the individual and this build up is felt as „pain“. Thus, the individual and civilisation exist in an uneasy truce – on the one hand the individual reaps the benefits of group life while on the other foregoing for lengthy periods the instinctual satisfaction that the individual craves. As argued by Freud (1943) “culture must be defended against the individual, and its organisation, its institutions, its laws, are all directed to this end; they aim not only at establishing a certain distribution of property ... they must [also] protect against the hostile impulses of mankind.”¹³⁴

The greatest tool that exists to aid the very notion of communal living is the superego. It is through the superego that people become supporters of civilisation. In other words: “those people in whom [the development of the superego] has taken place, from being foes of culture, become its supporters ... the greater [this] number in a cultural community, the more secure it is and the

¹³¹ Brunner, J. 1998: 81

¹³² Freud, S. 1943: 9

¹³³ Freud, S. 1943: 9

¹³⁴ Freud, S. 1943: 9 - 10

more easily can it dispense with external coercion.”¹³⁵ This is not to say that there are no problems in a civilisation merely because a majority of the individuals in the civilisation have developed superegos. There are those in the civilisation who are better off than others and this in itself creates problems: “it is intelligible that these suppressed classes should develop an intense hostility to the culture.”¹³⁶ It is the case that the subdued and underprivileged classes begin to resent their status and also to resent the more privileged classes. The suppressed classes are subjected to their privations as such; they try to: “rid themselves of their own surplus of privation and where this is not possible a lasting measure of discontent will obtain within this culture.”¹³⁷

However, Freud (1943) makes arguments as to how the suppressed classes reconcile themselves to the privileged classes and ultimately reconcile themselves to the society that they, by rights, should despise being a part of. Essentially Freud’s arguments centre on the notion of culture as narcissism¹³⁸. The members of the civilisation come to exhibit a great pride in the accomplishments of their culture in terms of ideals that they have created etc. Thus, a narcissistic pride in, and love of, the culture develops.

“Among the psychical possessions of a culture [are] its ideals ... its judgements of what are its loftiest and its most ambitious accomplishments. It seems at first as if these ideals would determine the achievements of the cultural group; but the actual process would seem to be that the ideals are modelled on the first

¹³⁵ Freud, S. 1943: 19

¹³⁶ Freud, S. 1943: 20

¹³⁷ Freud, S. 1943: 20

achievements that the cooperation of internal ability and external circumstances made possible, and that now these first achievements are held fast by the ideal as examples to be followed. The satisfaction of the ideal ... is thus of a narcissistic nature, it is based on pride in what has already been successfully achieved.”¹³⁹

This narcissistic satisfaction in the group serves the purpose of counteracting the inherent hostility that people have towards culture while: “human feelings towards strangers usually have an element of intolerance; an individual feels that the strangers” differences ... imply a criticism and a demand for change.”¹⁴⁰ In a group situation this fear of intolerance (as well as displays of intolerances) is largely diminished. This fear of criticism is the result of the individual’s narcissistic feelings. However, in a group situation love for others in the group starts to develop. In essence, a type of group narcissism begins to develop. The libidinal ties in the group arise: “through the psychic mechanism of identification. To identify with someone means to take someone else as a model ... to shape one’s own ego accordingly.”¹⁴¹ In effect, the identification with others in the group stems from the leader of the group: “in groups that have a leader, the members identify in some way with the leader, whom they internalise as their ego ideal.”¹⁴²

The privileged group enjoy the benefits that it obtains from its position in the culture while the underprivileged are able to counteract their underprivileged

¹³⁸ Narcissism is “the persistence of an early stage of psychosexual development, in which the sexual object, remains the self.” (warren, H.C. 1935: 175)

¹³⁹ Freud, S. 1943: 22

¹⁴⁰ Abel, D.C. 1989: 90

¹⁴¹ Abel, D.C. 1989: 91

status by allowing themselves to despise those outside their group or culture¹⁴³. This dislike that the underprivileged feel towards others helps them to deal with their low position in the group by allowing them the feeling that, even if they occupy the lower strata of their group, they are still better than the wretches in other groups.

