

Ontological Security and International Relations A Psychoanalytic Political Theory Perspective

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I am delighted to be here and to have this opportunity to exchange ideas with you all. However, I think I should begin with the same warning that I gave when I was last here in 2010. I am an amateur when it comes to the study of international relations. This may become apparent as the evening progresses, as for some of the time I will talk about cases and situations about which I have only a general non-expert knowledge. I have taken this risk to my own ontological security in the interest of relevance to the likely interests of this expert group. I am happy to rely on the greater expertise that sits before me when we come to discussion.

However, I have studied inter-group relations in detail – especially the case of Northern Ireland – and my comments this evening are informed by what I discovered about relations between corporate actors in that setting. I have also developed a way of incorporating psychoanalysis into social and political theory which, I believe, is better suited to the analysis of relations between corporate actors than is the usual route through variations on the theme of socialization to type. I think this approach may help illuminate aspects of international relations and IR theory.

The very mention of psychoanalysis in the social sciences can often produce a quick response of dismissal. This can occur, despite the fact that a great number of leading social theorists of the twentieth century and beyond have engaged with psychoanalysis for the study of social and political relations. I am happy to say that quick dismissal was anything but my experience when I was last here – when I was met with wonderful questions and excellent discussions. Since then Professor Laroche has published her well-regarded book *La Brutalisation du Monde*, which incorporates psychoanalysis into an analysis of the history of violence, the State and non-State actors. So I am delighted to reflect that psychoanalysis and its virtues for the analysis of international relations, is well on the agenda for this group.

In my earlier presentation to Chaos International in September 2010, I noted that in *Social Theory of International Politics*, Alex Wendt addresses in a few pages some potential uses of psychoanalysis for the study of international politics. While quite 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.”¹ After I

¹. A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999, p. 278.

outlined some ways in which psychoanalysis could make a contribution to the study of international relations, I went on to note that Wendt's more recent turn to quantum theory involved certain shifts in his own position that could have been more readily and satisfactorily arrived at through a more systematic engagement with psychoanalysis – the very thing he had called for some years earlier in what has become his magnum opus. In particular I noted that via quantum theory Wendt posited a collective unconscious marked by an entanglement between culture and identity. Cultures themselves are now understood as less deterministic even though "*the radical indeterminacy of a quantum world does not change the fundamental point that anarchy is what states make of it*"².

So, with this quantum-theory turn Wendt has posited the need for a concept of a collective unconscious. This is similar to what I have termed a cultural unconscious; by which I mean the embedding of unconscious processes, for the construction of self and other and power, authority and violence, into the cultural repertoire that subjects draw upon to organize their social and political reality. My point is that particular unconscious processes of one kind or another are authorized as proper within certain instituted routines, including the routines of international relations.

Second, we now find a concern with entanglement, which might well be read as the entanglement of identifications and passionate attachments. This is exactly the kind of account Freud provides in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*. It highlights that identities are formed, maintained and open to reorganization through processes of identification with culturally available forms of identity that are authorized as proper for the moment. Of course, in many circumstances the *moment* will stretch over a lengthy period of time.

I mention Wendt's alternate route to collective unconscious processes and entanglement via quantum theory, as his new position is much closer to my own and because I think that a more fruitful route to addressing collective unconscious processes and entanglement is available within psychoanalysis and its extension onto political analysis. It is also worth noting that Wendt's earlier argument in *Social Theory of International Politics* is implicit in much of the more recent IR literature on ontological security.

What I will try to do this evening is address the recent discussions in IR theory on ontological security. I will focus on Jennifer Mitzen's work as I think it has many virtues and as I find myself in agreement with the main tendency of her argument. However, I also have some significant criticisms and will argue that a more thorough-going engagement with psychoanalysis would strengthen her account, while also complicating it.

In particular I will attempt to demonstrate that by following Anthony Giddens' account of ontological security so closely Mitzen, like Giddens, unduly restricts the scope for the play of the unconscious within cultures and institutions and in the instituted routines that defend against anxiety. As Wendt has come to recognize via quantum theory and as I have long argued via my version of psychoanalytic political theory, while learning or socialization processes are important in establishing identities, be these Hobbesian, Lockean or Kantian, these same identities remain more open to re-organisation in the here and now of immediate circumstances than a unidimensional

² A. Wendt, "Social Theory as Cartesian science: An auto-critique from a quantum perspective" in: *Constructivism and International Relations*, S. Guzzini & A. Leander (Eds.), London & New York, Routledge, 2006, p. 212.

commitment to cultural types, as learned identities that may be deeply internalized, would allow. It is far more productive to conceptualise a broader and more dynamic cultural field in which one mode of identity – say Lockean – may be dominant for the moment, without thereby excluding the potential of other cultural forms to assert their predominance. Rather, as recessive, the other forms haunt the cultural field and can claim or reclaim authority – the authority to determine what counts as proper – when circumstances promote them. Such circumstances may be specified as changes in the behavior of other international actors that arise for any number of geo-political or internal political reasons. Even Wendt's third level deep internalization of one of the cultures (say the Lockean) does not inoculate against the resurgence of the Hobbesian, friend-enemy mode, nor does it rule out the achievement of a Kantian mode – although this last is less likely.

In *Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma* Jennifer Mitzen notes that most IR theory takes the security dilemma as its primary – foundational – dilemma. Mitzen then argues that if we shift the focus from physical security (of territory and government structures) to ontological security some interesting consequences follow.

I will outline Mitzen's argument in some detail before complicating it. My main theme in this regard is that the reliance by Mitzen and others on Tony Giddens' account of ontological security leads them to short-change the place of unconscious processes within intergroup and international relations³. We will come to that. Eventually I will outline a more thoroughgoing account of ontological security and insecurity from a psychoanalytic political theory perspective – my own perspective, in other words.

What follows if States seek ontological security as well as physical security? Are there circumstances in which the investment in achieving and maintaining ontological security can endanger a State's physical security? What are these circumstances and how can we best analyse the processes involved? These are some of the interesting questions that Jennifer Mitzen's work on ontological security gives rise to. They inevitably raise further questions. Does it make sense to talk about the ontological security of States? How do you productively *scale-up* from psychological theories that concern individuals to a theory that addresses psychic processes that play out at the level of institutions, including the State?

Mitzen argues that "*physical security is not the only kind of security that States seek*". "*States also engage in ontological security seeking*". In this respect States are just like persons – or, at the least, they act *as if* they were persons. She argues that treating States as if they were persons is already a common-place in IR theory – so, she asks, why not extend that to the similarity between persons and States as regards the seeking of ontological security? It is on this basis that she first turns to theories of ontological security developed for the analysis of persons. As we will see, she then "extrapolates" from the individual to the State level.

