

# Does Death Matter in IR? The Possibilities of Counter-Methodology

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*Mainstream international relations (IR) scholarship does not deal with human death, because human death is not about analysis at the state or systemic level. This paper develops a counter-methodology that treats human death as ontological death, referring to the silencing of a meaning system. Counter-methodology is a kind of methodology that helps one understand oneself from the perspective of those one studies. Counter-methodology assumes that identities, as well as the personhood of theoreticians and those they study, are mutually constituted. IR scholarship does not acknowledge that theoreticians intervene in the decision-making process of decision-makers, or vice versa. This paper uses the classic wisdom of Mencius, a wise man of the Chinese Warring States Period, to illustrate how a social science theory on policymaking can kill the agency of policymakers. In short, scientific explanation of a particular behavior denies the possibility that policymakers can make policy abiding by completely different (i.e., non-universal) decision-making rules (or laws of behavior) if different decision contexts are triggered. Counter-methodology allows the theoretician to reflect upon the undecidable decision contexts by*

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*bringing in various notions of death that mainstream IR scholarship closes off. The paper also introduces the "hunch" as an epistemology that sheds light on the undecidable (i.e., ontologically fluid) decision contexts. Accordingly, even realist practitioners and theoreticians, who dismiss the deaths of civilians in the enemy state or soldiers of their own nation as being insignificant, could possibly slip into the humanist track, which is unknown to them in their work but is nonetheless familiar. Counter-methodology helps them shift decision contexts and develop a perspective on ontological death. This philosophical exercise does not require realist thinkers to jettison realism. On the contrary, this paper aims to accredit the legitimacy of realism by reducing it to just one of a number of different meaning systems. This will lighten the pressure imposed by the teleological hegemony of state-centered analysis. Realists can remain realists, or they can move on. This freedom of movement enables them to recognize different decision contexts and appreciate the meaning of death.*

**KEYWORDS:** social constructivism; Mencius; Alexander Wendt; hunch; death; methodology.

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The notorious level-of-analysis scheme in international relations (IR) literature continues to attract the attention of both practitioners and theoreticians even in the so-called age of globalization. In response to the September 11 attack, the Bush Doctrine ironically writes terrorists out of U.S. foreign policy by primarily targeting state actors that harbor terrorism.<sup>1</sup> This is ironical in that the Quadrennial Review of Fall 2002 specifically states that U.S. defense posturing must change. The argument is that because states are no longer the only threat, states that act as breeding grounds for terrorism must be taken out. Leaders of countries who supported the United States in its unilateral invasion of Iraq did so in the name of national interests, defined in realpolitik terms in accordance with their respective conditions. The New Europe, for example, allegedly wants Washington's help in countering the potential threats posed by its historical enemies France, Ger-

<sup>1</sup>George W. Bush, "The National Security Strategy of the United States of America" (September 17, 2002).



many, and Russia.<sup>2</sup> Taiwan, as another example, is believed to have no option other than total reliance on the United States in order to secure U.S. support in its confrontation with China.<sup>3</sup> People getting killed as a result of U.S. military action are considered unimportant in this regard. Even dead U.S. soldiers are quickly forgotten because of the state in whose name they sacrificed their lives. Therefore, they are meaningless in their personal regard.<sup>4</sup>

Woodrow Wilson, who read Immanuel Kant, would probably have a different judgment on the death toll of the invasion.<sup>5</sup> IR practitioners and scholars today do not consult Kant, though. And if we asked them who would, they would probably say only those who will never become statesmen or those statesmen whom the society of anarchy has already purged. Western IR practitioners may or may not like Kant, but they typically consider his thought to be irrelevant, except in very rare cases.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, they know some of his arguments. Would not simply knowing these arguments be enough to make some of them—though perhaps not the authors of the Bush Doctrine—change their judgment on death on a hunch over-

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<sup>2</sup>See the discussion by Michael Radu, "Old Europe vs. New," Foreign Policy Research Institute *E-notes* (March 12, 2003), <http://www.fpri.org/>.

<sup>3</sup>See the report by Lin Chieh-yu, "President Chen Voices Support for U.S.," *Taipei Times*, March 22, 2003.

<sup>4</sup>As an illustration of the tension between individual human lives and the American nation, note the obvious contradiction in these two statements by President George W. Bush delivered only a couple of minutes apart from each other: "We value every life; our enemies value none—not even the innocent, not even their own. And we seek the freedom and opportunity that give meaning and value to life"; and "We have made a sacred promise to ourselves and to the world: we will not relent until justice is done and our nation is secure." See the President's Remark to the Nation, September 11, 2002. While one could argue that national security is necessary for protecting individual lives, those lives are distinguishable from others not belonging to the American nation.

<sup>5</sup>Please read Woodrow Wilson, "It would be a most pleasant, a truly humane world, would we but open our ears with a more generous welcome to the clear voices that ring in those writing upon life and affairs which mankind has chosen to keep.... Your true human being has eyes and keeps his balance in the world; deems nothing uninteresting that comes from life...." See Woodrow Wilson, *On Being Human* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1916), 33-34.

<sup>6</sup>For example, Kantian thought contributes to the discussion of democratic peace. See Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay, 1795*, trans. M. Campbell Smith (London: S. Sonnenschein, 1903).



night? Similarly, who can be certain that in some strange future, a member of the Bush family might not enter into an intimate relationship with someone who might carry the once insignificant Iraqi blood, thus generating in the U.S. president a feeling for Islam, or even reincarnating him as a Kantian? What I am asking is: Who determines the context under which a person defines, judges, and decides on death, or any of her or his other problems?

This paper explores a methodology that treats the deaths of human beings as ontological death, death that will deprive alterities of their beings and therefore deconstruct at the same time the meaning of the theoreticians' and the killers' own beings. In other words, to appreciate lives of seemingly no significance is to respect an "Other," against whom one finds oneself meaningfully different or valuable. Unfortunately some extreme yet popular theoreticians tend to welcome the world of no alterity in their construction of a solipsist end of history or of some teleology toward a fixed form of world governance.<sup>7</sup> I want to rescue them, as a way of helping myself escape from any teleological fixation. In short, to bring the issue of individual life and death back to IR is to save the IR practitioners and theoreticians, and all of us, from descent into endless enemy-constructing or psychotic self-cutting. This is especially urgent as globalization allegedly eliminates anarchy out there as well as the natural sources, so to speak, of enemies. To construct an altar in an increasingly monotonous politics of identity relies on sacrificing the identical. In fact, under globalization, all killings are self-cutting, hence ontological self-denial. Note that the immediate closure of U.S. borders on September 11, 2001, and the subsequent changes of procedure at each port of entry served to question globalization, which observers claim is under attack by terrorists.<sup>8</sup> For the self-perceived global state, both self-closure and resumed outward killings are unquestionably self-cutting.

