

***Passionate Attachments, Conflicted Relations*****By John D Cash**

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I am delighted to have this opportunity to talk with you today - and I hope this will develop into a conversation - and perhaps one that continues beyond today. I was very happy to accept Professor Laroche's kind invitation to present a talk about psychoanalysis and its extension onto the study of institutions, societies and the international field. However I must tell you, indeed warn you, at the outset that I am an amateur so far as the study of international politics is concerned. My own research has focused on intra-state and intergroup relations, as in Northern Ireland and Australia. So today's talk represents my very first attempt to carry some implications of my approach to the international field. Of necessity I will approach it by drawing on lessons I have learned in the study of intergroup relations.

In his influential book *Social Theory of International Politics*, Alex Wendt occasionally toys with the uses of psychoanalysis for the study of international politics. While entirely marginal to his major argument, he does express the opinion that "the role that unconscious processes play in international politics is something that needs to be considered more systematically, not dismissed out of hand.<sup>1</sup> I'll return to this quote later, but allow me to make one immediate comment. It is quite appropriate that Wendt finds space to mention psychoanalysis in a book titled *Social Theory of International Politics* because the somewhat obscured feature of social theory throughout the twentieth century and up until today has been its ongoing engagement with psychoanalysis. Erich Fromm, for instance, while a member of the Frankfurt School, wrote his "The Method and Function of an Analytic Social Psychology: Notes on Psychoanalysis and Historical Materialism" in 1932. Other members of the Frankfurt School, especially Adorno and Horkheimer drew heavily on psychoanalysis in their work on both fascism and the culture industry. Marcuse is another major figure here. Habermas, particularly in *Knowledge and Human Interests*, turned to psychoanalysis for a theory of ideology as systematically distorted communication. In the United States Talcott Parsons drew heavily on psychoanalysis for his account of "the social system". In France one thinks immediately of Bataille, Althusser, Lyotard and Castoriadis. There is also a complex relation to psychoanalysis in Pierre Bourdieu's work. Deleuze was similarly engaged with psychoanalysis, even if rather critically. And, of course, there is Zizek. What has been the attraction for social theory? Why such an intense engagement with Freud's case-studies, for instance. With Dora's cough, Little Hans' fears and anxieties, the Wolf-Man's dreams and memories and the Rat-Man's perverse desires to harm the ones he also loves and, hence, wishes to save from aspects of himself – his father and Gisela. Social theorists have typically found a complex account of human subjectivity in psychoanalysis: the human subject as divided, decentred and desiring; as capable of reasoning, but always subject to

rationalization. As Freud says in an often overlooked publication, "*the ego is not master in its own house*".<sup>ii</sup> Psychoanalysis has also been turned to regularly for theories of ideology. Better conceptualizations of ideology and subjectivity or culture and identity are the primary concerns that have drawn social theory to psychoanalysis, we could say. Other major themes have been accounts of motivation, captured by the notions of desiring subjects capable of both love and aggressivity. Also, accounts of the processes that bind groups, institutions and societies together, perhaps best captured by the concept of identification.

My talk today will address the following issues. First, what is it in the psychoanalytic conception of human subjectivity and human sociality that makes it suitable for an extension beyond the couch and the study of individuals and onto the study of social institutions, including states and the international system? Second, how is psychoanalysis best extended onto the study of such social and political relations? Third, what is gained by incorporating psychoanalysis in the analysis of social and political relations? Fourth, how might this extension figure in the study of international relations?

These issues, stated as questions, will be addressed in three parts and, hopefully, in a way that points out continuities across the three parts. First, I'll draw out some salient features of psychoanalytic theory itself. Second, I'll talk briefly about psychoanalytic political theory, as it is sometimes named, and indicate my own version of this with passing reference to my analysis of social relations and political conflict in Northern Ireland. As that approach can be described as constructivist – to use the IR designation – it provides a useful reference for my brief discussion of a few aspects of Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics*.

### **Psychoanalysis**

Anyone who is well-acquainted with Freud's case studies is, inevitably, well aware of the intricate, delicate, complex and overdetermined imbrication of history and the unconscious that is narrated and analysed in these case-studies. At every turn, the history of the subject (including a dynamic "archaeology" and "genealogy" of the subject), a history that is both continuous and discontinuous, familiar and surprising, hence always uncanny; this history is deepened and extended through the techniques and concepts of psychoanalytic practice. This history, then - a history of events, experiences, and constructions and a history of the memories and phantasies attached to such events, experiences, and constructions - is re-constructed and re-told through close attention to the unconscious with its various processes and formations. In the hands of a writer such as Freud or Klein, there is no disjunction between a focus on the unconscious and the re-telling of a life; a re-telling that holds out the prospect of a re-making of a life. An adequate history of the human subject inevitably entails entering into the confounding complexities of an uncanny unconscious. Richard Rorty makes a similar point very nicely, in his essay "The Contingency of Selfhood", when he writes:

*"For Freud, nobody is dull through and through, for there is no such thing as a dull unconscious. What makes Freud more useful and more plausible than Nietzsche is that he does not relegate the vast majority of humanity to the status of dying animals. For Freud's account of unconscious fantasy shows us how to see every human life as a poem..."*<sup>iii</sup>

In suggesting this Rorty is highlighting the manner in which Freud's invention of psychoanalysis enabled a profound extension and deepening of our abilities to re-tell the history of a life, in all its canny and uncanny dimensions. We see this very clearly in Freud's "Rat Man" case.