Mitzen characterizes ontological security as follows: "*ontological security refers to the need to experience oneself as a whole, continuous person in time - as being rather than constantly changing - in order to realize a sense of agency*". She cites Giddens and also Ronald Laing as sources of this argument – and follows Giddens' argument very closely thereafter. In particular she argues that "*agency requires a stable cognitive environment*" and that "*deep (cognitive) uncertainty renders the*

³. A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, Polity, Cambridge, 1991.

actor's identity insecure"⁴. Chaos is likely to follow if this unbearable instability and uncertainty persist. As Mitzen puts it: "Giddens argues that all social actors intrinsically know that behind the routines of daily life, 'chaos lurks'. Constant awareness of such chaos would generate tremendous anxiety, making it extremely difficult to reconcile competing threats and take any action at all"⁵.

The antidote to instability and uncertainty is to establish a routine that restores ontological security by simplifying complexity and thereby restoring certainty. In psychoanalytic terms, we could say that such routines operate as defences against anxiety. I would add something Mitzen overlooks. These routines are not merely practices informed by "practical consciousness"; they are also organized by cultures that have unconscious dimensions. They are organized by a specific cultural unconscious. Later I will provide an example taken from the psychoanalytic study of groups and institutions to illustrate how this process operates.

I would also add a core psychoanalytic assumption. As Freud put it: "The ego is not master in its own house" however much it imagines itself to be the master⁶. This feature of the ego highlights that even ontologically secure individuals cannot inoculate themselves against the unconscious – nor the cultural unconscious. Another way of putting this is to point out that for Giddens – and hence for Mitzen – the unconscious is outside routine practices – it is what we fall into at critical moments when our familiar institutions and routines have collapsed or disintegrated. My argument to the contrary is that routines are organized, in significant ways, by unconscious processes. We don't escape the unconscious in the cultures of institutions and the routine practices they organize. Rather, unconscious processes await us there and for so long as we are a good subject, who operates according to the codes of the institution we enter, we tend to identify with and internalize the cultural repertoire of that institution. It is that cultural repertoire, replete with unconscious processes, that we draw upon and typically reproduce in our performance as competent actors. That is why the qualitative characteristics of any particular cultural repertoire – with its accompanying instituted discourses - carry such significance for intergroup and international relations. Those qualitative characteristics of instituted discourses are exactly what political actors draw upon in order to construct and perform the relationship.

Mitzen also addresses the issue of why routines, once established, tend to persist. A principal reason is that individuals form attachments to these routines that organize their reality – and hence support their ontological security. Consequently, they are very reluctant to abandon the routines once they are established and attachments have been formed. Severe anxiety and potential chaos lurk the other side of those routines. To fall out of these protective routines is to fall into chaos, it is argued – or at least risk such chaos. In IR terms we might say that this would involve a falling out of culture and into anarchy; an anarchy that is truly anarchic in that, being novel, unpredictability and uncertainty are at their extreme.

This is an implication of the Mitzen-Giddens argument with which I disagree. Rather, my argument is that cultural fields and the routines they support and promote are more internally

⁴. Mitzen quotes above are all from page 342 of *Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma*.

⁵. *Ibid.*, 346.

⁶. S. Freud, "A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis" [1917], in: *Standard Edition*, Vol. XVII, London, The Hogarth Press, 1961, p.143.

differentiated and dynamic than the Mitzen-Giddens argument recognizes. If an actor falls out of one culturally organized routine they will soon take-up another that lies waiting within the cultural field. They will not fall out of culture and into nature. In such a shift different unconscious processes will come to the fore as the dominant cultural form is displaced by another form that is already available within the cultural field and is adopted in the new prevailing circumstances. The United States, after the September 11, 2001 attacks on New York and Washington, might well be regarded as an illustration of this – perhaps best distilled in George W Bush’s statement that “[e]very nation, in every region now has a decision to make. Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists” and in the foreign policy initiatives that followed, particularly regarding Iraq. A recessive form of the culture of the nation, organized around the splitting processes of the friend-enemy distinction, was drawn into renewed prominence. This form was certainly a well-established feature of this cultural field of the American nation and, hence, was available to be reiterated and rejuvenated in the new prevailing circumstances. Of course, it was a political choice to react to September 11 in this way; the response taken was not inevitable. What was inevitable is that the response was located within the cultural field of American nationalism and must draw upon one of its particular forms. It could not create a response *de novo*. If it attempted to do so, any *de novo* response, if possible, would be rapidly covered and incorporated into one or another form of the culture of the nation.

Dynamic transformations are possible and they involve the reiteration and rejuvenation of alternate cultural forms, with their incorporated unconscious processes. However, as Mitzen argues, strong attachments that resist change are formed to routines that support identities and reduce complexity and uncertainty. Passionate attachments are formed to such routines in intergroup relations settings – such as Northern Ireland. It seems clear that similar processes are at play in the Israel-Palestine relation and in the India-Pakistan relation. Psychoanalytic concepts of identification and internalization – as well as the psychoanalytic concern with pleasure or, as Slavoj Zizek would term it, enjoyment, are of relevance here as they can provide a more detailed account of how passionate attachments are formed to particular types of identity and particular intergroup or international routines. These identities and routines become entrenched due to the strength of these passionate attachments, the defences against anxiety they present and the psychic enjoyment or satisfaction they provide. Psychoanalytic theory also highlights the emotional as well as the cognitive aspects of such attachments and, thereby, better indicates what is at stake in the maintenance of ontological security.

There is a further point that should be made here. Mitzen subscribes to a notion of socialization that seemingly draws upon, and in any case resembles, Alex Wendt’s understanding, in *Social Theory of International Politics*, of how any of his three cultures – Hobbesian, Lockean or Kantian – can move from operating as an external demand to becoming an internalized norm that motivates agency due to its intrinsic valuation by the actor. Wendt’s movement from the first to the third degree of internalization is implicit in Mitzen’s argument. While this argument has several strengths, it suffers from the limitation of many socialization arguments in that the further that internalization proceeds (towards the third degree of internalization) the less dynamic and the more determinate a State’s likely responses become. As Wendt puts it in *Social Theory of International Politics*, “It is Realists who should think that cultural change is easy, not constructivists, because the more deeply shared ideas are internalized – the more they “matter” – the stickier the structure they

*constitute will be*⁷. Yes indeed, but cultural positions are never as closed as this presumes. While one form of being and relating may have become second-nature as it were, this does not remove the availability of alternate forms that may come into operation as circumstances change. The relevance of this for Mitzen's argument is that a socialization-to-type argument that excludes or restricts the scope of unconscious processes within institutions and cultures unduly constrains the dynamism of identities and relations.