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<sup>7</sup>See, for example, Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Aaron, 1992); and Alexander Wendt, "Why a World State Is Inevitable," *European Journal of International Relations* 9, no. 4 (December 2003): 491-542.

<sup>8</sup>Editorial, "The War Against America: The National Defense," *New York Times*, September 12, 2001.



### **Where is the Fish?**

How the context of a decision emerges is not only about the context itself. It is also about the training of the decision-maker—whether or not past socialization minimally preserves within each one of us alternative sensibilities that may, through hunches, lead us to a different interpretation of the situation. In other words, we not only encounter contexts, but we also recall, reinterpret, and reconstruct contexts. A hunch is therefore capable of carrying one from one context to another, given appropriate external or internal clues.<sup>9</sup> Many people experience the mix of contexts in terms of classic role theory, which suggests how easily a social being can feel torn among different roles.<sup>10</sup> Any clue that leads to the awareness of a different role may quickly change the rules of decision applied to the situation in question. Political and business negotiations rely heavily on the ability of the bargainers to trigger a role context that can soften an opponent's position.<sup>11</sup>

The theory of role conflict implies that the conflict is within the same cultural context. Since the beginning of colonialism, however, identities have gradually replaced roles as the major source of self-contradiction. In addition to the sociological puzzle of how "I" can remain "myself" while switching among different roles such as parent, child, spouse, and so on and so forth, the contemporary puzzle involves conflicting cultural values and national identities. All postcolonial societies have more than one value system to guide the decision-making of their ordinary members and/or identification system to determine who belongs to them. The sense of

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<sup>9</sup>Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody, and Philip E. Tetlock, *Reasoning and Choice: Explorations in Political Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1991); and Victor Battistich et al., "Personality and Person Perception," in *Self, Situations, and Social Behavior: Review of a Personality and Social Psychology*, ed. Phillip Shaver (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1985), 6:185-208.

<sup>10</sup>Seymour Rosenberg and Michael A. Gara, "The Multiplicity of Personal Identity," in Shaver, *Self, Situations, and Social Behavior* 6:87-113.

<sup>11</sup>For more discussion, see Max A. Bazerman and Margaret A. Neale, *Negotiating Rationally* (New York: Touchstone Books, 1994); and G. Richard Shell, *Bargaining for Advantage: Negotiation Strategies for Reasonable People* (New York: Penguin Books, 1999).



belonging is intrinsically related to the sense of life and death. To be accepted by a colonial master society is a "rebirth" for illegal immigrants. To be suspected of disloyalty by the state is regarded as a life sentence by others. For most of the postcolonials not involved in immediate re-identification or de-identification crises, the context of decision-making is constantly undecided.

Mencius (孟子), the legendary disciple of Confucius (孔子) and a wise man of the Chinese Warring States Period (戰國時期), once shed light on the undecidable context. He asked himself how he would choose between two dishes—bear's paws and fish—both of which he liked very much. He decided on bear's paws.<sup>12</sup> Social scientists interested in human behavior could embark upon a research project to explain Mencius' reluctant choice—perhaps his residence in Shandong (山東) was too near the sea for him to be overly fond of fish; perhaps he was getting too old to deal with fish bones; or perhaps bear's paws represented a higher social status for a famous person like him, and so on. Once explained, the choice of bear's paws would appear normal and structurally inevitable. The next time a similar decision context emerged, Mencius would be ontologically closed off from the possibility imbedded in fish and would choose bear's paws again.

Social scientists are not interested in how Mencius might have selected fish. The possibility of him choosing fish in exactly the same context is explained away if scholars can successfully explain the choice of bear's paws. The explanation offered for the choice of bear's paws pertains to the legitimacy of the choice since the choice is considered to be imbedded in a social science necessity. Without any warning, the undecidable characteristics of the decision disappear. This is obviously not what Mencius meant to say; for him the choice between fish and bear's paws is close to an impossible choice. If he had had a second thought and opted for fish, the explanation offered for the choice of bear's paws would have to be scientifically wrong, because it was just not scientifically sensible to have the same decision structure end up in different behaviors. This co-

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<sup>12</sup>James Legge, *Four Books* (Taipei: Wenyan Bookstore, 1967), 266.



existence of contradictory yet legitimate choices seems to be exactly what Mencius meant.

To keep both of Mencius' options alive ontologically, social scientists must explain why and how, granted that the choice of fish is not enacted, he desired fish and thus could have chosen fish. Since social scientists regard their job as explaining behavior, it is most likely that they would not pay serious attention to the option of choosing fish, which is revealed as unimportant by Mencius' preference for bear's paws. Fish disappears from the clue-finding process that focuses on the decision structure leading to bear's paws. As time goes on, scholars may not remember that there was a choice of fish. The death of Mencius is therefore not death in the mundane sense. Mencius would have been deconstructed before his physical death if scientists had insisted on looking for a scientific reason for his bear's paws decision. It is the death of an undecidable context and the meaning Mencius once attached to the choice of fish.

Mencius continued his undecidable journey by extending the choice between fish and bear's paws to one between life and death. He thus asked himself how he was going to choose between life and righteousness, both of which he cherished highly. He said he would opt for righteousness even if it meant sacrificing his life.<sup>13</sup> If social scientists proved that Mencius' value and role had made him decide between life and righteousness, anyone sharing the same value and role expectation could legitimately ask that Mencius be punished if he had selected life over righteousness. The interest of social scientists in explaining decisions affects the legitimacy of the choice denied. Social science theory, which defines ontological possibilities, alludes to the legitimacy of a choice. For Mencius, the undecidable is undecidable; it is precisely because it is undecidable that his decision is significant. If life is not equally as valuable as righteousness, the comparison would be pointless. How can social science preserve the legitimacy of choosing life in the same context if it already claims a successful explanation for the choice of righteousness?

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., 266-67.



Can it be that both bear's paws and fish are both legitimate choices under exactly the same circumstances? Could Mencius freely interpret in which cognitive context his choice was to be made? Once explained, his behavior would have lost the freedom, in the sense that the social science explanation of his choice would at the same time be an ontological choice of the context as well as Mencius' meaningful being therein. If Mencius had died for righteousness, not because of a genuine choice but because of scientifically tested structural factors unknown to him, his death would have been an ontological death of an alternative context where the choice of life could have been legitimate. One way to protect the choice of life from the encroachment of the social science explanation would be to argue, as many do in various different cultures, that the choice of righteousness is a shot for permanent, spiritual life.<sup>14</sup> The enlarged notion of life preserves both the value of life and the legitimacy of choosing physical life over righteousness except that physical life at the sacrifice of righteousness is just less valuable, not completely lacking legitimacy.