### The Rat Man

The case of the Rat Man has one of its beginnings when a young man - Ernst Lanzer as we come to learn much later (Freud names him Paul Lorenz) – goes on military manoeuvres as part of his military service requirement. Whilst there, an old army sergeant tells him of a terrible torture practised 'in the East.'<sup>iv</sup> "*[T]he criminal was tied up ... a pot was turned upside down on his buttocks...some rats were put into it... and they... bored their way in.*"<sup>v</sup> As soon as he hears this tale, young Ernst has the terrible, but, for him, quite delicious thought that this torture should be performed on Gisela, the love of his life, and on his father, who has been dead for some time. Immediately he has these thoughts he feels dreadfully guilty, and yet he remains fearful that something terrible will happen to Gisela and to his father. So he invents a complicated ritual about catching trains, posting letters and getting people to hand money to each other. But this is no real answer to the dilemma of his desire, as the ritual is so internally contradictory that it preserves, unresolved, his dual passion to both harm and protect Gisela and his father. Soon after this experience this young man goes to visit Freud who, we are not surprised to learn, readily agrees to treat him.

The most striking aspect of this precipitating scene is that reference to 'in the East.' With that one phrase the cruel captain invokes a whole fantasy structure about oriental despotism and the careless cruelty of the sovereign – he who dominates and whose every wish is a command. It is of passing historical interest, I think, that such an instance of orientalism, splitting and the friend-enemy distinction should play such a prominent role in the case that Freud presented to the very first meeting of the International Psychoanalytic Congress in Salzburg in 1908. Consider the phrasing Freud uses to describe young Ernst's face as he recounts the story of the cruel captain and the torture practiced 'in the East': 'At all the more important moments while he was telling his story his face took on a very strange composite expression. I could only interpret it as one of horror at pleasure of his own of which he himself was unaware.'<sup>vi</sup>

Here we have Freud's major observation – that there is a subterranean process, an unconscious process that is in deadly conflict with this young man's attempts to govern himself. It generates pleasure, but also fear and anxiety – fear for himself and for those whom he loves. It is exactly a Hobbesian fear – but this young man finds it impossible to sign up for the compact that would offer protection against the fear. He is, like all of us (only, in all likelihood, more so) a divided self, a decentered subject, for whom the social contract is a sacrificial contract that he resents even as he assents.

As a very young boy (between the ages of three and four) Ernst had done something naughty – perhaps it was sexual, perhaps he bit someone. His father beat him as a punishment and in response the little boy flew into a rage and hurled abuse at his father. Having no 'bad language' to use, he resorted to the names of common objects. So he screamed at his father '*You lamp! You towel! You plate! And so on.*'<sup>vii</sup> Although, on first impression, a rather cute story – we shouldn't fail to notice that here we have a moment of

terror, violence and fury. The resort to naming the father as a series of inanimate objects is itself a dehumanising move. This is reinforced by the indication that from this time forward Ernst was a coward – a coward not exactly out of fear, but rather 'out of fear of the violence of his own rage.'<sup>viii</sup> In this we see a further instance of the fragility of his self-sovereignty and the intensity of his occluded secret self.

If the young Ernst was almost lost for words of abuse – one of the major aspects of the case is the way a whole series of words come to signify the Rat Man's unresolved ambivalence – what Freud terms a 'regular rat currency.'<sup>ix</sup> Apart from scenes of biting, of worms in his anus (like the rats of the story from 'the East'), of rats at his father's grave, of rats being killed, etc. – there are all those little 'rat' signifiers which, like so many rat's tails, hang off a series of words that accumulate in the analysis. So we have *spielratte* (referencing his father the gambler in colloquial German), we have *hofrat* (the new honorific attached to Fraulien Lina, the girl who was his nurse and object of desire when he was a child, with whom he took 'a great many liberties' and who later married a judge, thereby transforming herself into Hofrat Lina), we have the worries about the cost of the analysis and the condensation of *ratten* and *raten* – supposedly including Freud putting his daughter on the stairs – the girl, in Ernst's dream, whose beautiful eyes turn to dung.<sup>x</sup> In a massive condensation, the signifier 'rat' inserts itself throughout all aspects of the case. It is as if the words he didn't have when he was a violent, but impotent, child have taken form, but remained unconscious, around the image and significance of the rat. In the process of attempting to become a civil subject, via mechanisms of identification, mirroring, repression, splitting and projection, the young boy who becomes the young man whom Freud meets, has established a boundary between the human and the animal that he subsequently uses – very unsuccessfully – in order to present himself as a loving son, a suitable husband and a competent worker. But isn't this a characteristic of becoming a civil subject; a deeply sedimented, culturally and indeed civilizationally, ordained way? In particular, isn't this an intensified, over-determined feature of the post-Enlightenment European imaginary? Aren't these processes of abjection, that support the drawing of the categorical boundary between human and animal and friend and enemy, along with the dehumanising of the other as a means of distancing, disenfranchising and attacking that other – isn't this exactly what is at stake when we posit ourselves as sovereign subjects?

In the case of the Rat Man (like all of us, according to this psychoanalytic understanding), this is played out in the place of the other scene which is beyond any intentional speech and which contains a knowledge that he does not know he has, the scene of the unconscious. Even though this other scene is beyond any intentional speech, it slowly unfolds and displays itself as the Rat Man speaks. It inheres within his speech and slowly declares itself in its very insistence and repetition. Of course, the Rat Man attempts to intentionally reveal himself to Freud, but he actually says more than he intends. He intends to tell Freud about how he is a loving son, a loyal fiancée and an ambitious law student who somehow finds himself assaulted by thoughts and feelings that are quite alien to him, and that he has to work very hard to subdue and keep at bay. But in the very process of telling this story about himself he gives himself away, as it were. There is something in his speech that insists and persists, that repeats and eventually is heard; first by Freud and then by the Rat Man himself. This is 'the regular rat currency,' as Freud puts it; that accumulation of rat signifiers that keep recurring in his speech.