It is also worth noting that Mitzen argues that there are two modes of attachment to the routines that protect against a loss of ontological security. They are either *flexible* or *rigid* and "*give rise to differing capacities for agency*"⁸. In itself that is a reasonable point, but we should notice that it only concerns the capacities of individuals as agents. It does not address the other dimension of what is, after all, a structuration argument concerned with the mutuality of agency and structure. It does not address the ways in which specific cultural forms can also be usefully distinguished as either flexible or rigid. Nor does it leave open the possibility of specifying the unconscious processes that generate and support potentials for flexibility or rigidity.

However, in a related article on "*Anchoring Europe's civilizing identity*" – also published in 2006 – Mitzen comments when discussing "*rigid*" as against "*healthy*" or flexible basic trust that "*what these two types of basic trust tell us is that the character and location of routines condition an actor's ability to learn and realize her aspirations*".⁹ I agree with this claim, but note that Mitzen develops her argument in terms of spaces and practices – not in terms of cultures and their cultural unconscious. So, for individuals the home operates as a protected, secure space that supports creativity and flexibility while maintaining ontological security. Scaling the argument up to the State and inter-State level, for the European Union the equivalent supports for flexibility and creativity are those "*intra-European routines of multi-lateral security cooperation, which began with European Political Cooperation (EPC) and deepened in the 1990s with the CFSP (or Common Foreign and Security Policy). Through these routines, EU member states enact their collective identity and recognize it in one another, keeping it salient even for external action*".¹⁰

The point to make about both these spaces – the home and the EU forums for multi-lateral security cooperation - is that the space itself guarantees or "*conditions*" very little; unless you also specify the culture (and its cultural unconscious) that is dominant for the moment. That is obvious with homes, surely, as some can be dominated by vicious cultures while others can be supports for individuality and creativity. International forums can also take either form; certainly at the level of unconscious processes and even if diplomatic proprieties are assiduously observed. As I have argued above, it is the qualitative features of the dominant culture that matter; when it is understood that these features include unconscious processes that are authorized as proper for the construction of self and other and for proper forms of authority, violence and the exercise of power.

One of the analytic pay-offs from positing ontological security as a desire of States in the international system is that a State's desire to maintain ontological security may conflict with a State's desire for physical security. If that happens realist theories would expect that physical

⁷. A. Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 255.

⁸. Mitzen, *Ontological Security*, p. 350.

⁹. *Journal of European Public Policy* 13:2 March 2006, pp. 270-285.

¹⁰. *Ibid.* p. 272.

security desires would trump the desire for ontological security. However, Mitzen suggests it might work the other way. Ontological security needs may trump physical security desires. She cites the Israeli-Palestine relationship after the Oslo Accords as an example of two parties locked into a routine that generates certainty and ontological security by presuming that the other is aggressive. This presumption warrants or renders proper, acting aggressively oneself, despite one's own better intentions and any initiatives by the other that contradict the presumption that they are intrinsic aggressors. Of course, faced with this situation, the other also reduces uncertainty by presuming that its opponent holds aggressive intentions. Over time, presuming the worst of the other and acting aggressively oneself become routinized. Ontological security is maintained by adhering to the very routines and practices that jeopardise the physical security of the State or proto-State.

Mitzen develops a very interesting argument, but the various psychological and cultural processes through which ontological security needs trump physical security needs are thinly explained. The argument is that States become attached to these routines as they answer questions of identity. Over time, whatever their better intentions, such States shift type, from potentially being status quo security seekers that are only conditionally aggressive to becoming greedy states that are unconditional aggressors. Once that routine is in place and organizes the inter-State relationship, it is extremely difficult to alter as it generates identities that are ontologically secure.¹¹

I now want to say something about Anthony Giddens' account of ontological security, as this is the account that is closely followed by Mitzen, Steele and others working in IR theory on this set of issues.¹² The first point to make is that Giddens draws very directly on psychoanalytic theory, but in a way that fails to give due account to the presence of unconscious processes within the routines of cultures and institutions. Let me explain.

In his particular version of structuration theory Giddens discusses three types of knowledgeability that characterise the human agent; discursive consciousness, practical consciousness and the unconscious. Discursive and practical consciousness are central to the structuration process as they offer modes of access to the available repertoire of rules and resources that are more or less deeply layered into social systems. The unconscious plays a different role. It organises the ontological security of the individual actor and enables that actor to participate in the routines of everyday life. It does so by grounding, or, alternatively, failing to establish, the actor's capacities for trust, autonomy and initiative. The unconscious serves, then, as the fundamental support of the structuration process without itself having any dynamic role in organising the repertoire of rules and resources which constitute that process. It is present within the social as the mere pre-history of the competent actor.

In my opinion this is a very unsatisfactory account of the relationship between the unconscious and the social. We can see this if we consider the manner in which Giddens handles a distinction he consistently draws between routine situations and critical situations. Routine situations are organised by the specific sets of rules and resources that are embedded in particular institutional and social settings. These routine situations constitute the field of structuration and rely

¹¹. Mitzen, *Ontological Security*.

¹². See Steele, B. J., "Ontological Security and the Power of Self-Identity: British Neutrality and the American Civil War", *Review of International Studies*, 31, 2005, pp. 519-540.

upon the knowledge of individuals solely at the levels of practical and discursive consciousness. Unconscious processes are not present within these routines. Critical situations, on the other hand, occur “in circumstances of radical disjuncture of an unpredictable kind which affect substantial numbers of individuals, situations that threaten or destroy the certitudes of institutionalised routines.” What happens to the knowledgeable agent at such critical moments? Faced with such an overwhelming threat to their ontological security such agents can be said to have fallen out of culture and into nature. That is they fall into, or regress into, a culturally unmediated psychological state in which primitive psychic defence mechanisms predominate. It is worth noting that these primitive defence mechanisms are understood as having only an individual location; they have no place within the structuration process itself. Critically, they do not have any place in the organisation of a set of institutionally, or socially, located rules for the structuration of social communication and interaction at moments of crisis. For instance, there is nothing akin to Habermas’ account of ideology as systematically distorted communication in which unconscious processes shape and distort intersubjective communication.¹³ In Habermas’s case the culture of an institution or a society is itself understood as a compromise formation in which some unconscious desires or aggressivities are excommunicated from the group’s consciousness— yet, produce distorting effects due to their unconscious presence and the way in which that presence distorts and circumscribes communication and agency.