However, social scientists should not allow this because the definition of death must not be open to interpretation, lest this should deconstruct the usefulness of death as a concept. To open up the concept of death for reinterpretation is not unlike the rebirth experienced by Gibreel Farishta (or Ismail Najmuddin) in Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*;<sup>15</sup> such an act is good only for the imagination, not for science. In response, fundamentalists give us the example of the families of suicide bombers in Jerusalem who want to believe that their loved ones gain eternal life through martyrdom.<sup>16</sup> By dying for a noble cause one supposedly transcends this limited life and reaches an unlimited spirituality.<sup>17</sup> The Chinese

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<sup>14</sup>Jerome D. Frank, *Sanity and Survival: Psychological Aspects of War and Peace* (New York: Random House, 1967), 100-101.

<sup>15</sup>Salman Rushdie, *The Satanic Verses* (New York: Viking, 1988).

<sup>16</sup>For example, see Suzanne Goldenberg, "Bomber's Family Weeps in Grief, Shock... and Pride," *Guardian*, March 31, 2001, [http://www.theage.com.au/news/2001/03/31/FFXWD\\_XGTWKC.html](http://www.theage.com.au/news/2001/03/31/FFXWD_XGTWKC.html).

<sup>17</sup>Steven Kull, "War and the Attraction to Destruction," in *Psychological Dimensions of War*, ed. Betty Glad (London: Sage, 1990), 41-55.





notion of greater self parallels this logic of sacrifice, belittling the little self.<sup>18</sup> Likewise, think of the September 11 attack as possibly having generated a sense of permanent life for the self-sacrificing terrorists. It is this permanent state of existence that provides a meaning for those still living who approve of the sacrifice.<sup>19</sup> However, a scientist could insist on the deaths of these martyrs. Let us push scientists to the extreme by requesting an undisputable definition of physical death. This is difficult, if not impossible, due to the political nature of such a definition.<sup>20</sup> Hence, a definition remains a definition. In addition, a moralist would consider a living person no better, if not worse, than a dead person if that person had lost the meaning of life. He or she would have literally become a living corpse. A scientist can at most define death for research or professional purposes; therefore anyone else can do so for their own purposes.

Death cannot be exclusively defined because it involves the undecidable meaning of life for the living person. Any scientist who must, for research purposes, define death cannot stop others from writing definitions for different purposes. When life and death are about definitions, they are game-like systems to which a person must consciously learn to subscribe. A postcolonial society may learn the meaning of life from at least two different systems, one imbedded in indigenous ecology and the other in colonial modernity.<sup>21</sup> A life-and-death issue under the rules of this system could look like a ridiculous farce under a different system, or lead to a trivial tear drop under yet another. I am referring to the loss of life in the U.S. "Free Iraqi" action of 2003, which killed numerous insignificant lives from the U.S. national interest point of view, and was narrow-

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<sup>18</sup>The greatest self is ancestry. See Francis L.K. Hsu, *Under the Ancestors' Shadow: Chinese Culture and Personality* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948).

<sup>19</sup>Edna Yaghi, "Interview: The Long Road Home, Interview with the Family of Saeed Hotary, Suicide Bomber," *Redress Information & Analysis*, June 25, 2001, <http://www.redress.btinternet.co.uk/yaghi24.htm>.

<sup>20</sup>For more on this, see Robert Veatch, ed., *Transplantation Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2000).

<sup>21</sup>Tani E. Barlow, ed., *Formations of Colonial Modernity in East Asia* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1997).



ly defined in terms of "making a statement" about terrorism.<sup>22</sup> What are these factors that justify IR games, yet treat those lives as unworthy of a longer physical stay on earth? Could U.S. national interests be put in an alternative context so that these lives could mean a little bit more to the warmongers? In Mencius' terms: Where is the fish? In other words, the realization that American lives and Iraqi lives are not inherently equal in value in one game should not preclude the awareness that there are alternative games that lead to a reverse assessment of these lives. An awareness of this sort treats the value of all these lives as ontologically equal.

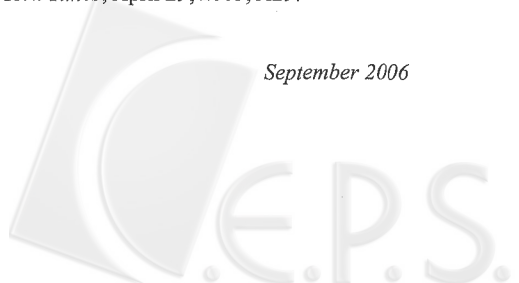
### Where is Locke?

IR scholars today are like Mencius who chose bear's paws. Between Locke and Hobbes, if there is only one state of nature to be chosen, the IR scholars have, over the generations, decided to favor Hobbes. Trying to explain scientifically why Hobbes is preferred in IR is to engage in an epistemological war to kill Lockean philosophy. The Lockean order, which is denied a place in anarchy, is domestic. Death would imply domestic tyranny or external invasion when one happens to recall the Lockean order. In short, there is no ontological reason why the Lockean order must be both outside of anarchy and inside the sovereign borders. One must accept the extension of Hobbesian anarchy from the individual level to inter-state relations before one completely forgets the possible relevance of the Lockean state of nature to IR scholarship on death. This is not to say that IR scholarship should simply embrace Locke to cure Hobbesian anarchy overnight. Nonetheless, it is interesting to ponder what kind of clue might open IR scholarship to domestic Locke, or anyone else.

Before Wendt enlisted Locke to support the neoliberal world order in his social constructivist IR, IR students generally did not have to do in-depth reading of Locke if they chose to focus on international rather than

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<sup>22</sup>Paul Krugman, "Matters of Emphasis," *New York Times*, April 29, 2003, A29.



domestic politics. In domestic politics, knowledge of progressive politics defined in terms of limited government should begin no later than Locke. For Locke, the state of nature is free and harmonious, so to speak. This conceptualization seals Locke's fate for IR scholars who typically trace their origin back to Hobbes, if not Machiavelli.<sup>23</sup> Anarchy, the Hobbesian state of nature, is horrifyingly competitive. Theoretically, death should be the routine. Yet, for Locke, death would be an important thing if it were the result of unjust rule by the prince. Locke is thus related to IR scholarship in a peculiar way. First, domestic constitutionality reproduces its own legitimacy through contrast with the self-help anarchy outside the sovereign borders. Second, intervention can be justified when domestic order denies members idealist rights available in the Lockean state of nature. The third is what most would attribute to the much-later Kant, that is, relations among constitutionalist sovereignties are necessarily peaceful.<sup>24</sup> Finally, the Lockean state of nature is possibly the philosophical origin of plebiscite, which assumes the existence of rational citizens within the sovereign borders.<sup>25</sup>