So let me put the question – according to this psychoanalytic understanding, how do we become a sovereign subject, a proper subject who has subjected himself, or herself, to

the Sovereign – who has signed up, ('fessed up,' as it were) to the social contract? What are the psychosocial and psychopolitical implications, indeed effects, of subjecting ourselves to the Law in order to be recognized as a sovereign subject? And in particular, how does this relate to the deeply embedded cultural habit of drawing and policing such a strict boundary between the human and the animal, the friend and the enemy?<sup>xi</sup>

In a famous comment, after considering the assault on human narcissism contained within the discoveries of Copernicus and Darwin, Freud reflected on what he regarded as the third, and most profound blow to human narcissism; the blow contained within psychoanalysis itself:

*But these two discoveries - that the life of our sexual instincts cannot be wholly tamed, and that mental processes are in themselves unconscious and only reach the ego and come under its control through incomplete and untrustworthy perceptions - these two discoveries amount to a statement that **the ego is not master in its own house**. Together they represent the third blow to man's self love, what I may call the **psychological** one. No wonder then that the ego does not look favourably upon psychoanalysis and obstinately refuses to believe in it.*<sup>xii</sup>

In the context of this discussion, it is worth quoting how Freud understands the relationship between narcissism and our relation to Nature. Just a few lines before the above, Freud writes:

*In the course of the development of civilization man acquired a dominating position over his fellow-creatures in the animal kingdom. Not content with this supremacy, however, he began to place a gulf between his nature and theirs. He denied the possession of reason to them, and to himself he attributed an immortal soul, and made claims to a divine descent which permitted him to break the bond of community between him and the animal kingdom. Curiously enough, this piece of arrogance is still foreign to children, just as it is to primitive and primeval man. It is the result of a later, more pretentious stage of development.*<sup>xiii</sup>

Freud tells us, then, that the ego is not master in its own house. Moreover he tells us that humanity, in the history of civilisation, comes to break the bond of community with the animal and to place a gulf, an absolute dichotomy, between human nature and animal nature. It is this gulf that the Rat Man gets trapped in and that we all remain susceptible to.

But what becomes of the presumed-to-be-sovereign subject? Is that presumed autonomy as stable as it imagines itself to be? What becomes of civilization's discontents? The formation of the subject takes place in a world of self and others, a world of bodies and parts of bodies, of sensations, memories and phantasies. It proceeds through processes of abjection, incorporation, identification, internalisation, mirroring, repression and the entry into culture and language. To achieve a capacity to speak and act in the world we come to exercise sovereignty over ourselves – but this is always subject to disruption by the unconscious. Psychic organisation always leaves traces that persist. Our apparent sovereignty, then, is achieved at a cost – the repudiation of aspects of self and others, of

bodies and parts of bodies, of sensations, memories and phantasies, of desires that cannot be incorporated into the organisation of the "I/me" that I take myself to be. This positing of an "I/me" emerges from the capacity to locate or situate the "I" that I take myself to be within a symbolic order as a speaking and acting subject who has some capacity to decide, to choose, to respond. What we have seen is that this positing of an "I/me" that can act, choose and respond involves the splitting of the subject. Part of what is split off – part of what becomes unfamiliar or uncanny – is those aspects of myself and my relation to others that have been repudiated and repressed in order to establish an ego or "I." These repressed, split-off aspects remain as part of my unconscious but they resist recognition by the "I" that I take myself to be. However, they have been preserved as part of my psychic organization – a repressed part – and they insist on some form of representation. Typically they are recognized as other than me – as strangers or enemies. Or as the uncanny. As Freud writes with regard to the idea of the uncanny double:

*There are also all the unfulfilled but possible futures to which we still like to cling in phantasy, all the strivings of the ego which adverse external circumstances have crushed, and all our suppressed acts of volition which nourish in us the illusion of free will. But ... nothing in this more superficial material could account for the urge towards defence which has caused the ego to project that material outward as something foreign to itself.*<sup>xiv</sup>

Freud then traces this splitting and projecting back to an origin:

*When all is said and done, the quality of uncanniness can only come from the fact of the 'double' being a creation dating back to a very early mental stage, long since surmounted - a stage, incidentally, at which it wore a more friendly aspect. The 'double' has become a thing of terror, just as, after the collapse of their religion, the gods turned into demons.*<sup>xv</sup>

If this doubling and splitting persists – as it tends to do – then the only recognition I can give to these repudiated, repressed parts of myself is to see them as the disliked, hated or despised aspects of others whom I regard as unlike me – strangers, foreigners or those whom I can successfully construe as different. In this way, what we broadly regard as the dehumanising, stereotyping and scapegoating of others proceeds. It is, however, haunted by an uncanny recognition of the other as a desired or detested 'object' of and for the subject – a repository for secret desires and not so secret aggressivities.; an intimate friend-enemy. So, Freud concludes that 'this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression.'<sup>xvi</sup>

In *Civilization and its Discontents* Freud makes a similar point, but now at a more explicitly social level. As Freud puts it:

*"It is always possible to bind together a considerable number of people in love, so long as there are other people left over to receive the manifestations of their aggressiveness".*<sup>xvii</sup>

Those repressed aspects of our divided self haunt us from the inside, as it were. Unable to accept them as aspects of our self, we project them onto others – who then haunt

us at a distance. We then try to exclude, discipline or destroy these haunting others onto whom we have projected our own desires and anxieties. These animosities, exclusions and hostilities can take the form of culturally organised sexism, racism, extreme nationalism or fundamentalism. In all of them an Other is vilified, excluded and sometimes violently attacked.