For Freud the unconscious is transhistorical and transformable at once; civilisation is that complex cultural field in which the unconscious is ever present and ever dynamic. With different emphases and inflexions many psychoanalytic traditions have preserved and extended this recognition of the incorporation of the unconscious into the dynamic processes of cultural formations. A classic instance of this recognition is provided by Isabel Menzies-Lyth in her finely observed study of the nursing system within a London Hospital. I will address that study in a moment. First I want to briefly outline a foundational instance of achieving ontological security, as reported by Freud in the fort-da story he tells about his grandson Ernst – from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*.

The concept of *fort-da* has its origin in an account by Sigmund Freud of his grandson’s play with symbolisation as a defence against ontological insecurity. Distressed by his inability to control the comings and goings of his mother, Freud’s infant grandson invented a game that he played with a cotton-reel tied to a string of cotton. Routinely, he would throw the cotton-reel into his cot; one with cloth-covered sides. Hence, the cotton-reel, as substitute-object now under the eighteen-month old boy’s control, would disappear from sight. Yet, with a tug of the cotton string, it could be hauled back into sight. Its comings and goings were under the boy’s control. These actions were accompanied by exuberant verbalisations. As he threw the cotton-reel out of sight the boy would shout “o-o-o-o”. As he drew it back into sight he would shout “da”. Both Freud and his daughter (the boy’s mother), Sophie, were convinced that the boy was attempting to voice the two German words “fort” and “da”, or gone, as in “gone away” and there, as in “there it is” when he threw the cotton-reel in and out of sight.

¹³. See J. Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*. Boston, Beacon Press, especially chapters 10-12.

Taking this anecdote as his starting point, Freud interpreted the *fort-da* game as a play with symbolisation in which much was gained, but at a cost. Through his inchoate entry into culture and civilization, distilled in this play with symbolisation, the eighteen-month old child achieved substitute satisfaction through controlling the presence and absence of the symbol or signifier for the desired m(other). At the same time he was becoming what we could term one of “*civilization's discontents*”; the common human condition according to Freud. This entry into the social contract afforded certain powers, but only by allowing culture, through the medium of language, to mark itself upon the subject, in this case the young boy.

In this anecdote we glimpse a larger account of how an instituted culture enables the human subject, yet marks itself upon that same human subject. In later iterations of this same process the instituted cultures are, typically, far more robust and deeply embedded than the boy's self-improvised game with presence and absence. Human subjects lean upon, engage with and negotiate their very subjectivity and forms of inter-subjectivity in relation to such instituted cultures. In particular, a major way in which they defend against ontological insecurity is by drawing upon the unconscious psychic defence mechanisms that the dominant form of the instituted social imaginary deems proper.

My argument, then, is that we can discern a parallel *fort-da* process in the routines of everyday life – they too present socially instituted ways of dealing with insecurity and anxiety. There are further significant implications, as it follows that with deeply embedded or instituted cultures the particular qualitative features of each instituted culture take on paramount significance. Typically, such cultures are anything but self-improvised. While open to change and transformation, cultural forms regarding the state, nation and rule of law, as well as race, gender, class and ethnicity have a long history and typically confront the human subject as social facts that must be engaged with and negotiated. The scope and support these cultural forms provide or deny for creativity, dialogue, compromise, the handling of complexity, dwelling in ambivalence and the capacity to learn from experience can vary considerably – with significant implications for inter-group and international relations.

The practices and mentalities that count as proper modes of being and relating to self and others and to processes of power, authority and violence are signature themes in this regard. For instance, when the friend-enemy distinction has installed itself as the predominant or hegemonic common-sense, this eliminates choice and creativity, constrains agency and outlaws ambivalence. Learning from experience is radically restricted as zero-sum repetitions of violence, dehumanisation, prejudice and the like recur; further embedding the cultural form that organises the repetition. Qualitatively distinct cultural forms that more fully optimise choice, creativity, agency and ambivalence can provide much stronger support for the mutual enactment of, following Wendt, third-degree Lockean identities and relations.

In my earlier conference presentation in 2010 I began my discussion by commenting on one of Freud's famous case-studies; the case of the Rat Man. I want to finish this evening with some comments and reflections on the applicability to IR theory and analysis of another well-known psychoanalytic case-study – but this time it is the study of an institution. This is a quite famous and very influential study by Isabel Menzies-Lyth, titled *The Functioning of Social Systems as a Defence Against Anxiety*. Menzies-Lyth, along with other psychoanalysts at the Tavistock Institute in London, developed a method of consulting to groups and institutions. In her major study she consulted to the

nursing service of a London hospital that was losing its best nursing recruits. She observed the following features of this nursing system. Firstly, to cope with the anxiety produced by their work experience of caring for sick and dying patients and distressed relatives, nurses characteristically "split off aspects of" themselves and projected these "into other nurses". Irresponsible aspects were projected into subordinates, stern and harsh aspects into superiors. This became institutionalised, so that junior nurses actually regarded themselves as irresponsible and often behaved accordingly, and superiors tended to be overly severe. Secondly, a whole set of routines developed that bound or deflected the anxiety, but at a cost. For instance patients tended to be depersonalised, becoming "the liver in bed 10" or "the Pneumonia in bed 15". Other institutionalised practices and norms identified by Menzies-Lyth included "detachment and denial of feelings", "the attempt to eliminate decisions by ritual task-performance" and "avoidance of change".¹⁴

The culture of the nursing institution required and legitimated a restricted set of psychic defences against anxiety that nurses were expected to draw upon in order to defend against the anxieties aroused by performing the difficult and distressing tasks that the care of ill and dying patients inevitably involves. Only behaviors and mentalities organized by a restricted set of unconscious psychic processes of a paranoid-schizoid character – to use Kleinian terminology - were recognized as proper.¹⁵ (By way of extension to IR concerns, only the psychic processes of the friend-enemy, Hobbesian culture were legitimated, we could say.) More complex psychic processes were excommunicated and rendered improper by the dominant culture. Complex emotional states were repressed by the instituted culture, with the effect that a more mature working-through of anxiety, grief and desire was forestalled. In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that some nurses – typically the best of the new recruits – exited the scene rather than completing their training. They did so due to the dissonance between their characteristic mode of defence against anxiety, grief and desire - typically marked by Klein's "depressive position" – and the culturally mandated paranoid-schizoid defences that were so deeply embedded within the nursing system, at least at the time of the Menzies-Lyth study in 1959. The mandating of routines organized by such unconscious psychic processes maintained the ontological security of some nurses. However, Menzies-Lyth discovered that it also placed the well-being of both nurses and patients at risk and threatened the capacity of the nursing service to retain its best recruits and reproduce itself.

