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On learning from Wendt

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Alexander Wendt's *Social Theory of International Politics* is so impressive an achievement that it has a good chance to become a standard text of the mainline, American-oriented, professional International Relations literature. Composing what Morgenthau and Carr provided for my teachers, Morton Kaplan's *System and Process in International Politics* was for my peers, and Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics* (especially in Robert Keohane's reader, *Neorealism and its Critics*) has been for many North Americans a bit younger than myself, is a remarkable achievement. It suggests a disciplinary mode of review.

Some of Wendt's most important accomplishments are as follows. First, like Ashley, Ruggie, Buzan and Little, van Evera, Posen, Walt, Snyder and others, Wendt has taken the most widely taught standard text of his day, read and reread it carefully, and critically and constructively improved upon it. His cumulative theoretical reformulation deftly, and subsumptively, places Waltz within a rivalrous, Lockean, sociocultural rereading of anarchic system possibilities distinguishable from Hobbesian or Kantian rereadings. More generally, as this fine de-essentializing of anarchy's implications suggests, Wendt systematically 'sociologizes' IR's disciplinary self-understanding (beyond the positivistic, naturalistic, economistic presuppositions of some of its most prominent North American practitioners).

Moreover, he doesn't throw out the possibility of an internationally shareable, emancipatory, social science of International Relations with the positivistic bath water. Carefully grounding his social constructivist approach in an appealing, research-stimulating, post-Lakatosian, 'realist' philosophy of social inquiry, he suggestively transcends older inter-paradigm debates by ontologically contrasting (and combining) idealist constitutive determinations of changing meanings, identities and interests with more materialistic determinations. With his emancipatory empirical focus on historical, causal and processual conditions and possibilities for moving from Hobbesian to Lockean to Kantean cultures of international relations, he keeps alive for coming generations the hope of practically realizing in the next century, what this century has greatly sought, but failed adequately to achieve: a legitimate international order reinforcing violence-containing progress in world politics.

Given its potential for disciplinary renewal, my main focus here will be on how to learn from (and teach) Wendt. Taught as a standard text, *Social Theory* will still need pedagogical and methodological supplements, which might improve both learning from it and the fulfilment of its research-suggesting promise. I will suggest

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some challenges faced by potential Wendtian research programmes, as well as ways of contributing to them. In conclusion, I shall take a more sceptical, sociological look at the notion of a standard text and its associated research programmes, even if they are Wendtean.

Some pedagogical challenges

As part of his reformulation of Waltzean systems theory, 'since sociality is shared knowledge', Wendt substitutes 'an idealist view of structure as a "distribution of knowledge"' for Waltz's materialistic, economistic definition of international system structure 'as the distribution of material capabilities under anarchy'.[2] Wendt's sociological approach recognizes that it 'is possible to hold positions anywhere along [the materialist-idealist] continuum', but he observes a bipolar clustering of positions about the relative importance of the 'difference' ideas make, and the extent to which social structures are 'made of ideas'.[3] But when Wendt admits[4] that he doesn't 'see any other way to think about' the 'relationship between material forces and ideas' than the 'ultimately Cartesian' approach of separating 'the world into two kinds of stuff [ideas and matter]' he undermines his own, more sophisticated, argument.

The need to transcend Cartesian dualism

At the price of a certain increased complexity, one can improve upon Wendt's inconsistent recognition that his 'idealist-materialist' differentiation among the determining features of international politics is a continuum, a matter of degree. Unlike the influential methodological text by King, Keohane and Verba,[5] Wendt repeatedly cites John Searle's richly suggestive constructivist writings about language and social reality. But I think his future readers should be taught that Searle and his Berkeley colleague George Lakoff have gone a lot farther into contemporary neurophysiology and cognitive science than Wendt or King, Keohane and Verba have in transcending Cartesian ontology. As Searle himself says:

> [Above] I tacitly abandoned the traditional dualistic conception of the relation of mind and body in favor of the view that the mind is just a set of higher-level features of the brain, a set

[2] Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 20 and 16.