The group now armed with this narcissistic love for its culture has managed to set itself apart from other cultures and groups that it encounters. The values and ideals that various groups develop are naturally different, having arisen out of different circumstances (once the move to living in a group in the post primal horde period is accomplished). The narcissistic love of the culture, its values, and its morals in effect precludes the acceptance of the values and ideals of other cultures. The culture may end up despising other cultures: “to make this satisfaction complete the culture compares itself with others which have applied themselves to other tasks and have developed other ideals. On the strength of these differences every culture claims the right to despise the rest.”¹⁴⁴ The cultural ideals thus become a source of bad feeling and potential conflict: “between different cultural groups, as can be seen most clearly among nations.”¹⁴⁵

¹⁴² Abel, D.C. 1989: 91

¹⁴³ Freud, S. 1943: 22

¹⁴⁴ Freud, S. 1943: 22

¹⁴⁵ Freud, S. 1943: 22

This thesis has reached a critical juncture. The mental apparatus of the individual psyche has been examined in terms of how it is constructed and what role the various elements play in the cognitive functioning of the individual. This thesis has also highlighted Freud's original state (the primal horde) and how this original state led to the institution of the two taboos. Finally the movement from small family units to civilised culture has also been illustrated. What remains from this point is to illustrate Freud's arguments as regards the different cognitive functioning of an individual when alone and when that individual is a part of a larger group.

Freud in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1922) argues that the concern of group psychology is: "[with] the individual man as a member of a race, of a nation, of a caste, of a profession, of an institution."¹⁴⁶ Freud also argues that in the group, there is a definite: "mental change which [is] forced upon the individual."¹⁴⁷ Freud (1922) cites Le Bon who argues that the formation of the group influences the individual in the same manner as if that individual were being hypnotised. Le Bon labels this influence a contagion which is essentially defined as: "the spreading of *suggestion* throughout a social group."¹⁴⁸ In other words, ideas are spread through the use of suggestion throughout the group; this in turn has the effect of influencing the individual in such a way that "will and discernment are lost. All feelings and thoughts are bent in the direction

¹⁴⁶ Freud, S. 1922: 3 my italics for emphasis

¹⁴⁷ Freud, S. 1922: 6

¹⁴⁸ Warren, H. C. 1935: 59 my italics for emphasis

determined by the hypnotizer.”¹⁴⁹ The big difference between the contagion and hypnosis is mostly one of degree, where “under the influence of a suggestion, he will undertake the accomplishment of certain acts with irresistible impetuosity. This impetuosity is more irresistible in the case of groups than in that of the hypnotised subject ... the suggestion being the same for all individuals in the group; it gains in strength by reciprocity.”¹⁵⁰ The individual eventually loses all touch with his/her ability to critically think and act, thus becoming a part of the „group mind“.

Abel (1989) agrees with Le Bon’s thoughts concerning the individual’s intellectual weakening arguing that when in a group: “the individual’s „liability to affect becomes extraordinarily intensified, while his intellectual ability is markedly reduced.”¹⁵¹

McDougall in Freud (1922) draws a distinction between groups as crowds with little to no organisation, and groups as collectives where a certain prerequisite for a group is fulfilled, namely the fact that: “[the] individuals must have something in common with one another, a common interest in an object, a similar emotional bias in some situation or other ... the higher the degree of „this mental homogeneity“, the more readily do individuals form a psychological group, and the more striking are the manifestations of a group mind.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Freud, S. 1922: 12

¹⁵⁰ Freud, S. 1922: 12

¹⁵¹ Abel, D.C. 1989: 90

¹⁵² Freud, S. 1922: 26 - 27

Abel, Le Bon and McDougall illustrate two characteristics of the individual in the group: “the intensification of the emotions and the inhibition of the intellect.”¹⁵³ Freud’s quest is the search, not for what happens, but for why it is that the individual, when in a group, succumbs to the above-mentioned characteristics. Freud begins his argument with the role of libido. Libido, which as has been explained, is the energy attached to Eros – the life or the sexual instinct. Eros strives towards joining, bringing together, unification. As such, Freud argues that since we know something binds the group what better to attribute that binding agent to than: “Eros, who holds together everything in the world.”¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, the individual that willingly allows him/herself to be influenced by suggestion does so: “because he feels the need of being in harmony with [the group] rather than in opposition to them.”¹⁵⁵