The nursing service described by Menzies-Lyth indicates how unconscious processes are encoded into the culture of an institution and, thereafter, are established as the proper form for the construction of self and other and of authority and power. It highlights how identifications with and passionate attachments to the routines that support ontological security become so entrenched that change is forestalled, even though, in this case, the senior managers in the nursing service – and many other nurses – recognized that change was necessary and consciously endorsed such change. We see here a clear example of the ways in which unconscious processes resist domestication by the exercise of conscious intentions. The same nurses who consciously advocated change unconsciously resisted it, because the routines they identified with and were attached to were encoded with unconscious processes that resisted any change.

¹⁴. I. Menzies-Lyth, "The functioning of social systems as a defence against anxiety" in: *Containing Anxiety in Institutions*, London, Free Association Books, 1988.

¹⁵. M. Klein, *The Selected Melanie Klein* (ed. J Mitchell), Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1986.

I have gone over the nursing case to illustrate the argument I made earlier in this presentation. When we look closely at an institution, even a near-total institution, such as the nursing system in the late 1950s was, we find that within the cultural field that organizes identities and the routines that support ontological security we can identify unconscious processes at play that are culturally authorized as the proper way to think, feel and relate AND we can also identify qualitatively distinct unconscious processes, also culturally located, that are available to be drawn upon in order to disrupt the established orthodoxy and potentially displace it by instituting an alternate set of “rules” for the structuration of the unconscious in culture and the re-organization of the routines that support ontological security. Over time such a displacement has occurred in nursing services, at least in the English speaking world and, I suspect, more broadly. A similar change, although not complete, has been achieved in Northern Ireland over the past several years. Of course, the nursing case is just one empirical example far from the field of international relations, but it clearly highlights that, contra Giddens and Mitzen, unconscious processes are internal to the routines that support ontological security.

By way of conclusion I want to take the example of where a State’s physical security interests are in conflict with its interest in maintaining its ontological security – and to treat this very schematically for purposes of discussion. To take Mitzen’s most interesting example, then – the relationship between Israel and Palestine after Oslo. The claim is that both parties regarded themselves as security seekers and wanted to act accordingly, but “*neither was sure that the other was satiable*”.¹⁶ Accepting her version, both Israel and Palestine after Oslo were would-be security seekers that could not convince themselves that they could trust the other sufficiently to themselves act according to their best intentions. In turn, the other state or proto-state did not experience enough indications of the good intentions of the other to recognize it as a “security seeker” rather than as “greedy”. Over time – given their routine behavior – both internalized (or re-internalized, we might preferably say) an understanding of themselves as greedy and, by continuing to act accordingly, they constituted themselves as a greedy-type State and were recognized as such by the other. This created or recreated a self-fulfilling prophecy, a zero-sum game; a vicious circle. Once strong attachments are formed the routine is deeply internalized and becomes harder and harder to shift. Consequently, both Israel and Palestine act in ways that run counter to their best intentions and their preferred conception of self.

Let me make the obvious psychoanalytic point straight away. Both Freud’s argument that the ego is not master in its own house, although due to its narcissism it imagines itself as such; and Jacques Lacan’s account of the mirror-stage, the formation of the ego, and the imaginary relation as involving the split between the ego and the unconscious: these and many other fundamental aspects of psychoanalytic theory highlight that ontological security is quite consistent with the maintenance of BOTH aggressivity towards the other AND an image of the State or Nation as a “self” acting on the highest of moral principles. One term for this is rationalization and another is ideology.

Recall the argument that “ontological security refers to the need to experience oneself as a whole, continuous person in time - as being rather than constantly changing – in order to realize a sense of agency”. And the rider that “that all social actors intrinsically know that behind the routines

¹⁶. Mitzen, “Ontological Security ...”, p. 356.

of daily life, 'chaos lurks'. This argument promotes the notion of a centred subject that has stabilized an identity by attaching, whether unreflectively or reflectively, to a social routine that defends against anxiety and, ultimately, chaos. However, psychoanalysis informs us that we are all decentred subjects and that it is quite possible to adhere to a self-understanding that is quite at odds with one's routine practices and the unconscious processes that organize them. This is Lacan's imaginary and Freud's ego that misrecognizes itself and its powers.

If we take this fundamental psychoanalytic observation to my argument regarding the availability of an internally differentiated cultural field – including the differential availability of qualitatively distinct unconscious processes – we can see that an argument about distinct types that are stabilized through internalization does violence to the dynamism and complexity of situations like the Israeli-Palestine relationship and more generally. To put it in Wendt's terms, both Hobbesian and Lockean "rules" for the construction of self and other and the proper forms of power, authority and violence can co-exist and be drawn upon in what are regarded as proper circumstances. Ontological security may well require this in such circumstances. That is, in some circumstances, ontological security may take advantage of the decentring of the subject, such that both a friend-enemy mentality and its routines and a qualitatively different "*adversary-neighbor*" mentality and its routines together help a State-actor and its citizens make sense of, and respond to, a very complex and multi-dimensional relationship.¹⁷ The Israeli-Palestine relationship may well provide evidence for the efficiency of such a divided or mixed mentality.

A further point to make is that this particular example highlights the general problem with an argument about socialization or re-socialization to type that leaves out of consideration the alternative cultural forms that are also available, even if eclipsed for the moment. The analysis ends up with either an adherence to type or, when ontological security collapses, a falling into chaos, which is presumed to lurk the other side of established routines.

We might notice a formal similarity between this Israel-Palestine international relations example and the nursing system example. In both, a mentality and routines organized by unconscious processes identified by Melanie Klein as splitting and projection is interrupted (Oslo) by the prospect of an alternative mentality and routines in which the multi-dimensional aspects of both self and other are recognized rather than split - and in which reparative intentions and actions are not read through a persecutory perspective in which the other's malevolence is presumed – itself an effect of the splitting and projection. A capacity to dwell in ambivalence and creatively transform the relationship or situation through negotiation and compromise may now be possible, as the zero-sum repetitions of the past that relied on and reproduced a friend-enemy or splitting mentality and routines is potentially displaced.

Eventually, nursing services, at least in the West, succeeded in making this transition and introduced a new mentality and routines that do not involve splitting and projection as the required form of defence against anxiety. If I may mention Northern Ireland again – it too has made a significant shift in this direction – from Hobbesian to Lockean mentalities, we could say. It is an open question as to just how deeply internalized this transformative culture is in Northern Ireland and within which sectors of the community it is located. Certainly the formal structures of government – a consociational or power sharing government at Stormont – presume and can only operate if

¹⁷. Given the complex relations between and within the backers of each State.

Lockean mentalities and practices are adhered to. The wager is that over time the Lockean culture will be internalized. My argument is that such an achievement may displace but will not eradicate the friend-enemy culture. Clearly, the situation is different with Israel-Palestine. The transition has not occurred and the friend-enemy culture retains predominance.