### The Social and the Political

As Freud's more social texts suggest, the imbrication of history and the unconscious is also a feature of social relations that stretch beyond the purview and scope of an individual life. But in this arena the couplet history and the unconscious is a less happy and productive one. We might say that a bar has inserted itself between the terms of the couplet; the bar of the social. This bar unsettles and undercuts the creative potential of the couplet; tending to generate a flattening out of complexity and, ironically, a narrowed, one-dimensional account of subjectivity as a repetition compulsion.

There is a severe limit to a subject-centred or actor-centred approach. This limit is approached as analytic attention shifts from the study of an individual or a specific grouping with a common and, for the moment, shared identity, towards the analysis of larger groupings, more complex institutions and whole societies or international systems. At some point along this continuum it becomes necessary to pull back from an immersion in the imaginary identifications and symbolic anchorings of an individual or group and attempt to more systematically theorise social and political processes and their effects upon individual and corporate subjects. This is where new difficulties begin; it is in executing this move that a flattening out of experience, memory and fantasy is typically produced by undue reliance on what Dennis Wrong has famously termed the "*oversocialised conception of man*".<sup>xviii</sup>

As Wrong suggests: the "*most fundamental insight*" of psychoanalysis is "*that the wish, the emotion and the fantasy are as important as the act in man's experience*".<sup>xix</sup> However, this complexity of thought and feeling, fantasy and desire, typically is screened out in those very instances where attempts are made to systematically introduce a theory that addresses the intersection of social processes and the unconscious. This occurs because most sociology and social theory has appropriated psychoanalysis as a theory of socialisation.

The take-up of psychoanalysis by political and social theory can be broadly divided into two emphases. The first, more common, emphasis relies on socialisation processes, typically within family settings and during infancy and childhood, as the primary medium through which social demands are internalised as features of a common personality structure. The main tendency of this use of psychoanalysis has been to produce an account of a subject centred in his or her internalised and stabilised relation to power and authority. I regard this as an unfortunate emphasis as the very attraction of psychoanalysis lies in its resistance to such commonplace notions of a centred subjectivity.

The second emphasis, while recognising socialisation as a significant process that leaves a profound trace, focuses also on ongoing processes of identification in the here and now. This emphasis on identifications in the here and now, an emphasis entirely consistent with Freud's own work in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, for instance, regards identities, including political identities, as always in process, yet always somewhat organized and passionately attached for the moment. Always located within language, culture and social institutions, yet always with the potential for re-organization. This

emphasis on decentered subjectivity as organised, yet open to reorganisation despite its passionate attachments, holds the most interest for both political and social theory. With its focus on processes of identification, repression and defences against anxiety such as splitting and projection, psychoanalysis presents a rich account of the formations and deformations of subjectivity under conditions of intimacy, authority and the play of power and violence.

The task for social and political analysis that sees virtue in incorporating psychoanalytic understandings of the relations between culture and identity (to use those terms for now) is to preserve the account of a decentred, passionate subject in process and, also, to look more carefully into the internally differentiated structure of any cultural formation, including those that help organise the field of international politics.

As Cynthia Burack notes:

*Group psychoanalysis – (as developed by what she terms "psychoanalytic political theorists") – provides a method of theorizing discourse as expressing defenses, emotions (such as fear, anxiety, guilt, love, and rage) and interpersonal issues (such as dependence, trust, trauma, vulnerability, mourning, conflict and relations to authority) that are inscribed in group discourses.*<sup>xx</sup>

It is that inscription in discourse of a repertoire of defences, emotions and modes of identity that psychoanalytic political and social theory can and should address. It should do so while retaining the psychoanalytic strengths of attention to the depth, complexity and dynamic conflict characteristic of psychic processes. As suggested earlier, in an individual case-study the imbrication of history and the unconscious are usually captured in their conflicted complexity within the frame of the individual life-history. But as analytic attention turns to broader social and political processes that frame becomes a constraint that levels out the analysis – producing this odd shift from decentred to centred subjectivities – a limitation that also marks Wendt's three cultures of anarchy, I'd suggest. Hence the importance of expanding the frame by moving to an analysis of what I will risk terming the discursive or cultural unconscious and its central role, as available repertoire, in organizing identities, defences, emotions and intersubjectivity for the moment.

In *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* Freud tells us that "identification is the original form of emotional tie with an object" and that this way of integrating outer and inner persists throughout life.<sup>xxi</sup> One way of maintaining a relation to another is through identification, the internalisation of aspects of an external object, be that a person or a social institution or a cultural form. Identification with a shared mentality and identity are the risks and rewards (or satisfactions) that follow. At the same time, it is through identification that psychic structure is organized and a somewhat civilized subjectivity is achieved. But if this is the case, the qualities of the outer world take on considerable import for the organization of both subjectivity and sociality. As, indeed, does our understanding of the processes through which outer and inner connect and the effects of this connection. Repression, for instance, is also formation. Compromised, distorted formation, according to the theory, but the formation of subjectivity, nevertheless. Identification is also psychic organization, even if always subject to the decentering effects of the unconscious. Defence against anxiety is also a mode of relating to self and others.

This recognition, obvious in itself, that the qualitative characteristics of the outer world matter raises further questions about exactly how they matter and about how best to



conceptualise and analyse their effects. Already, in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, Freud addressed the ways in which contingent processes in the here and now of both institutional and psychic life leaned in upon each other and took particular form through processes of identification. A group mentality with specific features took form; itself the product of either emergent or, in *artificial* groups such as the army or the church, established unconscious rules. Freud's approach runs quite counter to the socialisation model because it keeps open and contingent the organisation of subjectivity - which is always a subjectivity established out of contestation and conflict and stabilised only for the moment - even if, in cases of deeply entrenched social institutions, this moment is a lengthy one.