Freud (1922) presents arguments as to how the leader comes to be head of the group. The individual abandons his own ego ideal and replaces it with the group’s ideal (which in turn is that ideal embodied in the group leader): “in many individuals the separation between the ego and the ego ideal is not very far advanced; the two coincide readily; the ego has often preserved its earlier self-complacency. The selection of the leader is very much facilitated by this circumstance.”¹⁵⁶ In other words, the leader, in order to be chosen, must

¹⁵³ Freud, S 1922: 33

¹⁵⁴ Freud, S 1922: 40

¹⁵⁵ Freud, S 1922: 40

¹⁵⁶ Freud, S. 1922: 102

characterise the ego-ideal of the individuals concerned. Those individuals whose ego-ideals are not embodied by the leader will succumb to the leader by means of suggestion: “that is to say by means of identification.”¹⁵⁷

Brunner brings two arguments to the fore at this point. First: “through the Oedipus complex the child learns not only to abandon his or her desires in the face of authority but also to cope with the presence of authority by identifying with its demands.”¹⁵⁸ This ties into his second argument: “he [Freud] declared in *Moses and Monotheism* that we know that in the mass of mankind there is a powerful need for an authority who can be admired, before whom one bows down, and by whom one is ruled.”¹⁵⁹ It appears that what Brunner is arguing here is that the resolution of the Oedipus complex mentally prepares the individual for the process of identifying with and accepting a leader as an authority figure (similar to the father in the family unit). In other words, what Brunner is angling towards is that: “Freud assumes that human beings are driven by a primary mutual hostility.”¹⁶⁰ However, Freud also argued that Eros bound the group together: “he had to explain how such love could come about in a group. He did so by asserting that the tie that binds members of a group ... derives from their submission to a father figure ... they share a love for the same father figure ... [therefore] they feel similar and close to one another.”¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁷ Freud, S 1922: 102

¹⁵⁸ Brunner, J. 1998: 88

¹⁵⁹ Brunner, J. 1998: 90 - 91

¹⁶⁰ Brunner, J. 1998: 81

At the end of chapter two one of the aims set out for this chapter was to answer where desires arose from and how the beliefs were formed that facilitated the satisfaction of those desires. This chapter has answered both of these points in terms of the psychoanalytic approach. The structure of the mental apparatus was illustrated above in an attempt to highlight the origin of human instinctual desires. Furthermore, the influence of the world as it is was shown to impact negatively on the individual's ability to gratify his/her instinctual desires. The problems of compatibility between civilisation and the individual were highlighted in order to illustrate the inherent problems as regards satisfaction of instinctual desires in order to allow work to exploit scarce resources. Civilisation also allowed individuals to more effectively defend themselves from other groups of individuals. The final section of this chapter dealt with the group and the influence of the leader of the group. One of the overriding facts in this section concerns the individual losing significant control over his/her actions in the group. This is largely because of the role played by the leader in reshaping the super ego as the leader becomes the ego ideal. Suggestion and identification in the group operate as contagion and serve to homogenise a heterogeneous group and create a „group-mind“. The group has also been shown to develop a group narcissism which has the potential to put the group at odds with other groups.

The role of this as regards the aims of this thesis will be elaborated on in chapter four. However it can be said that realism argues that states (which have been shown to be little more than groups of individuals) act in the national interest and

¹⁶¹ Brunner, J. 1998: 81

are often ready to use force against other states that interfere with that national interest. This seems to be explicable in terms of the group narcissism, the limited resources and the inherent aggressive/destructive instincts that many of the authors cited in this chapter argue that individuals possess. The threads shall be drawn together in chapter four.