The Hobbesian state of nature, in contrast, dominates thinking pertaining to interstate relations. Instances of death that would concern a Lockean because of violation of rights would attract Hobbesians least. IR theoreticians are not sensitive to conditions that Locke sees as important; they believe that this area pertains to comparative politics or political philosophy.<sup>26</sup> It may seem crystal clear to mainstream political scientists in North America and Europe how the fields of influence of Locke and Hobbes are separated. For a postcolonial society, whether a relationship

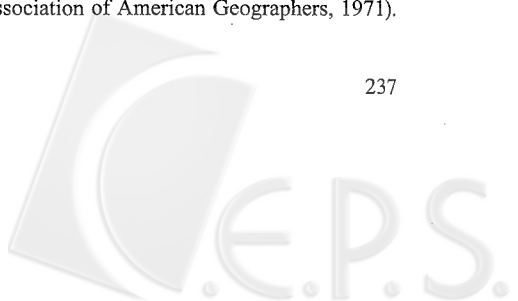
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<sup>23</sup>R. B. J. Walker, *Inside/Outside: "International Relations" as Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

<sup>24</sup>For example, Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

<sup>25</sup>Note that Gordon Tullock's *On Voting: A Public Choice Approach* (Northampton, Mass.: Edward Elgar, 1998) belongs to the series entitled *John Locke's Series in Classic Liberal Political Economy*.

<sup>26</sup>For the domestication of Locke, see Walker, *Inside/Outside*, 117. Walker also quotes from Edward Soja, *The Political Organization of Space*, Commission on College Geography, Resource Paper No. 8 (Washington, D.C.: Association of American Geographers, 1971).



is interstate or among individuals can never be certain. This could be a relationship between family members, such as Kwame Anthony Appiah and Nadine Gordimer ably show in their stories.<sup>27</sup> It could be one between a multi-national agent and a local.<sup>28</sup> It could even be one among different aspects of the same person involved in a transnational setting, such as a postcolonial immigrant in the former colonial master's country.<sup>29</sup> One can never be certain whether death or the meaning of life of one party in these relationships concerns the other parties without first knowing how each triggers her/his decision context at a particular moment, in a particular situation, and under a particular hunch. The undecidable relationship of this sort begins to test the water of globalization. September 11, 2001, is one such date which compels the global state of America to face changes eye to eye in an undecidable relationship.

The September 11 attack challenges conventional IR thinking on war in the sense that war in IR takes place among state actors. The sheer magnitude and shock of the attack nonetheless compelled President Bush and his associates to decide that they were facing a war.<sup>30</sup> The question for IR scholars, as well as for the president, was to identify which enemy state had launched such a war on the United States. Among the first of a series of reactions that showed it was the American state that was under attack was the closure of the U.S. borders with Mexico and Canada. Later developments that ensured the dominance of statist discourse are obvious from the Bush Doctrine. The Bush Doctrine basically says that it is the state's responsibility to curb terrorism.<sup>31</sup> Bush coerced other states to

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<sup>27</sup>Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Nadine Gordimer, *My Son's Story* (London: Bloomsbury, 1990).

<sup>28</sup>For example, see the discussion in Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches, and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986).

<sup>29</sup>Amy Tan, *The Joy Luck Club* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

<sup>30</sup>George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People" (September 20, 2001).

<sup>31</sup>The Bush Doctrine advocates preemptive strike, and the targets are necessarily states. There would be no such legitimacy problem with preemptive strikes in the case of targets outside of state borders.



take the American side in order to avoid being considered an enemy state. Following this conceptual clarification, the United States planned and executed wars with Afghanistan and Iraq, as punishment for their support for terrorism. The distinction between states and groups such as Al Qaeda, that the Bushes have recognized and actually responded to through work on homeland security, is nonetheless a minor point once the Hobbesian context is incurred; the sense of action would be lost without state targets to attack.

How much support each of these two small states actually provided to terrorists remained vague, and this is particularly the case with Iraq. Even in the case of Afghanistan, where there is much evidence that it was a haven for jihadi training, it is not clear from either the defensive-balance-of-power or offensive-quest-for-hegemony perspectives of realists why it wanted to attack the United States. Apparently neither state was interested in challenging the U.S. hegemony in world politics. The United States did not halt in its steps, even when there was a lack of evidence of support for terrorism, especially in the case of Iraq. In fact, as one U.S. Department of Defense official bluntly put it in an interview with the American Broadcasting Company after the war, the United States simply wanted to make a statement and Saddam Hussein was too obvious a target to miss.<sup>32</sup> In other words, President Bush was engaging, though probably unknowingly, in an epistemological war to preserve states as the fundamental actors in world politics by refusing to deal exclusively with terrorists. The United States, in common perhaps with many other states, can justify its long-standing policy of not making deals with terrorist organizations lest this should encourage them. In sharp contrast, however, this no-deal policy does not seem to discredit states from being a legitimate party to negotiations despite the realists continuously preaching distrust toward states and, more importantly, toward states of the "Axis of Evil." It is this discursive obsession with statehood that bars the sight of death. Once the analysis is stuck at the state level, the deaths of individual citizens in

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<sup>32</sup>Krugman, "Matters of Emphasis," A29.



Iraq or of U.S. soldiers beyond U.S. sovereign borders become cognitively insignificant.

Due to lack of evidence, many countries, including one-time strategic partners such as France, Germany, China, and Russia, refused to support the invasion of Iraq. In the process of negotiation with Washington concerning its invasion of Afghanistan, however, both China and Russia were given room to designate as terrorists separatist groups in their own sovereign domains.<sup>33</sup> How much they became enemy states during the invasion of Iraq was not decided upon immediately. The common theme of the two invasions is that the death toll of alter beings, meaning individuals living in different sovereign domains, remains largely insignificant. Hence, the United States did not care how many more deaths on either side resulted from renewed military actions against separatists in partner countries; similarly, the disapproving Russia and China did not feel for the Iraqis dying in the name of a free Iraq.

The Lockean discourse is nonetheless hidden within this set of logic, for there is always a domestic arena for the United States, where the brutal and inattentive anarchy does not apply. Citizens living in the United States are believed to enjoy rights and act with rationality. This Lockean state of nature can also exist in Iraq if, and only if, some external intervention could remove the tyrant who deprived his countrymen of rights and rationality and install a democratic system allowing Iraqis to resume the Lockean nature. One cannot simply believe that Iraqis are doomed to fail, or that any failed state is hopeless, because this would suggest a lack of differentiation between the internal defined by Locke and the external defined by Hobbes. Today, globalization challenges the differentiation between the internal and the external. So whether world politics remains anarchical or turns rational is undecidable; it is all contingent upon the hunch of the statesmen at the moment of action. September 11 was the moment that sent the United States over to the anarchical side.