What happens when a State's ontological security collapses? Does chaos really prevail? My argument regarding the typical availability of an internally differentiated cultural field would suggest that what usually occurs is the validation of a previously eclipsed cultural form that either replaces or partially replaces the pre-eminence of the previously established form (or mixture of forms) – ie. replaces the form or mixture of forms that has now collapsed or lost its prior hegemony. We can identify three common scenarios here. First, a mixture of forms persists as in the Israel-Palestine example (according to my conjecture). The United States - post September 11, 2001 – and indeed at many other moments – may also fit this scenario. As just explained, it is fully consistent with a psychoanalytic account and with my extension onto a differentiated cultural field that encodes a variety of qualitatively distinct unconscious processes. Given, their complexity, most States - and their civil society – are likely to involve some degree of mixing of forms. However, we can distinguish some States in which one form is massively predominant and hence there are cases in which it does make good sense to talk about a Hobbesian or Lockean culture of anarchy and to anticipate a Kantian one. But only if we also recognise that states that lose their sense of ontological security typically do not fall out of culture and into anarchy or nature. Rather, they fall, or rise in the unlikely Kantian case, into another previously eclipsed cultural form (or mixture of forms) that are also available to them and that organize their ontological security differently. This suggests that there is more of an internal relationship between physical and ontological security than the current IR literature seems to recognize. To be stuck in a Hobbesian culture and thereby miss transformative opportunities is a genuine hazard. But to step out of the Hobbesian culture too soon is also hazardous. That is the dilemma of deeply entrenched conflicts.

What about the opposite case – a State whose international relations are, principally, organized by a Lockean culture. Taking the United States as a candidate for such a characterization, does that identity and the ontological security it affords restrict the ability of the United States to protect its physical interests of territory and government – and its citizens? The rule of law, including international law does impose certain constraints, I am sure, but as my earlier discussion highlights, the United States had no difficulty in reviving a friend-enemy culture for significant aspects of its foreign policy initiatives after September 11. That strikes me as a very common mixed formation – and it depends on the availability of a diverse cultural field and a capacity to shift from one cultural form to another without falling into chaos, anarchy or nature. This does suggest to me that while it is correct to point to the potential for emergent inconsistencies to arise between the physical and the ontological security needs of States, they are not as external or distinct from each other as Mitzen argues. Rather they typically relate to each other as internal features of the internally differentiated cultural field of the State and nation and its international identity – and consequently shifts between specific forms of identity and the maintenance of mixed forms of identity are not as traumatic as the Giddens-Mitzen account of ontological security presumes.

Discussion with the audience

1. *Action theories in sociology seem to be reproduced in IR: thus, both "realists" and "liberals" use the notion of interest to explain how States behave (even if they oppose on what it means) ; meanwhile, "constructivists" rely heavily on the concept of identity. Then, can we consider psychoanalytical political theory and its "collective unconscious" as a bridge between those different frameworks?*

This is a very interesting question that raises a complex set of issues relevant to my presentation. Your mention of identity links very directly to my focus on ontological security, which is all about the maintenance and protection of established identities.

Let me begin with your suggested "bridge". As you know, constructivists rely on an approach that bridges the gap between theories of structure and theories of agency by emphasizing the ways in which structure and agency are mutually enmeshed. Any social process involves agents who draw upon established structures and thereby reproduce or modify those very structures. The point to note here is that this process is always a somewhat open one in which, at any new moment in the process of reiteration, difference or change may occur. Structures, of which a culture is one pertinent instance, are both constraining and enabling. They are also open to modification, even if, typically, they are routinely reproduced in their already established form. However, that is not inevitable. Changes can occur, identities can be re-formed and relationships can be reorganized.

Of course, Anthony Giddens terms this the process of structuration and his work, along with influences by Roy Bhaskar and Pierre Bourdieu, have been taken up by constructivists in IR. Interestingly, Giddens' related concept of "ontological security" as crucial to the maintenance of identity has also been adopted by IR scholars. As my presentation outlines, while I endorse the interest in the concept I believe that Giddens – and those IR scholars such as Mitzen and Steele who follow him very closely regarding ontological security – develop the concept in a way that both includes and yet marginalizes unconscious processes. In my 1996 book *Identity, Ideology and Conflict: the structuration of politics in Northern Ireland*, I developed a theory of structuration which included an emphasis on the structuration of the unconscious in cultures and institutions. It is that approach that I have drawn upon in this presentation to address ontological security in the context of international relations. That approach carries implications for constructivist theories, such as Wendt's, that draw upon what I have just now termed the "somewhat open" character of the structuration process, as it questions the extent to which learning and internalization or socialization to type (Hobbesian, Lockean or Kantian) can settle identity. Even at the third degree of internalization, unconscious processes remain a potential source of dynamism and complexity within the organization of an established identity. But how do you conceptualise that when addressing state-actors rather than individual persons? This is where my own approach – sometimes termed psychoanalytic political theory – can come into play. As I have argued, cultural fields contain a variety of particular cultural forms, all of which have unconscious processes encoded or incorporated into them. These unconscious processes are not all the same. There is a fundamental qualitative difference between those cultures, mentalities and the practices they organize that draw upon unconscious processes of splitting and projection and those alternative cultures, mentalities and practices that involve a capacity to accept complexity, dwell in ambivalence and negotiate with

others on mutually acceptable terms. They construct the proper forms of self and other and power, authority and violence quite differently; as either a Hobbesian friend-enemy or a Lockean adversary-neighbour, we might say. My argument, contra Giddens, Mitzen and others, and with implications for Wendt's deep internalization argument - is that when ontological security is punctured the corporate actor does not fall into chaos or anarchy, but rather quickly adopts another cultural form - typically the friend-enemy formation - and the routines that it organizes. Of course, this argument relies on both my claim about the complexity of cultural fields and the related claim about a cultural unconscious - which I described as the embedding of unconscious processes, for the construction of self and other and power, authority and violence, into the cultural repertoire that subjects draw upon to organize their social and political reality.

While I doubt that this fuller incorporation of unconscious processes will "bridge" the "realist"- "liberal" divide - although perhaps it could and should - I think that it does keep open the optimism about potential change inherent in liberal approaches while, at the same time, capturing - and offering a better explanation for - the pessimism of realists. So, perhaps you are right about the possible strengths of "psychoanalytical political theory and its 'collective unconscious' as a bridge between those different frameworks". Of course, I would like to think so.

2. Does the idea of "stabilized cultural fields" still make sense in the context of globalization and the subsequent tendencies to uniformization (first, on economics and finance, but also on cultural matters)?