By extension, we can see that ideologies or discourses, and in particular their unconscious rules or imaginaries, are central to social and political life because they establish, through processes of identification and internalisation, the range of common-sense understandings, the predominant reality principles, that are recursively drawn upon by subjects to construe how to be and how to act. At the same time what counts as proper – the proper way of being, relating, feeling or construing – is recurrently fought over in the ongoing making and re-making of social and political relations. These unconscious rules, in their multiple codings of the proper, including the proper form of authority, the proper exercise of power and the proper form of violence, become the very object over which a politics of identity is played out. At issue is which set of unconscious rules, each with quite distinct and conflicting implications for the organisation of identities and social and international relations, will become predominant for the moment.

In such an approach the internal forms of any culture or ideology are analysed more for what they produce than for what they occlude. The emphasis falls on the positivity and performativity of any specific ideology or imaginary. This draws attention to the making and re-making of particular formations of the unconscious within a social and cultural organisation, institution or system. It brings into focus the patterns of thinking and feeling, reasoning and relating that come to constitute particular forms of common-sense and the particular discourses through which identities are organised and re-organised in the intended and unintended making of the present. Thereby it re-introduces politics into the couplet – history and the unconscious.

### **Cultural Fields as Internally Differentiated**

Kleinian theory and its extensions onto social and political analysis provide a powerful way of addressing the internal differentiations of any cultural field and the identities it organises<sup>xxi</sup>. Cultures or ideologies are central to political life because they establish the range of common-sense understandings, the predominant reality principles that are recursively drawn upon by politicians and other citizens to construe proper forms of identity, proper forms of political and social relations and proper forms of power, authority and violence. At the same time what counts as proper – the proper way of being, relating, feeling or construing – is never entirely settled. In particular, at moments of crisis or anticipated conflict, what counts as the proper way of being, relating, feeling or construing and the proper forms of power, authority and violence are thrown into contestation. The unconscious processes that organise these constructions of the proper can re-organise the culture, bringing into predominance quite distinct cultural patterns. Kleinian theory, with its

distinction between paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, is helpful here, as these two primary positions organise self-other relations quite differently. Kleinian theory is also the psychoanalytic theory that has been most fully extended into the study of institutions in the work of Elliott Jaques, Isabel Menzies-Lyth and others.

For current purposes of social and political analysis, these two Kleinian positions - paranoid-schizoid and depressive - which are cognitive, affective and conative at once, can be termed persecutory on the one hand and inclusivist on the other. The persecutory position is self-regarding, as Wendt would say. But self-regarding in quite a particular way as it idealises the self-identity, such as the nation, whilst either dehumanising, at its most extreme, or denigrating the other. This involves splitting, as in the friend-enemy distinction, and projection, whereby one's own aggressivity and hostility is projected onto the other, so as to maintain the idealised construction of the self-identity, for example the nation. A further consequence is that, now, the other, appears as the hostile would-be aggressor and countering such aggression becomes a duty and necessity, in order to preserve the integrity of the idealised nation, its way of life, its form of government, its set of freedoms, preferred forms of trade, perhaps even mode of production – the entrepreneurial spirit, etc.

This persecutory position is marked by intolerance of difference. Difference – and that may be simply being a different identity or nationality - is read as potential hostility. This intolerance of difference is not restricted to the construction of members of the other-identity group. The same intolerance is evident in the construction of members of one's own grouping who speak or act in ways that differ from those preferred ways that are sanctioned by shared norms. Hence, the anxieties about fellow-travelers, moral panics like McCarthyism in the United States and more recently around the figure of the international terrorist. The explosion, so to speak, of recent legislation in many Western societies has introduced more draconian laws for surveillance and arrest, prompted by the spectre of international and/as homegrown terrorism. In Australia, for instance, anti-terrorist legislation that was first established following upon the events of September 11, 2001, was extended further following the London bombings. As MacDonald and Williams put it, regarding Australia. "*Until September 11, 2001, Australia had no national laws on terrorism. Political violence was dealt with by the ordinary criminal law. Since that time, the federal parliament has passed 44 new anti-terror statutes, many of which impact on traditional notions of criminal justice*"<sup>xxiii</sup>. Fortunately, while there have been some plots, there have been no successful terrorist events in Australia, yet anxiety and the anticipation of terrorism have supported these legislative changes.

Another feature of the persecutory position is that the other, including the internal other mentioned above, lacks complexity – they (the others) are solely the potential or actual enemy. Aggressivity and hateful contempt are present in the persecutory position, but these affects are alloyed, other than in the most extreme cases, with anxiety about the interests, welfare and future of one's own grouping. Moreover the persecutory position is capable of establishing a distinction between those others who "*know their place*", as it were, and those who are construed as potentially out of place. It is only those who step out of place, by refusing to accept their allotted social position within the established order, that are construed as persecutory. Toleration, for the moment, is extended to those who accept their designated place. We might think of Iran confronting this issue as it moves towards, perhaps, establishing a nuclear arms capacity. The persecutory position is consistent with Wendt's Hobbesian culture of anarchy.