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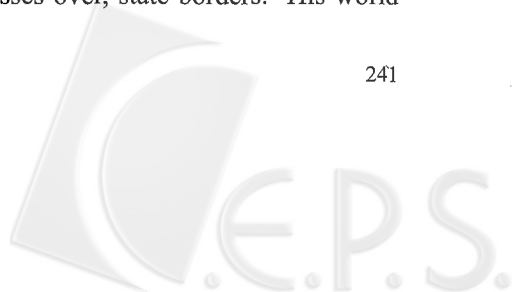
<sup>33</sup>Jaime FlorCruz, "China's Dilemma in the Fight against Terrorism," CNN, September 19, 2001, <http://www.cnn.com/World/asiapcf/east/09/19/ret.china.dilemma/>.



Trying to find out what level of analysis the statesman is working on is therefore not a way to test independent variables that explain their behavior. On the contrary, the level of analysis that seems to work best at each particular time set is itself a dependent variable to be explained. No context of decision can determine under what clues, internal as well as external, the context emerges. Even the same clue should be allowed to trigger different contexts for the same person. This is simply because the decision-maker is familiar with both Hobbesian and Lockean claims on the state of nature. A simple hunch can change the decision context of a person who then sees to it that deaths outside of sovereign borders are ignored or observed. To save one form of meaning is to save the other. This is why we should never say Bush's border-closing policy on September 11, 2001, can be irrevocably considered to be against globalization for realist purposes. Both possibilities must coexist at all times to make any of them meaningful. That said, IR theoreticians need to ask how the Lockean reading of a Hobbesian situation may change behavior and vice versa.

### **The Wendtian Hegemony above Globalization**

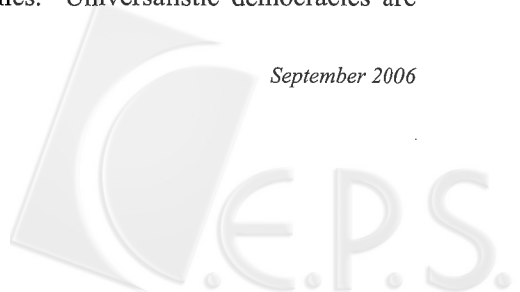
Locke referred to the state of nature that exists among individual human beings. Alexander Wendt extends it to the interstate state of nature. The rationality of sovereign states thus highlighted inevitably distracts one from Locke's concerns for Man. The Wendtian combination of epistemological Hobbesian states and Lockean rationality in his so-called Lockean culture closes the discussion on natural rights of human beings. Once the Wendtian analysis navigates only at the interstate level, crossing the line separating the international and the domestic, the undecidable is decided, and death is irrelevant. By introducing Locke, Wendt unintentionally kills the undecidable possibility that Locke represents in opposition to Hobbes. World governance, which he promotes, responds to the state of anarchy under globalization but not to the need of human bodies that sovereign borders fail to contain. This kind of globalization is the one that reproduces, instead of trespasses over, state borders. His world



governance is a grand translation mechanism that re-presents states each in their special, if not exotic, values that can be Othered and consumed by a different state. I want to use Disney as an analogy for his world governance.

In recent years, Disney has produced animated films inspired by different cultures, for example, *Aladdin* and *Mulan* which represent translated versions of Arabic and Chinese culture respectively. (Other examples from Warner Brothers are films about Moses and the King of Thailand.) Needless to say, these cultural representations are reconstructed for the consumption of an audience mostly foreign to the culture presented in the movie. However, both Chinese and Arabs may enjoy Disney. First, Disney products can generate pleasure at being represented, with certain characteristics, across set borders. State sovereignty and interstate relations together render their self-regarded differences irrelevant, but now Disney makes up for this loss of difference. People may dislike the distortion of what they consider to be genuine cultural values. They are nonetheless pleased to see some recognition of the difference. In addition, they can at the same time consume representations of other cultures sent to them through Disney and carry out a form of cultural exchange. Consequently, the Egyptians become *Aladdin* for the Chinese and the Chinese become *Mulan* for the Egyptians. No border-crossing is required here to generate the sense of globalization in the local mind-set. Accordingly, what the forces of globalization need are borders that are to be represented and translation that carries the representations across the borders.

To the extent that Wendt's eventual world governance is composed of states, it is therefore not a part of globalization but a response to it on behalf of the state system, serving to maintain it. The translation mechanism is composed of a kind of democracy that will bring all the states together, while allowing each to remain imbedded in its unique values. Having different values is a way in which nationals develop feelings and pride for their own states. Those democracies that have no special values beyond those of liberal universalism cannot be easily represented. They are actually democracies that represent the universal world, embodied by the hegemonic state and its military allies. Universalistic democracies are





the first groups of states to compose world governance,<sup>34</sup> then to accommodate and welcome other democracies which host unique local values. These unique values testify to the necessity of having separate state identities. This is just like Disney setting up the parameters of translated cultural meanings to prevent local diversity from disappearing. Countries with "unique" values serve to demonstrate the democratic pluralism of world governance. The same discursive logic can be applied to Iraq's reconstruction, to the extent that the world accepts the legitimacy of intervention and killing by the hegemonic state, while at the same time claiming democratic intervention and respect for Islam. Killings at the individual level are not noticeable at the state level. At this level, Iraq's exotic religious conditions are conceptually considered protected despite the fact that in daily life, the hegemonic troops had no feeling for the indigenous museums looted during the invasion or the religious taboos violated in the detention camp.<sup>35</sup>

Whether or not a country is a democracy is not an issue. On the contrary, it would actually be a serious threat if all countries became similar democracies, as this would make the translating mechanism obsolete. The forces of globalization must be very wary of the disappearance of borders or cultural difference, because the meaning of globalization presupposes the existence of borders that are vulnerable to trespassing. Therefore, it is not just indigenous societies that worry about the dissolution of identity under globalization;<sup>36</sup> the forces of globalization want to maintain local identities to reproduce borders. The idea of world governance based on the existing sovereign borders satisfies both the local need for protecting local uniqueness and the global need for maintaining difference. The so-called glocalization—thinking globally, acting locally—can be a project

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<sup>34</sup>James Robert Huntley, *Pax Democratica: A Strategy for the 21st Century* (New York: St. Martin's, 1998).

<sup>35</sup>"Museum's Treasures Left to the Mercy of Looters: U.S. Generals Reject Plea to Protect Priceless Artifacts from Vandals," *Guardian*, April 14, 2003, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/Story/2763,936330,00.html>.

<sup>36</sup>Akbar Ahmed, "Akbar Ahmed: When Honor Is Threatened," *The Globalist*, September 13, 2002, <http://www.theglobalist.com/DBWeb/StoryId.aspx?StoryId.aspx?StoryId=2274>.



of collusion, if not co-optation. For world governance, thinking globally requires one to worry about the legitimacy of one's representation in the global society. This means that one should present oneself in a liberal democratic format. Acting locally requires one to worry about one's uniqueness. This means that one should present oneself in exotic symbols that cannot be easily copied by others.