Let me begin by saying that I am sure I have never, myself, used the term "stabilized cultural fields". My whole point is that cultural fields are far more complex and dynamic than the Giddens-Mitzen argument about the loss of ontological security and the fall into chaos presumes. A large part of that dynamism is that cultural fields have unconscious processes of qualitatively distinct kinds embedded or encoded into them. Moreover, as I have argued in my presentation, while learning or socialization processes are important in establishing identities, be these Hobbesian, Lockean or Kantian, these same identities remain more open to re-organisation in the here and now of immediate circumstances than a unidimensional commitment to cultural types, as learned identities that may be deeply internalized, would allow. It is far more productive to conceptualise a broader and more dynamic cultural field in which one mode of identity - say Lockean - may be dominant for the moment, without thereby excluding the potential of other cultural forms to assert their predominance.

So, reframing the question somewhat, how do the homogenizing effects of globalization on economics and finance, but also on cultures, look when analysed from the above perspective? Adapting Freud, we might well say that globalisation generates discontents. That is to say while capitalist neo-liberal policies and practices are part and parcel of globalizing imperatives, with considerable transformative effects, they also give rise to discontents. Of course, we have seen that in the effects of the global financial crisis, especially in parts of Europe and the United States. Over a longer period it has been evident in the effects of the high levels of youth unemployment and the increasing casualization of jobs. A leading example of this is what Richard Sennett diagnoses as "no long term" in his *Corrosion of Character*. Today, we might think immediately of the emergent politics of discontent in Greece, Cyprus and Spain and in response to austerity measures throughout Europe.

Ultra-nationalism and ultra-regionalism are instances of discontents expressed by drawing on cultural forms available within the cultural field that rely on splitting and projection and friend-enemy mentalities and practices. As I have argued, these forms may be marginalized at certain times, but they are never extinguished. They can be drawn back into political conflict over the proper way to be and relate to others. The dynamism of unconscious processes and the resistance of the unconscious to thorough-going colonization by social ideals – such as the presumed virtues of globalization – when located within a diverse cultural field offers a productive way of understanding the complex dynamics of what I have here termed “globalization and its discontents”.

3. According to numerous scholars, international law defines also the way States behave; how can it be taken in account within the frame of a psychoanalytical political approach? And furthermore, what's about the classical opposition between law and ethics?

Of course, international law is fundamental to the relations between States within the international order. Most of the time, it structures the form and pattern of international relationships. Psychoanalysis in its Freudian, Kleinian and Lacanian guises regards submission to the “law” – understood as the social contract – as fundamental to the organization of human subjectivity. It is through this submission – for Lacan, the entry into the symbolic order – that the human animal becomes a human subject. That process leaves a trace and generates discontents in its wake. That is why, while law is fundamental, it would be difficult to claim that international law always defines the way states behave. The unconscious is both complicit with the law and resists the law, we could say.

It is a further issue, however, when you attempt to *scale-up* from an argument about individual human subjects to an argument about corporate actors, including States in the international system. This is where my approach is helpful, I think. The argument about a diverse cultural field that encodes a variety of unconscious processes supports scaling-up without presuming an equivalence between States and persons or, even, “as if persons”. As I argued: We don’t escape the unconscious in the cultures of institutions and the routine practices they organize. Rather, unconscious processes await us there and for so long as we are a good subject, who operates according to the codes of the institution we enter, we tend to identify with and internalize the cultural repertoire of that institution. It is that cultural repertoire, replete with unconscious processes that we draw upon and typically reproduce in our performance as competent actors. I illustrated this with the Menzies-Lyth study of a nursing service.

Politicians, bureaucrats, ambassadors and other representatives of a state, likewise, will typically draw upon the preferred cultural repertoire of the state, or particular state institutions, with which they identify. What these individuals share is a common set of discourses and encoded unconscious processes that they draw upon to perform their identity and with which they identify. That is how the “scaling-up” operates while incorporating the unconscious. Whether these commonly shared discourses and unconscious processes are State-wide or institutionally-specific will depend on the politics of State institutions and agencies. We can take account of differences between, say, regarding the United States, the State Department and the Pentagon and the White House staff in this way.

In my presentation I discussed the Israel-Palestine relation and Jennifer Mitzen’s argument about their common, yet unrealized, desire, after the Oslo Accords, to behave and relate according

to their preferred self-understanding as “security-seekers” rather than “greedy” states. Due to a lack of mutual trust, neither could live up to these better intentions and their preferred self-understanding. Hence a “greedy” routine was established or re-established and their ontological security was maintained by adhering to this routine. As I argued, this split between a preferred self-image and self-understanding as a State or proto-State that adheres, or prefers to adhere, to international law and one that relies on routine practices that are organized by splitting and projection and the friend-enemy distinction is quite consistent with fundamental psychoanalytic arguments about the divided, decentred subject and narcissism and the imaginary relation. Again, the tricky aspect is scaling up to corporate actors and, again, my argument about a diverse cultural field containing embedded unconscious processes that are qualitatively distinct is my answer to that difficult step.

So, to directly answer your interesting questions in the light of my above discussion, as I have indicated, psychoanalysis already incorporates regulation by the law as well as the creation of discontents in its wake. The law is already taken into account at the most fundamental level. Scaling up is the tricky issue.

As to the distinction between law and ethics, in psychoanalysis there is also a useful distinction between the super-ego and the ego-ideal. Although accounts vary and it is a complex story, the super-ego is usually associated with self-discipline and self-punishment (the internalization of the law as punitive and pragmatic) and the ego-ideal with what could reasonably be identified as ethical principles that curb desire. So, again, psychoanalysis can accommodate the issues you raise, as they are fundamental issues for it. Scaling up remains the further issue and my argument about mixed-forms – as in the Israel-Palestine example or the example of the United States after September 11, 2001 – that are constituted in complex circumstances by drawing upon more than one repertoire available within the cultural field and mixing them so as to support self or national ideals as would-be lawful corporate actors while also justifying aggressive behavior, is of relevance in this regard. It is here that we capture the strengths of the psychoanalytic account of the divided subject and raise doubts about the Giddens-inspired account of ontological security as requiring a routine that supports the person’s identity as a whole continuous person in time and space – a centred subject – where the unconscious is outside practical consciousness and the routines it organizes. Of course, a sense of continuity in time and space and in psychic characteristics is important for identity, but such identities are more dynamic and more subject to unconscious disruption or re-organisation than Giddens and his IR followers recognize. For psychoanalysis, this psychic state of continuity and centredness involves misrecognition. It is a trick that the ego routinely performs, but it is not the full story. Lacan’s schema L highlights this exquisitely – the subject of the unconscious is never where it imagines itself to be. On the other hand, at least for corporate actors, chaos, or anarchy, is not the inevitable consequence of a loss of ontological security. An alternative repertoire drawn from the cultural field can establish or re-establish routines that may have previously lay dormant.