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The inclusivist position construes individuals, groups and the whole political and social formation as complex and multifaceted. It is from this complex construction that ambivalence arises and is contained. Rather than being split and projected in ways characteristic of the persecutory position, “others” and other groupings, (including frustrating others, distrusted others and, even, despised others) are construed as complex subjects with both positive and negative aspects. Thus, in contrast with the persecutory position, the capacity for the handling of complexity, for the shifting of perspective and the enactment of bargaining and compromise is greatly enhanced. In this position the enemy becomes the rival and, potentially, the friend. The inclusivist position supports both a self-regarding Lockean culture of anarchy that, significantly, construes the other as like the self, and Wendt’s Kantian culture of anarchy with its other-regarding emphasis and concern. By extension, any transition to a Kantian culture of anarchy relies on the secure institution of the inclusivist position; one that supports the further extension of mutual and reciprocal self-regard into an other-regarding mentality. This amounts to significant change at the level of the cultural unconscious in which the uncanny – which haunts the self-regarding Lockean culture of anarchy – is integrated as different but valued. Such a cultural transformation would support reconciliation with those otherwise repressed aspects of self and others; sublimating them for so long as this Kantian cultural form remains predominant. Reciprocally, the very predominance, for the moment, of such a culture of sublimation would itself tend to preserve the system-wide authority of the Kantian culture of anarchy through legitimating its embeddedness and reading any risks or hazards through its radically open perspective. A perspective that remains unusually alert, yet calm and free from the distortions of the psychic and cultural defence mechanisms.

### Wendt and Cultures of Anarchy

Just to remind you of what I am sure you know far better than I do. According to Wendt, whether a system of international relations is conflictual or peaceful is a function not of anarchy and power but of the shared culture created through discursive social practices. Each actor’s conception of self (its interests and identity) is a product, in a recursive process, of the other’s actions or diplomatic gestures. Through an ongoing pattern of such actions and gestures, including self-binding gestures, states can reshape the international structure, as culture, by the effects of this very recursive process. Wendt argues, then, that through new gestures and actions, states can reconstitute interests and identities toward more other-regarding and peaceful means and ends. States can act to alter the intersubjective culture that constitutes the international system, solidifying over time the non-egoistic mind-sets needed for long-term peace. His large claim, then, is that “*Anarchy is what states make of it*”<sup>xxiv</sup>. Hence, his characterization of three cultures of anarchy; Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian.

This is an intriguing argument and I will simply make a few observations. My main **concern** is to confront some of Wendt’s major claims with insights that follow from what I am terming psychoanalytic political theory. My major **theme** is that identities, including state-identities within the international system, are more complex, internally differentiated and dynamic than Wendt presumes.

Wendt’s argument about Westphalia is interesting to look at in this respect. He regards the Treaty of Westphalia as having established a Lockean anarchy of sovereign

states, first of all in Europe, that has since moved from Europe and, as it were, colonized the world.<sup>xxv</sup> Hence we could say that there are, currently, a set of rules that organize the international field such that, typically, sovereignty is recognized and conflict, when it occurs, is not intent on 'murdering' the other state. Gaining advantage through the conflict, yes, but destruction, in the sense of eradication through conquest and integration, No. Thanks to the Treaty of Westphalia and its global extensions the enemy of the Hobbesian culture of anarchy has become the adversary of the Lockean culture, Wendt argues. The difficulty with such ideal-types is that they are presumed to cover the field of interaction, until they fail to do so. This follows from understanding them as lacking internal differentiation and as effectively monological. My own argument differs from Wendt's in that I presume, subject to empirical analysis, that any culture will be internally differentiated. In particular, constructions of self and other according to the rules of the persecutory position and the friend-enemy distinction remain available within the culture that organizes relations within the international field. The friend-enemy distinction may be eclipsed or dormant, as with the predominance of a Lockean culture, but it is not eradicated. Heightened insecurity, with the anxiety that it generates and the threat to ontological security it entails, may operate to establish or re-establish the primacy or hegemony of the friend-enemy distinction. At this point psychoanalysis supports a quite detailed analysis of how such a mentality is organized and its implications for the pattern of future inter-state relations.

There is a further point here. Contrary to Wendt's argument, the international field and its cultural rules are overdetermined by the internal cultures of the participating states. There is not one rule for home and another for away, we might say. Or if there is, and this is the better way of putting it, they bear an internal relation to each other. The international system is not inoculated against being affected by the irruption of the persecutory position within some of its nation-state actors. Heightened insecurity promotes reliance on more persecutory forms of culture. I am not simply suggesting a regression to more primary modes of psychic organization at the level of each individual who identifies with the nation. Rather, my argument is that the available cultural repertoire of the nation already contains or encodes persecutory modes of thinking, feeling and relating and persecutory notions of the proper form of authority and violence. At moments of crisis or state adventurism the internal structuration of this cultural repertoire of the, until then, secure nation can rearrange itself by bringing these persecutory modes to the fore – establishing them as the new common-sense, the new reality principle. This is not invention *de novo*, it is the valorization or re-valorization of a previously eclipsed form of national identity. As the internal political discourse re-organises itself in this persecutory manner it is likely to reconfigure the corporate mentality of the agents of the state acting within the international field. In turn, the other state will not be oblivious to such a strident internal reorganization of nationalism in its potential enemy. Any doubts about its other, the counter-state, will find new licence. So Alter, like Self will begin to draw on its previously recessed persecutory mode of nationalism to construe how best to understand and relate to the new circumstances. As these two persecutory nationalisms confront each other, the risks of acting aggressively or unwisely are enhanced. This is particularly the case when both parties are located in the same region – as with India-Pakistan or Israel-Palestine-Lebanon. Terrorism, boundary disputes and even what Freud termed the narcissism of minor differences, keep popular culture replete with intense persecutory anxieties regarding the other<sup>xxvi</sup>. State elites are not immune to such emotional intensities, as David Campbell's