Complying with certain democratic procedures, such as fair elections, party politics, and an independent judiciary, grants admission to the rim of global governance. Theoretically, the local practice of democracy gives the impression that, if there is a unique local culture, it is a culture practiced by the majority of citizens. Hence it is a genuinely unique, democratic culture. On the other hand, without these ostentatious democratic procedures, any locally claimed uniqueness may be reduced to just another camouflage covering suppression. The debate on "Asian values" is one such example: Does cultural difference matter before democracies are installed?<sup>37</sup> No such unique cultural symbols are expected from those universalist democracies, whose major tasks are fourfold: to examine whether or not democratic procedures are appropriately followed locally,<sup>38</sup> to recognize, through commercially consuming them, the unique cultural symbols presented to the world;<sup>39</sup> to further translate, through interpretation and reinterpretation, the uniqueness of the thus presented local symbols so that they can have meaning for other local democracies also wanting to be consumed;<sup>40</sup> and to reward the local states financially for supplying exotic symbols and cooperating in democratic reform.<sup>41</sup>

Because of the recognition and the reward, there are sufficient incentives, psychological as well as material, for local leadership to engage

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<sup>37</sup>See, for example, Linda S. Bell, Andrew J. Nathan, and Ilan Peleg, eds., *Negotiating Culture and Human Rights* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001); and Michael Jacobsen and Ole Bruun, eds., *Human Rights and Asian Values: Contesting National Identities and Cultural Representations in Asia* (Richmond, Surrey: Curzon, 2000).

<sup>38</sup>Through such organizations as Freedom House and Amnesty International.

<sup>39</sup>Such as the Nobel Peace Prize and MacDonald's "golden arch theory," according to which wherever there is a MacDonald's there is peace.

<sup>40</sup>Through *Journal of Democracy* and *Voice of America*, etc.

<sup>41</sup>Through such bodies as the Ford Foundation and the Asia Society.



in democratic reform. In addition, a local state acquiring a position along with the universal democracies to consume unique cultures from other local democracies suggests progress in the local society's status in the world.<sup>42</sup> Equally important is the discursive ability to examine other states on their performance of democracy. This evaluator's gesture could increase one's sense of participation as an equal member in world governance. The pressure/desire to exaggerate the enhancement of status may indeed lead to a higher local demand for democratic reform. It is always possible to replace local colluders with others if the local government refuses to comply with the democratic rules subscribed to by the world governance. Despite the fact that democratic reform might occasionally cause chaos and death, intervention that causes these negative developments can always be disguised by the Hobbesian argument that an external state has no responsibility toward the state of other states.

The popular impression that globalization is a salute to individual agency can be problematic. Once a local state is locked in the myth of globalization, the chance for foreign policymakers to open a dialogue between individual rights and national freedom does not necessarily increase. Globalization pushes the national leadership to consolidate local identities and reduces the role of the individual to a provider of cultural uniqueness. On the other hand, the Wendtian theory of world governance as well as the Kantian theory of republicanism pushes the local government to democratize to win recognition. This justifies intervention, but intervention is always based on ignorance, if not distortion, of local conditions. As a result, human lives that are sacrificed for the sake of world governance are not present in the rhetoric of globalization. Hunches that hint at the significance of human death are rejected in favor of the celebration of individual agency that overthrows the so-called dictatorship and allows the desired cultural uniqueness to win recognition.

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<sup>42</sup>Such as India in relation to Pakistan or Taiwan to China.



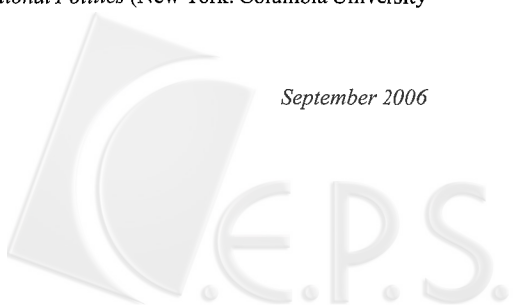
### Counter-Methodologies on Democratic Death

So far, this paper has attempted to take Locke seriously for the instrumental purpose of demonstrating that there is a possibility of fish in IR. This can provide meanings for the deaths of human beings suffering the Hobbesian state of anarchy. The room for this possibility shrinks fast under Wendt's able reinterpretation and application of the Lockean state of nature to the level of the sovereign state. Wendt is capable of performing conceptual manipulation not least because he has an ontological imagination of himself as a theoretician unrelated to the world he studies. While he realizes that states and the interstate system are mutually constituted, and ontologically states are mere constructions,<sup>43</sup> he needs a further step to discern the mutual constitution of a theoretician and others, whose behaviors are theorized. Ontologically theoreticians' observing positions are undecidable. The ontological separation of the theoretician from those under study is key to Mencius' reduced opportunity to choose fish in the future. What Wendt does to Locke, namely, locking the latter into interstate relations, is just like the argument that fish is no more than bear's paws in disguise, so that Mencius was actually torn between two different tastes of bear's paws. We need a methodology to allow Wendt to read from Mencius' mind in order to save Mencius' fish.

The methodology is counter-methodology. If methodology enables a theoretician to develop a perspective on those under study, counter-methodology enables those being studied to develop a perspective on the theoretician. Both methodology and counter-methodology are for the use of the theoretician. To use methodology is to study those under study from an ontologically un-problematized position. When one uses counter-methodology, one simulates the life experiences of those under study and thus is able to problematize one's own life experiences. The use of methodology assumes the separation of the theoretician from those under

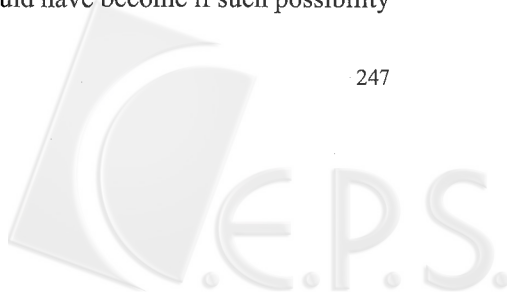
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<sup>43</sup>Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999).



study while the use of counter-methodology implies the mutual constitution of the theoretician and the studied. In short, in terms of research purpose, counter-methodology is for self-study. It allows one to study how one's self-understanding depends or could depend on the perspectives taken by those under study. Counter-methodology requires an epistemological shift which puts the theoretician into the shoes of the studied. Accordingly, if Mencius said that the choice of fish was alluring to him, the theoretician must take fish seriously. To turn down the possibility of fish by providing structural explanations of why bear's paws must be chosen, one kills fish, Mencius, and consequently the theoretician, who could no longer be seen from the whole of Mencius' perspective, the fish part of which is killed. As a result, the theoretician would be locked into "bear's paw complex" and lose agency to switch to alternative decision contexts. As time progresses, fish disappears ontologically.