4. *Graham Allison's work on the Cuba crisis analyzes how the US foreign policy was produced as the unpredictable outcome of bureaucratic struggles (Department of State vs Defense, etc.). How conciliate this kind of approach with a more "psychoanalytical" one?*

In many ways, I think my immediately prior answer addresses this question as well. There is nothing in my approach that assumes that there is no internal politics to State policy-making and decision-making in international relations or any other field. Indeed, in my research and publications on Northern Ireland I have emphasized that a great deal of the politics has occurred within each corporate group or ethno-political identity, rather than between corporate groupings, and that this politics was principally concerned with the proper way of constructing the identities of self and other and conducting the intergroup relationship between corporate actors. So, I have no difficulty with incorporating my own approach into Allison's argument, or vice versa. A differentiated cultural field is relevant in this context.

As you say, Allison emphasized the unpredictable outcome of bureaucratic struggles – the intra-State politics, as it were. As you know, he also questioned rational actor models. Clearly, this is a major strength of psychoanalysis, which addresses how reasoning can collapse into rationalizing and how narcissism can cloud judgment. Decision-making in crisis situations can readily succumb to unconscious processes of splitting and projection, for instance. The anxiety involved can produce such unconscious effects.

Your question reminds me that when I was a graduate student in political Science at Yale University, I had the good fortune to take a subject in social psychology with Irving Janis, soon after he had written his book on "groupthink". As well as being a renowned social psychologist, Janis had trained as a psychoanalyst and was alert to the way group processes could distort and disrupt critical thinking and analysis, especially in situations of high uncertainty and actual or potential crisis. He also focused on the United States and Cuba – but his case-study was the Bay of Pigs fiasco where "groupthink" in the group advising President Kennedy led to an over-estimation of how competent that advisory in-group was and how inferior the enemy was. This was a clear instance of the unconscious splitting and projection I have discussed. As Janis put it: "*The more amiability and esprit de corps there is among the members of a policy-making ingroup, the greater the danger that independent critical thinking will be replaced by groupthink, which is likely to result in irrational and dehumanizing actions directed against outgroups*". This is quite consistent with Allison's similar concern with the discrepancies between rational-actor models and the actual psychological processes involved in decision-making under stress when dealing with complex problems. My addition to this is to argue that cultural forms that have these unconscious processes embedded in them are available within the cultural field and can suddenly take predominance in the organization of the intergroup or international relationship.

5. How can this "enhanced" approach of the ontological security allow us to understand better the behavior of some deviant States, such as North Korea or Iran?

Thank you for this question, which takes me back to my focus in this presentation on ontological security analyzed from a psychoanalytic political theory perspective. I have no expert knowledge of either case, so this is speculative.

For Iran, its desire to enhance its nuclear capabilities and to approach or reach the capacity to develop nuclear weapons may well be regarded as both a geo-political security ambition in a war-prone region and, also, as a source of ontological security in that its self-understanding as a major power relies on pursuing nuclear ambitions. We may reach a point where Iran's nuclear capacity is so intolerable to the international order that a strike against that capacity may be imminent. At that point Jennifer Mitzen's argument that ontological security may trump physical security becomes of relevance for Iran. Does it concede for physical security reasons or does it resist in order to preserve its ontological security? My argument highlights that within its cultural field for the construction of international relations, Iran has a variety of responses available to it – none of which need involve a fall into chaos. In particular, it could stall the process – as it may already be doing – by constructing a mixed form that maintains popular support for a friend-enemy response at home while negotiating as an adversary-neighbour in the international arena. I think this is a stronger argument than Mitzen's and it is based in the psychoanalytic fundamentals I have outlined – the divided subject, etc. – and my own "enhancement", to pick up that term, of a diverse cultural field embedded with unconscious processes. I have also suggested that by the time the crunch-time finally arrives and one or the other choice about nuclear weapons has to be finally taken, due to there being "more of an internal relationship between physical and ontological security than the IR literature seems to recognize" and taking advantage of the possibility of mixed forms consistent with the maintenance of ontological security, the distance between ontological and physical security may have collapsed. In my 2010 presentation to CHAOS I termed this the performative slide.

North Korea would appear to have its ontological security tightly linked to the fate of its ruling elite and its new leader. This is a case where Janis' "*groupthink*" could produce serious miscalculations. Such an idiosyncratic State surrounded by booming economies has its nuclear-weapons capacity as its one ace in the hand and must threaten to play that, at all times. This is its one routine and it is an open question as to whether it, or its small, privileged elite, can find another more conciliatory one – or would even want to as that would threaten the idiosyncratic nature of the State, and the elite's special predominance, as North Korea was opened to broader foreign relations. This places a special responsibility on the States that are interacting with North Korea – and that takes me to the final question.

6. *Regarding Rogue states, what does a psychoanalytic political theory perspective propose about how the United States relates to Rogue States?*

By now, I have addressed most of the relevant issues raised by this interesting question. First, I think it is correct to place the emphasis in the way you have placed it. How do the major international players, especially the United States, relate to rogue states and what can a psychoanalytic political theory perspective propose about this?

Rogue States are exceptions and that already places unusual pressure on their need to maintain their ontological security as well as their physical security. Some policy implications follow from this observation and it is a moot question whether the United States can manage to adhere to these implications. For the moment, it seems to me that the Obama Presidency is successfully moderating its rhetoric and actions so as to offer both Iran and North Korea potential “outs”, if they can themselves compromise and accept international requirements. In other words, the White House, in the person of the new Secretary of State, for instance, has adhered to Lockean rules that both match the preferred self-understanding of this American Presidency and its international role and also create room for rogue states to negotiate. However, as we would expect, there are other groups and parties within the United States for whom anything other than a friend-enemy mentality and corresponding behavior is construed as weakness in the face of an intransigent enemy. These voices are present in Congress and some right-wing think tanks and they limit the scope for Lockean policies and practices when relating to rogue states. In my argument, this is the case because they draw upon an alternative form of the American cultural field that is replete with unconscious processes of splitting and projection. This cultural form has the capacity to establish its pre-eminence if the Obama-Lockean policies are seen to fail, as they are deeply embedded in American nationalism. As in other situations, but here with special sensitivities and risks attached, there is an internal politics about the proper way to construct and relate to rogue states. My psychoanalytic political theory approach allows us to recognize the extent to which unconscious processes are integral to such internal political conflicts about external relations and what is at stake when one form that draws on unconscious processes of splitting and projection gains predominance. We have been there too often in recent times.

Many thanks for all these interesting questions.

John Cash