*Writing Security* nicely illustrates<sup>xxvii</sup>. The Lockean culture of anarchy in which those state elites operate is also not as constraining, civilizing and merely rivalrous as Wendt argues. If, as I am arguing, cultures and the cultural unconscious is internally differentiated in the way I have suggested, then the systemic constraints of the Lockean culture of international politics cannot always override and domesticate, as it were, the persecutory anxieties of the nation-states, their citizens and their political elites. In so far as it is a culture rather than solely a system of international law, the culture of anarchy that marks the international system would itself be internally differentiated, just like the national cultures. The friend-enemy distinction and the practices and mentalities it licences and supports can be re-invoked. Further, if identities are open to re-organisation in the ways psychoanalysis suggests, then we would expect what might be termed a performative slide. As the zero-sum game of exchanged hostilities starts to embed itself, both culture, as already differentiated, and identity as open and in process, will re-organise around previously eclipsed forms; typically cultural forms and identities reliant on the friend-enemy distinction and the persecutory processes of splitting and projection that such cultural forms encode and support. Wendt's Lockean culture of anarchy is not as monological, internally consistent, undifferentiated, unconflicted and resilient as he presumes.

Drawing on my everyday observations of the response by the United States to the attacks of September 11, 2001, I think we can see an example of how a recessed persecutory mode of American nationalism was drawn into salience and predominance by the extraordinary character of the assault on American security in the homeland. The persecutory mode was re-valorised and amplified in the wake of September 11. Of course such a mentality had already been evident in The United States' former Cold War ideology, in the domino theory regarding Vietnam and in the idealising notion of America's manifest destiny, its super-power entitlements and its neo-colonial burden to spread freedom and democracy, whilst protecting the interests of domestic and globalising capital. These persecutory assumptions were similarly embedded within the neo-conservative agenda – spelled out prior to September 11 in the *Project for the New American Century* (1997).<sup>xxviii</sup> With September 11, the cultural repertoire of American nationalism was reorganized – with all the consequences and misjudgements that have flowed since then; including the spill-over into further polarization of the West and the Islamic worlds and the spectre of an international terrorism that respects no territorial boundaries. George W. Bush's post September 11, 2001 mantra that "[e]very nation, in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" clearly illustrates the totalizing, friend-enemy splitting that I have described<sup>xxix</sup>. Significantly, these same psychic processes of splitting and projection are embedded or encoded within the cultures of the nation that are both routinely drawn upon and identified with. These cultural repertoires are used to defend against insecurity and its attendant anxieties. Hence heightened insecurity is hazardous, as it tends to mobilise cultural repertoires that encode the friend-enemy distinction as a defence against anxiety.

Such persecutory modes of culture and identity are also promoted by insecurity about the future. This is another area where Wendt's cultures of anarchy argument encounters difficulties and is usefully supplemented by psychoanalytic political theory. His response to realist critics who highlight the irreducible uncertainty of what states may do in the future is to point to the empirical evidence which suggests that uncertainty about other states' present and future intentions is rare. Wendt goes on to argue:

*"In short, states need a high degree of certainty about each other's intentions to be 'states' at all. This is true even in the Hobbesian culture, where states know who they are (enemies) by virtue of the shared understandings that constitute that identity. Although Hobbesian states assume the worst about each other, they do so not because they are uncertain but precisely because they know that others are out to get them... Thus, even in this hard case, structure (anarchy) does not constrain state action independent of culture" <sup>xxx</sup>*

Wendt goes on to say that *"the problem of future uncertainty does not change this conclusion significantly"* <sup>xxxii</sup>.

Despite this defence of his argument about uncertainty, as it was developed in *Social Theory of International Politics*, Wendt, in his recent response to his critics, draws on quantum theory to posit a collective unconscious marked by an entanglement between culture and identity <sup>xxxii</sup>. Now, from this quantum perspective, he grants that uncertainty about future intentions, like uncertainty about present intentions, is ontologically warranted. He doesn't conclude from this that cultures no longer matter, rather that they are less deterministic, at any particular moment, than he had previously presumed. At least, this is how I read his argument that if states are (quantum) wave functions then they do not even have definite intentions until they collapse. Second, quantum actors have free will ... This means uncertainty cannot be reduced beyond a certain point, no matter how much learning states do. Both the present and the future are radically open. He continues to maintain, however that *"even the radical indeterminacy of a quantum world does not change the fundamental point that anarchy is what states make of it"* <sup>xxxiii</sup>.

So let's consider what Wendt's turn to quantum theory has delivered and whether it is closer to a psychoanalytic political theory approach, as outlined here, than Wendt recognizes. First of all, we now find the positing of a collective unconscious, a concept very close to what I have termed a cultural unconscious. Wendt does not intend his positing of a collective unconscious to evoke a Freudian or, more generally, a psychoanalytic conceptualization of the unconscious. <sup>xxxiv</sup> However, the distinction he wishes to draw relies on his extremely limited understanding of psychoanalytic theory and its extensions onto psychoanalytic political theory. <sup>xxxv</sup> Second, we now find a concern with entanglement which might well be read as the entanglement of identifications and passionate attachments. Again, psychoanalysis already addresses these processes. Third, and most tellingly, we find a relaxation of his assumptions regarding the monological determinacy, at any particular moment, of a culture of anarchy and his opening onto performativity and, implicitly, what I have termed the performative slide. The general point I would make is that all these significant adjustments to his social theory of international politics conform with taking seriously Wendt's suggestion, quoted at the outset, that *"the role that unconscious processes play in international politics is something that needs to be considered more systematically, not dismissed out of hand."* The route through psychoanalytic political theory facilitates exactly this move, and more readily than a turn to quantum theory.

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<sup>i</sup> A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 278.