Chapter Four – Where to from here?

This thesis has examined the realist school of thought, in the field of international relations. The realist school concerns itself with the behaviour of states in the international system and why those states often find themselves entering into a state of conflict. This chapter has two aims.

First, it aims to draw the strands of the last three chapters into a coherent whole. Second, it aims to offer recommendations for a possible reordering of the international system in light of some of the issues identified. This chapter will, however, begin by giving a brief overview of the arguments presented in chapters one, two and three before beginning the process of drawing the strands together and making recommendations.

In chapter one the nature of the international system was argued to be anarchic. The reason for this anarchic description rests on the fact that statesmen and by extension¹⁶² states act in terms of furthering their national interest. In other words, states tend to behave in a manner that can best be described as self-interested. “According to realism ... people are self-interested and selfish and seek to dominate others.”¹⁶³ In other words, while it is true that people are often observed to cooperate with each other: “they can not be depended on to cooperate ... they will stop when it no longer serves their interests.”¹⁶⁴ The above may be witnessed today in the international system. The United States’ war on

¹⁶² As argued extensively in chapter two.

¹⁶³ Russett et al 2000: 25

terror – more specifically the much spoken about removal of Iraq's Saddam Hussein - is not drawing the same level of support from allies that backed the United States in the Gulf War. The realist position would explain this in terms of national interest; or more specifically in as much as a renewed conflict in the middle-east is no longer in the national interest of states such as Germany and Saudi Arabia. Thus it is that the actions of states must be judged in terms of how those actions undertaken enable the state to increase its standing and prestige in the international system. In other words, morality is not a criterion for evaluation of foreign policy. The nature of state action was also equated with human nature. The realist conception of human nature is that human nature is egoist, and power seeking.

One of the central issues that this thesis deals with concerns the logical movement that the realists make where on the one hand they refer to human nature and on the other hand they simply attribute that nature to states (in effect creating a type of „state-nature“). In order to deal with this movement in logic, the thesis examined the methodological individualists. The notion of methodological individualism was able to shed some light on the question: How does one accomplish the movement, in analysis, from individual to state? Methodological individualism seems to be a plausible answer to the above question. Put quite simply, the conclusion reached in chapter two essentially argued that states are not states. Rather, they are groups of people who identify with each other in a certain way that allows them to label their group in a specific manner. In other

¹⁶⁴ Russett et al 2000: 25

words, England is little more than people who identify with each other in such a way as to call themselves English, and to label the area that they occupy England. Or, in the words of Ryan: “ontologically, there are really no such things as states or nations, armies, churches, and the like ... statements about these dubious entities can all be translated into statements about individual men and women.”¹⁶⁵

Chapter three created a more interesting problem for the thesis. The initial claim presented in the thesis was quite simply that human nature is conflictual. This claim raised two problems. First, not all individuals and indeed all groups of individuals seem to display an aggressive, conflictual nature at all times¹⁶⁶. Second, it became necessary to identify a theory that explained in some detail under what conditions individuals could exhibit aggression and a propensity towards conflict. Psychoanalysis provided a plausible theory that fit the above two criteria.

In terms of the first criterion, while Freud does argue that individuals in a group situation do seem to experience an “intensification of the emotions and the inhibition of the intellect,”¹⁶⁷ he does not go on to make the claim that individuals will always experience this or even that this will necessarily lead to a state of aggression and a propensity to conflict. However, it was shown in chapter three

¹⁶⁵ Ryan, A. 1987: 158

¹⁶⁶ It is true to state that under certain conditions, people do display an aggressive conflictual nature but it does not always manifest itself.