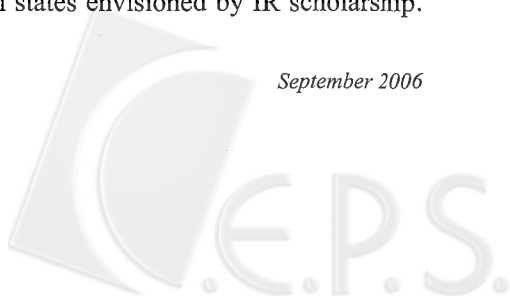
Counter-methodology forces a theoretician to look at his/her own being through the eyes of those whom he/she studies. The ontological death of the studied implies the ontological death of the theoretician in the sense that mutual learning relations between the two sides are terminated. This also results in the end of the possibility of shifting identities between the two. Henceforth, the theoretician can no longer be the same person as before the "death." This is not simply a philosophical point, but also an empirical one. Take the invasion of Iraq as an example. The Republican Guard, seen as the most formidable defenders of the country, simply collapsed. U.S. Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld might feel that this was the result of his military plan working well. What if the choice of the Republican Guard had been to fight on? Rumsfeld can only argue that, from hindsight, this would not have been possible. He could not have argued that if the Guard persisted, he as a military strategist would not be affected both in terms of his understanding of the art of war and his evaluation of Iraq as a state. During the moment of war, his meaningful life was composed of his war scholarship and hatred toward Iraq. Rumsfeld would benefit from counter-methodology if he could find out how fighting, instead of running away, was still a possibility from his enemy's point of view, and how different a person he would have become if such possibility



was executed. In other words, how Rumsfeld is a theoretician about interstate war is contingent upon how the Guard perceives the meaning of their own life, or death.

The ontological approach to death, which is the core of counter-methodology concerning war scholarship, treats death as a choice of the ontological form of existence. Ontological death is democratic death because it allows those who choose death to determine the meaning of death. In turn, they determine the meaning of life to those who study their choice of death, not vice versa. The September 11 attackers executed a quintessential choice of death. No matter how culpable the attack was from the humanist standpoint, it involved conscious choice on the attackers' part. To begin with, the September 11 attackers utilized the infrastructure of globalization to make a statement of representation about who they were. They refused to stay within borders that were represented by exotic symbols to be consumed. They effectively renegotiated their identity at an analytical level that has no appropriate name in IR scholarship, such as state, international system, or class. The scholarship on globalization, be it welcoming the emergence of glocalization, celebrating the rise of human agency, or condemning the brutality of multinational firms, must reconsider the validity of any given universal standpoint.

Those Republican Guard members who chose not to die pose a different threat to IR scholarship. The myths about the bravery and loyalty of the Guard were proved to be inaccurate. Their service is not necessarily owed to the state. It could well be the case that they continued to act loyally to Saddam Hussein, their religious cause, or the feeling of resistance. The contrast between their escape and their legendary fighting spirit was particularly confusing, especially in the light of the spread of unconventional suicide attacks among female and adolescent bombers elsewhere. However, if the Guard had never wanted to fight the way the United States wanted, would this not suggest that anarchy, which is indexed by war in IR scholarship, is a unilaterally imposed game, and not a product of international interaction? Saddam and his Guard were not playing the game that the United States thought they were. The resistance which came afterwards was not the war between states envisioned by IR scholarship.



Anarchy, after all, is an Anglo-American academic game exported. The shying away from anarchy is by no means a simple sign of fear. It should not imply that none of the Guard members wanted to die for the Iraqi state during the invasion, or that none would join the jihad against the United States by sacrificing their lives when the time was right.

In other words, the collapse of the Guard involved a choice. There were other choices; these are choices one would not appreciate without living through the ambivalence of the moment. Just like the September 11 attackers, many Guard members could still be seeking opportunities to make their statement at a level unknown to IR scholarship, at the cost of their lives. Another issue even more challenging to IR scholarship is the possibility that those potential bombers might not notice their willingness to sacrifice themselves until the moment that calls their conscience into question. In short, the possibility of other choices does not reside in a constant state of alert, but lies in historical and social meanings to be picked up at any given moment upon hunches. Without some kind of counter-methodology, a theoretician's sense of control of the knowledge of the world is locked by the self-fulfilling prophesy of anarchy.

The Republican Guard was not the only actor refusing to choose death over American dominance. Thousands of Iraqi people came out on the streets to watch the Allied troops. It is apparent that they did not want to die, either. Yet, it may be far-fetched to suggest that they welcomed the unfamiliar American democracy. There is no Lockean state of nature in Iraq, thus the termination of the Saddam Hussein regime helped little in formulating an "American" democracy. This only became clear a couple of months after the end of the war, when it became obvious that the American occupation troops could not even maintain minimal civil order. Iraqis participated unknowingly in the reconstruction of American self-perception by defying the American expectation of what is "normal."<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup>Islam is not simply anti-Christian, nor is it in cooperation with Confucianism or self-consistent. See Jeremy Black, "Islam and the West: A Historical Perspective," *Watch on the West* 4, no. 2 (Philadelphia: Foreign Policy Research Institute, May 2003), at <http://www.fpri.org/>.



Suicide bombers all over the world contrast sharply with the surrendering Iraqis looting goods. All these make the distinction of Hobbesian anarchy and Lockean rationality increasingly irrelevant as a reference point for the so-called Iraqi state.

### **Hunch as Epistemology**

Death matters in peculiar ways from the point of view of those being studied. There is no definite answer as to how death matters to them because, just like any theoretician, a person who belongs to the state under research has acquired more than one stream of worldviews that could provide sufficient hints for decision-making. This supposedly allows a person to avoid death when it appears to be meaningless, but accept or even pursue death when doing so gives meaning to life. Soldiers drafted into the Republican Guard might feel death to be meaningless when their top leaders are not devoted to jihad against the imperialist invasion. Their leaders might have been torn between divergent self-knowledge. However, hunches that affect a decision should not simply be explained from an external, structural point of view. Hunches of a different kind may very well point to an alternative path of thinking. They might even give the same set of internal and external clues, because hunches are undecidable.