<sup>ii</sup> S. Freud, "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis" (1917), in: *Standard Edition*, Vol. XVII, The Hogarth Press, London, 1961, p.143.

- <sup>iii</sup> R. Rorty, "The Contingency of Selfhood" in; *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1989, p.35.
- <sup>iv</sup> S. Freud, "Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis" (first published 1909) in *Sigmund Freud: Case Histories II*, Penguin Books, England, 1987, p. 47.
- <sup>v</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>vi</sup> Ibid, pp. 47-48.
- <sup>vii</sup> Ibid, p. 86.
- <sup>viii</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>ix</sup> Ibid, p. 94
- <sup>x</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xi</sup> Clearly, there is implicit reference to Carl Schmitt's friend-enemy distinction as the criterion of the political running through this aspect of the argument. In my own reading I argue that Schmitt overlooks the psychological lining to the friend-enemy distinction. I also note that the friend-enemy distinction, Schmitt's distinguishing criterion of the political, can be eclipsed or else it can be sublimated, but it cannot be eradicated. Schmitt notes as much when he comments that the State, or, indeed, any social institution 'is a political entity when it possesses, even if only negatively, the capacity of promoting that decisive step, when it is in the position of forbidding its members to participate in wars, i.e., of decisively denying the enemy quality of a certain adversary'. Later in the same paragraph Schmitt makes it clear that this includes the promotion or 'forbidding' of 'civil war within a state'. (*The Concept of the Political*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1996, p.37 - both quotes.) By way of expanding the significance of this dual aspect of Schmitt's argument – the political as either authoritative promotion or denial of the applicability of the friend-enemy distinction - I would suggest that the political also denotes the recurrent battle between those forces that act to install the friend-enemy distinction and those that act to displace it by turning the enemy into the mere adversary. Such a displacement is possible and is routinely achieved, but it is never total and complete. Some friend-enemy repertoires remain and can always extend their scope so as to achieve predominance in the organisation of what counts as proper with regard to power, authority and violence.
- <sup>xii</sup> S. Freud, "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis" (1917), *Standard Edition, Vol. XVII*, p.143. Emphases in original.
- <sup>xiii</sup> Ibid, p. 140.
- <sup>xiv</sup> S. Freud, "The 'Uncanny'" (1919) in *Sigmund Freud: Art and Literature*, Penguin Books, England, 1990, p. 358.
- <sup>xv</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>xvi</sup> Ibid, pp. 363-4.
- <sup>xvii</sup> S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), The Hogarth Press, London, 1975, p.51.
- <sup>xviii</sup> Dennis Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology" in *Sceptical Sociology*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1976, See a similar discussion of this point in Peter Gay's *Freud for Historians*, chapter 5 (New York, Oxford University Press, 1985).
- <sup>xix</sup> Wrong, "The Oversocialized Conception of Man in Modern Sociology", p. 37.
- <sup>xx</sup> C. Burack, *Healing Identities: Black Feminist Thought and the Politics of Groups*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 2004, page 61.
- <sup>xxi</sup> S. Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego in Civilization, Society and Religion* (Pelican Freud Library, Volume 12), Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1991, p 137.
- <sup>xxii</sup> See J. Cash, *Identity, Ideology and Conflict*, Cambridge University Press, 1996 & 2010 and C. Burack, *Healing Identities*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York, 2004 for two detailed discussions of what Burack terms 'psychoanalytic political theory' that draws upon Kleinian theory.
- <sup>xxiii</sup> See E. MacDonald and G. Williams 'Combating Terrorism: Australia's *Criminal Code* Since September 11, 2001' *Griffith Law Review*, 16: 27-54.
- <sup>xxiv</sup> A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, pp. 6, 42 & passim.
- <sup>xxv</sup> Ibid, pp. 270 and following, for instance.
- <sup>xxvi</sup> I would emphasise that when, in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud discusses the narcissism of minor differences he quickly moves on to discussing examples of what might be termed the narcissism of *major* differences. So, for instance, he writes about 'all the massacres of the Jews in the middle ages', 'extreme intolerance on the part of Christendom towards those who remained outside it' and 'the dream of a Germanic world-dominion' immediately following his 'narcissism of minor differences' discussion. S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), The Hogarth Press, London, 1975, pp. 51-52.

<sup>xxvii</sup> D. Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, 1992.

<sup>xxviii</sup> See the web-page: <http://www.newamericancentury.org/statementofprinciples.htm>

<sup>xxix</sup> President G. W. Bush, 'Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People' United States Capitol Washington D C September 20 2001. Available online at:

<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>

<sup>xxx</sup> A. Wendt, "Social Theory as Cartesian science: An auto-critique from a quantum perspective" in: S. Guzzini, A. Leander (Eds.), *Constructivism and International Relations*, Routledge, London, New York, 2006, p. 211.

<sup>xxxi</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxxii</sup> Ibid.

<sup>xxxiii</sup> Ibid. p. 212

<sup>xxxiv</sup> Presumably, he is even less drawn to the Jungian collective unconscious, quite rightly in that instance.

<sup>xxxv</sup> See his discussion at *ibid*, p. 198. Wendt writes that "Our wave functions themselves, then, would correspond to our unconscious, understood not in the narrow, Freudian sense of something repressed, but in the more general sense of all the background knowledge we have about ourselves and our environment of which we are not aware when we are conscious ...". Suffice to say that the Freudian unconscious is more than the repressed contents, it is also the way they are organised and the ways in which they act. Secondly, the psychoanalytic account of the unconscious, whether Freudian, Kleinian or Lacanian, locates that aspect of psychic life within a larger account of the human psyche which any good understanding of the unconscious presupposes. Wendt's comment here is misleading and reductionist.