¹⁶⁷ Freud, S. 1922: 33

that Freud thought that the individual does allow him/her self to be influenced by the group in order to remain in harmony and not in conflict with the group. This was attributed to the role of Eros. The individual seems to be driven by a sense of need to be a social part of the group. This need to be a part of the group is due to the arguments concerning libido and Eros – the life instinct. The key to group formation resides in the role of the leader of the group. There are three ways in which the individual may succumb to the ego-ideal of the leader of the group. The first instance concerns the member of the group abandoning his/her own ego-ideal in favour of the ego-ideal embodied in the leader of the group. Brunner was cited as arguing that it was the resolution of the Oedipus complex that mentally prepared the individual for the process of identifying with and accepting the leader as an authority figure. Brunner was also shown to believe that “in the mass of mankind there is a powerful need for an authority figure who can be admired, before whom one bows down, and by whom one is ruled.”¹⁶⁸ The second and third instances concern the notions of suggestion and identification respectively.

In terms of the first problem it would appear a) that the character of the leader of the group would play an important role in terms of the nature of the group and how it behaves towards other groups. In other words, if the leader of the group were an individual prone to conflict then it seems plausible that the members of that group would exhibit tendencies towards conflict when operating in the context of the group (which is not to say that when outside the group they would

¹⁶⁸Brunner, J. (in Roth) 1998: 90 - 91

still be in favour of conflict). Van Zyl (1990) argues that the relationship between the leader and the group is of primary importance. It is because of the fact that the group places significant amounts of libidinal energy into the leader that they therefore become attached to that leader. Indeed the leader begins to assume a highly revered status. Because of this common love and affinity for the leader, the group finds a common platform on which to construct a bond or a mutual basis for togetherness. "It is under these conditions [that] individuals give over the otherwise ... internalised superego as the site of ethical judgment to the leader much as they might in love or hypnosis."¹⁶⁹ The problem exists however in the fact that the leader is potentially flawed and potentially fallible¹⁷⁰. Van Zyl (1990) quotes Freud: "the only way in which group formation can be stabilized is under the auspices of a rational and impartial leader who can act as the superego to all members and in being just also guarantees ... suggestibility of the members does not turn to violence upon others."¹⁷¹ Therefore the superego of the leader¹⁷² is of primary importance when observing the behaviour of a group („state“) in the international system.

B) It is also possible that in terms of the group narcissism mentioned in chapter three that a group that feels in some way threatened by another group, whether that threat exists in a physical manner or in some other manner such as religious

¹⁶⁹ Van Zyl, S. 1990: 11

¹⁷⁰ Van Zyl, S. 1990

¹⁷¹ Van Zyl, S. 1990: 15

¹⁷² This also true in so far as the personalities of the leader's close circle of advisors go. It is the leader that commands the respect of the group, but it is the leader and the close circle of advisors that make the decisions as to what foreign policy will be.

or cultural threat, may in order to preserve itself resort to conflict. The concept of group narcissism by its very nature demands that groups see themselves as being in some way superior to other groups: “on the strength of these differences every culture claims the right to despise the rest.”¹⁷³ A possible example of this is the current standoff between the states pro United States and those pro Islam.

C) A final plausible situation that could shed some light on the issue concerns the nature of the group itself. In other words, if a group is unstable¹⁷⁴ the leader of the group may constantly be seeking an external enemy in order to create a false feeling of homogeneity amongst the members. Thus, while it is correct to argue that groups do not always show signs of aggression or conflict, there are conditions under which aggression or conflict may become manifest.

In terms of the second problem, psychoanalysis does illustrate how under any of the above conditions (a, b, or c) the propensity towards conflict may become manifest. Throughout chapters one and three one common strand of argument has arisen: states, as far as the realist is concerned, enter into a constant state of competition with each other because resources are scarce. For Freud, individuals institute rules and regulations in society because of the need to work for scarce resources instead of existing solely to satisfy their instinctual impulses. Freud also argues that given the nature of humans (in terms of instinctual

¹⁷³ Freud, S. 1943: 22

¹⁷⁴ In terms of constant infighting between members of the group, a group where members identify on artificial grounds, a group with very large splits between the various minorities that

impulses) they possess the intrinsic characteristics of aggression and potential for conflict. Thus, individuals are made to set aside their instinctual desires in order for society to function efficiently. The realists also place emphasis on the fact that there are scarce resources and that it is this scarcity that initiates the constant competition among states as well as acknowledging a propensity towards conflict in terms of the nature of people governing and comprising the state.