A theoretician can correctly predict the state actor's behavior not only because the method used is empirically well tested, but also because those acting in the name of the state subscribe to the same method of thinking. Accordingly, when realist scholars correctly predict the irrelevance of human death in Bush's decision, this must also be because Bush adopts the realist thinking, instead of the Kantian thinking. However, state-level analysis has dominated IR scholarship for such a long time, to the point that people tend not to attend to other modes of approaches equally familiar to theoreticians in their daily life. One can never be certain whether hunches might affect Rumsfeld's policy and his view on human death caused by his policy. At least theoretically, a theoretician has the responsibility to preserve this possibility epistemologically so that when



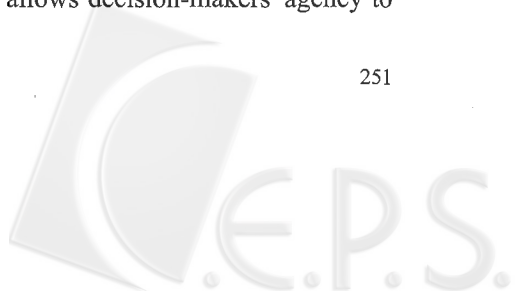


somehow, someday, Rumsfeld switches to a different decision context, his new approach can be considered a source of knowledge concerning state behavior, not disregarded as nonexistent.

Death will be taken more seriously in IR when theoreticians realize that a decision context no longer automatically constrains. One must learn to enlist a decision context; there is no effective system in the human world where a grown adult only possesses one decision context. It is interesting how and why one decision context becomes more relevant than others, and why and how other decision contexts cannot be ruled out completely. Counter-methodology allows a theoretician to reconsider the attitude toward death because, for those under study, death means different things, depending on which decision context is incurred. This helps a theoretician to develop a view of the self: this allows them to appreciate the kind of knowledge that does not claim total epistemological control over those under study. Accordingly, theoreticians would develop agency to recall those decision contexts previously killed by their explanation of the Other's behavior. When all theoreticians acknowledge that undecidable hunches are a built-in element in the imperfect human world, they will know when death matters in IR and when it does not.

The practical question remains not why hunch matters but also how. For statist, realist statist in particular, since a structure cannot die in the human death sense, nor does it think, it would have no undecidable perspective on death that could enable the realists to engage in self-reflection. Exactly because they regard international relations as a materialistic structure, they need a map to connect realism with the human world. Even a liberal, who could agree that there are human perspectives involved, does not have to agree with the counter-methodology, because the liberal needs no reflection from the point of various alternatives to liberalism that the counter-methodology implies. To open up room in the academic world for democratic death to be appreciated requires an epistemological bridge between statist international relations and postcolonial international relations. The task is twofold.

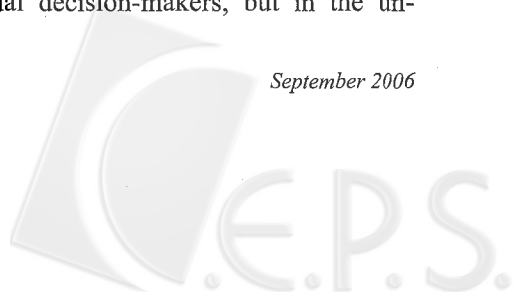
On the one hand, the issue is to recognize decision-makers' hunch. Wendt does that to some extent, as he allows decision-makers' agency to



play a role in moving their state toward the Kantian order. However, his range of choice is too limited as the choice is exclusively between Hobbesian, Lockean, and Kantian orders and is irrevocably teleological. One may easily add a few other orders such as Chinese under-heaven, Japanese Shinto, Islamic Jihad, or Indian Yoga, among others. Wendt's notion of intersubjectivity is useful nonetheless. While he is interested in intersubjective interaction between states that leads to entry into, and subsequent reproduction of, a higher order, an expanded use of intersubjectivity should also include intersubjective interaction between members of the same state, schools of thought of the same historical context, and, most importantly, hybrid cultural components of the same individual mind.

This way, intersubjectivity and hybridity become two compatible concepts in the sense that a state, a group of decision-makers as well as any individual decision-maker, can have more than one identity. The intersubjective accord achieved between any two states is never permanent or certain since the accord is simultaneously contingent upon the intersubjective interactions below the level of the state. Adding indigenous worldviews to the three provided by Wendt does justice to the identity formation of most postcolonial societies. Hunch at the state level records the hunch at lower levels so that the worldview that guides the decision-makers acting in the name of the state at any particular moment is not exclusively the product of interstate interaction, although the interstate intersubjectivity certainly has an impact on subsequent choices of the decision-makers.

This model of multi-level intersubjectivity and multiple subjectivities suggests how value-oriented decision-makers imbedded in postcolonial (or globalizational) hybridity are intrinsic to the reproduction of the current order or the departure from a given order. In the same vein, this model permits communication, between two states, two decision-makers, or two identities of the same decision-maker, to be consequential since persuasion may either inject new perspective or enlist a latent alternative. Most important is this model's welcoming of intersubjective interaction whose relevance is not structurally determined, nor irrevocable, nor perfectly predictable, nor teleologically fixed. The complexity does not rest in the hybrid components of the individual decision-makers, but in the un-



decidable hunch that may shift them from one context to another, hence the possibility of breaking away from a seemingly familiar path or an ostensibly hegemonic norm.

On the other hand, the issue is at the same time about the intersubjective interaction between decision-makers and the theoreticians. This arena of interaction additionally involves sub-intersubjective interaction between theoreticians of different schools. By tracing the hybrid components of a postcolonial decision-maker, a theoretician can accordingly develop his or her own hybrid worldviews. Traditional statist IR theories may refuse to acknowledge the undecidable nature of their subject in the beginning. However, statisticians in the age of postcolonialism and globalization are no longer isolated observers. They constantly interact with decision-makers whose choices they fail to predict, or with theoreticians who can present decision-makers in completely different rationales as well as morales. Despite the seeming rigidity of the statist paradigm, statisticians are acquiring the ability to shift away from statism. Their interaction with the human world has become so complex that they unknowingly breed the hunch that can lead to the acceptance of alternative modes of analysis during a future event.

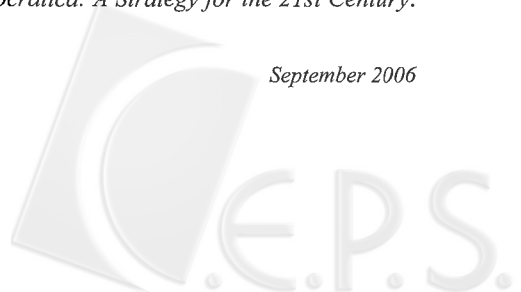
There is no expectation that such a hunch will be executed by all statisticians. The point is that they know that they have already had the larger, though partial, map in hand. Therefore, it has to be a matter of choice that they decide to stay with statism, not a matter of inevitability. Their awareness of the choice they have made is sufficient for the purpose of enlightenment because now killing would mean burning the map that connects the human world. And burning the map would mean self-imprisonment. At that point, death of any kind would mean the loss of choice and also the loss of identity.

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