Thus, the realist and the psychoanalyst share similar views as to the problem of scarcity and human nature and how best to overcome them. The difference between the psychoanalyst and the realist exists in as much as the psychoanalyst argues for rules and regulations while the realist does not argue for any end-point for the resolution of competition. In other words, the realist does not present a mechanism to deal with the conflict that is the logical end-point of their arguments. This chapter will present some possible resolutions that stem from the logical progression of the realist. The issue that will be dealt with later in this chapter concerns the mechanisms that are used to control instinctual desires and their gratification in a society and the lack of those mechanisms in the international system.

The realist argues in favour of international law. However, it can be argued that the role of and powers of coercion of international law are not given a large

comprise it, etc. This also includes states such as Rwanda in which the group is not Rwandan first and Hutu or Tsutsi second but rather Hutu or Tsusti first and Rwandan second.

enough role or scope: “unlike domestic politics, where a hierarchical pattern of authority exists to enforce private agreements and public laws, sovereign states ... are ultimately dependent on their own resources to protect their interests, enforce agreements and maintain order.”¹⁷⁵ In other words, the realist argues that states obey international law only in so far as it is within the interest of those states. Russett et al (2000) argues that the realist allows for the existence of international law: “not because states are particularly „good“, but because it is in their interests to be law abiding and to encourage others to obey the law as well.”¹⁷⁶ In other words, states will disobey the law when their interests are served by doing so.

The Security Council of the United Nations has the task of “[maintenance] of international peace.”¹⁷⁷ However, the Security Council is hampered by the veto vote of the five permanent members.¹⁷⁸ The veto vote is a power invested in the five permanent members which allows any of them to veto a decision that is taken by the majority of the five permanent and ten non-permanent members of the Council. In other words, a resolution passed 14 – 1 in favour of a given course of action may still be blocked by the veto of one of the permanent members: “this veto has been invoked by all the permanent members when they have perceived their own interests to be threatened, and has deprived the

¹⁷⁵ Krieger, J. 2001: 715

¹⁷⁶ Russett, B. et al 2000: 26

¹⁷⁷ Dugard, J. 1994:302

¹⁷⁸ The USA, Russia, China, France, the United Kingdom.

Security Council of much of its effectiveness.”¹⁷⁹ It is clear that the Security Council has limited effectiveness in terms of implementing its resolutions under either Chapter VI¹⁸⁰ or VII¹⁸¹ of the United Nations Charter. It is important to note that since the end of the Cold War consensus has been found more often by the Security Council members. While this may sound like an improvement on the Cold War status quo, it is still worrying that the Cold War, arguably the conflict with the greatest destructive potential in history, saw such fragmented action by the international community. With this being said however it is again important to note the heterogeneous response to the current Bush administrations proposals concerning the „war on terror“.

It is important, at this juncture, to note two central aspects of this thesis. First, in terms of the notion of group narcissism, an argument could be made concerning the split in the international system between those groups that feel they are threatened by the Muslim faith and those that feel they are, as Muslims, being persecuted. This split creates ramifications where both groups feel that they are under threat and therefore feel that they are justified in defending themselves. This creates a situation with a high potential to develop into a full scale conflict. Second, the organs of international law and security seem to be inadequate in terms of preventing attacks on western states (such as the United States) while

¹⁷⁹ Dugard, J. 1994: 302

¹⁸⁰ “Empowers the Security Council to address disputes which in its judgment do not threaten international peace ... but which, if continued, are *„likely* to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.” (Dugard, J. 1994: 304)

¹⁸¹ “Permits [the Security Council] to take legally binding decisions ... directing member states to impose economic sanctions or to use force to maintain international peace.” (Dugard, J. 1994: 305)

at the same time preventing those states from retaliating and escalating the feeling of persecution and the resultant escalation towards conflict in the international system.

One of the major issues in the debate surrounding the role of international law concerns the notion of state sovereignty. The ending of the Thirty Years War, in 1648, with the treaty of Westphalia laid the foundation for what would become the modern international system. The most important aspect of this foundation could be considered the notion of state sovereignty¹⁸². Essentially all aspects of the governing of a state are the sole responsibility of the officials in charge of that state. The problem arises when the notion of state sovereignty is placed side by side with the notion of international law. Take as an example, the situation of an individual who as a citizen of a state murders another individual. The state mechanism is able to identify the murderer, hold a trial to identify whether the murderer is in fact guilty or whether there were mitigating circumstances at the time of the murder, and finally, in the event of the individual actually being guilty of murder, to remove the individual from society and place him/her in jail. In light of the above, it is said that the state has the monopoly in terms of the means of coercion. However, in the international system, this does not occur. If a state acts in a manner that is not in accordance with international law and that state refuses to cooperate with international legal bodies there is very little that can be

¹⁸² "Sovereignty in the relations between states signifies independence. Independence in regard to a portion of the globe is a right to exercise therein, to the exclusion of any other state, the function of a state." (Dugard, J. 1994: 95)

done a) to the state, b) to the leader of that state¹⁸³. Therefore, as far as any recommendations are concerned, the first step that must be taken concerns a limitation of state sovereignty in order for international law to have any meaningful role at all.

As argued, in chapter three, psychoanalysis holds that the development of the individual occurs through a number of stages. In the first stage, the id which houses the primary instincts develops. The id has a monopoly on informing the individual of how to act. In the second stage the ego develops in response to an understanding that the external world exists and that hostile responses may be invoked from the external world when the individual attempts to satisfy desires arising from the primary instincts. In the third stage the individual, upon resolution of the oedipal complex, develops the superego. At this point in development, the individual now has a mechanism that holds the values and morals of society. These values and morals were shown to arise initially through the influence of the parents, and then from societal influences. It is at this point that the individual is able to operate in society as a valuable member¹⁸⁴ in accordance with the rules, morals and taboos of that society. Therefore, the society needs to maintain a monopoly on the means of coercion in order to

¹⁸³ Proponents of international law may counter this point by referring to the Pinochet and Milosevic trials. However I would respond to these proponents by arguing that these are only two isolated examples. Furthermore, neither of them has had any significant impact on the many other tyrants operating in the international system.

¹⁸⁴ This does presuppose that the Oedipus complex was resolved successfully and that the instincts are able to be tempered.

ensure that the individual operates correctly in the society in terms of a) the repression or b) the forestalling of instinctual satisfaction.

If one accepts the arguments in chapter two concerning the methodological individualist movement in analysing, on the one hand, individuals and, on the other, groups of individuals such as states then one must accept that the developmental processes outlined in chapter three are applicable to the issues raised in chapter one. Thus the international system could be argued to resemble the incomplete development of the individual in terms of acting only in terms of satisfying desires. The international system appears to allow human nature to manifest itself in an aggressive conflictual manner, where states, in the competition for scarce resources attack other states in order to satisfy the needs that the state perceives itself as having. For example, the USA's national interest (need) is for stability to exist in the Middle-East. This need stems from the reliance of The USA on oil. Thus, in order to satisfy the need for oil (and hence stability in the Middle-East) the USA, as was shown in the Gulf War, will act against other states (such as Iraq).

It also appears that there exists evidence that the ego manifests itself in the international system. This is true in as much as the realists argue that states will not act towards their goals if the pursuit of those goals endangers the existence of the state. Thus, when President Bush stated in 2002 that he was aiming for

the removal of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein¹⁸⁵ one of the first moves made by Hussein was to notify the United Nations that he would allow weapons inspectors into Iraq with unlimited access to suspected weapons sites. The above can be seen as perhaps being analogous to the psychoanalytic conception of the ego and the id. In other words, this is a similar argument to that put forward by Freud whereby the individual will likely not act on an instinctual urge if the satisfaction of that urge will threaten the existence of the individual.

It does not, however, seem to be the case that there exists a superego in the international system. The individual in the domestic context¹⁸⁶ will often fall into the trap outlined in chapter three: that being the trap of contagion and reciprocity. The individual becomes almost like an individual who has been hypnotised and as such the individual begins to have his/her will, desires and beliefs bent towards the desires and beliefs of the group. This occurs when, as argued in chapter three, the leader of the group becomes, or rather replaces, the ego ideal of the individual. Brunner argues that the leader is able to insert his/her self into the individual's super-ego through the resolution of the Oedipus complex: "through the resolution of the Oedipus complex [the child] learns not only to abandon his or her desires in the face of authority but also to cope with the presence of authority by identifying with its demands."¹⁸⁷ However, when groups of individuals encounter each other in the international system there does not

¹⁸⁵ One could argue that Hussein realised that Iraq had at best only a slim chance to defeat the USA in a military confrontation.

¹⁸⁶ In this context I refer to the individual as being in a group such as a state.

¹⁸⁷ Brunner, J. (in Roth) 1998: 88

seem to be any mechanism available for the formation of a super-ego or ego ideal. There is, so to speak, no leader for the leaders of the various groups of individuals to look up to and to identify with and more importantly to inform them of the morals and values that the international community ought to comprise. Furthermore, it has been shown, that existing international law is too limited to impose the restrictions on the manifestation of aggressive instincts when compared to the monopoly on the means of coercion that states possess when imposing restrictions on the gratification of individual desires.

“Man in society reacts to his fellow men in two opposite ways. Sometimes he displays egoism, or the will to assert himself at the expense of others. At other times he displays sociability, or the desire to cooperate with others, to enter into reciprocal relations of good-will and friendship with them, and even to subordinate himself to them ... no society can exist unless a substantial proportion of its members in some degree the desire for cooperation and mutual good-will. But in every society some sanction is required to produce the measure of solidarity requisite for its maintenance.”¹⁸⁸

“Sublimation and guilt are transformations of the drives into socially stabilising forces.”¹⁸⁹ However, there is no reason for sublimation or guilt to exist in the international system because, as argued by the realists, there is no morality to state action in the first place. Without a conception of morality there can be no guilt. Furthermore: “unlike Eros, aggression cannot easily be sublimated in constructive ways.”¹⁹⁰ In the international system the process of sublimation becomes even more difficult given the nature and lack of mechanisms available to force statesmen to sublimate aggressive impulses. It is important to note, that

¹⁸⁸ Carr, E. H. 1942: 123

¹⁸⁹ Fluxman, T. 1993: 60

this thesis does not argue that aggressive instincts always lead to conflict. Rather, the thesis argues that conflict is a continuum of potentialities and that the potential towards conflict is greater in an international system without adequate mechanisms to force a curbing of aggressive instincts.

In the light of the above arguments, it appears that any meaningful reordering of the international system will have to comprise certain elements. In the first instance a limitation of the concept of state sovereignty must occur. This allows the possibility for a more coercive international law. This is important because of the need for the rule of law to exist and actually be able to enforce the limitation of the aggressive instincts inherent in the leaders of states. It is also necessary for an individual who will in a sense take on the role of leader of the group of leaders. A possible reordering of the international system would therefore entail a global federation of states. Each state with an amount of sovereignty yet each state must still remain firmly under the guidance of an overarching governing authority that will maintain a more effective set of rules and laws. The institution of a global governing authority would take on the role of a domestic governing authority allowing the means for a curbing of the aggressive instincts innate to people.

“Primitive man was better off knowing no restriction to instinct. To counterbalance this, his prospects for enjoying this happiness for any length of time were slender. Civilised man has exchanged a portion of his possibilities of happiness for a portion of security.”¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Fluxman, T. 1991: 45

¹⁹¹ Freud in Fluxman, T. 1993: 58 - 59

In the same way consequences, such as loss of sovereignty, to states should be overlooked, in the context of gratification of and striving towards national interest versus security.

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