[3] Wendt, *Social Theory*, p. 23. He then and there lists five 'material factors' recurring in materialist discourse about Waltzean power polarities, etc: human nature, natural resources, geography, forces of production, and (most suggestively) forces of destruction. To describe either 'smart missiles' or human nature as 'material' rather than 'made of ideas' (or *vice versa*) is to miss the remarkable, embodied information-processing capacities of each, which are ontologically highlighted by Wendt's preferred 'realist' philosophies of inquiry.

[4] Wendt, *Social Theory*, p. 112.

[5] Gary King, Robert O. Keohane, Sydney Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry: Scientific Inference in Qualitative Research* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press).

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of features that are at once 'mental' and 'physical.' We will use the 'mental,' so construed, to show how 'culture' is constructed out of 'nature'.[6]

Rather than merely continuing a misformulated ontological debate about the relative importance of 'ideas' versus 'material forces or capabilities', I would strongly suggest additional work on its reformulation. Supplementary readings need to be chosen from more recent linguistic philosophy, evolutionary biochemistry, cognitive science, ethnomethodology, computational linguistics, and 'Complexity theory' on the ways neurons, brains, cognitions, languages, bodies, intentions, meaningful performances, social interactions and organizations are composed and how they individually and collectively inter-relate with each other and their environments.[7]

Complexity theorists with an hierarchical, evolutionary ontological bent, like Chomsky, von Neumann, Gell Mann, Kaufmann and Holland, may be seen as reformulating the ideas-matter continuum.[8] Knowledge of their 'new thinking' about ideas and living matter are likely to serve well those in the next generation who wish to transcend mind-body dichotomies. Typically, in such accounts, the ontologically higher levels of 'living being' depend more heavily on signalling, linguistically structured information processing, multi-agent message passing and social conversation (a somewhat more precise, measurable set of notions than 'ideas'). Hence, as both Aristotle, Chomsky, Simon and Wendt have argued, idealistic philosophies (and, I would add, their derivative methodologies) are more ontologically appropriate for the scientific study of meaningful human social interactions than 'materialistically' inspired methods deriving from seventeenth century Newtonian physics or early twentieth century statistics of physical random processes (which Wendt could describe as 'materialistic'). Wendt's many references to selection dynamics and the emergent properties of interactions among multiple, independent and adaptive agents show his fundamental sympathy with such ways of thinking. Future learners from Wendt would benefit, like Wendt himself, from such naturalistic scientific updatings.

[6] John Searle, *The Social Construction of Reality* (New York: The Free Press, 1995), p. 9; in the same book see also Searle's sophisticated treatment of institution-constituting rules in chs 4 and 5, and ch. 6 on 'Background Abilities and the Explanation of Social Phenomena'. Even more innovative is the post-Cartesianism of George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), which in a similar, micro-constructivist fashion links connectionist, neurophysiological science and cognitive linguistics to differently moralized political practices.

[7] Especially relevant citations to IR-oriented writings by Robert Axelrod, James Bennett, Lars Erik Cederman, Gavan Duffy, Joshua Epstein and others are contained in Alker, *Rediscoveries and Reformulations: Humanistic Methodologies for International Studies* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), Part I and ch. 12, as well as my 'On the Ontology of Peace and War,' a 1999 Santa Fe Institute Working Paper downloadable from http://www.santafe.edu/sfi. The journal *Complexity* and the Santa Fe Institute sponsored Addison-Wesley series of advanced textbooks are excellent, more general, and often more technical sources on complexity theory.

[8] Perhaps von Neumann will most be remembered not for his game theory, but as the Godfather of the 'artificial life/virtual reality' paradigm because of his constructive theorizing of the self-reproducing, self-organizing automata which are the most important entities in computational studies of artificial social life. Other authors sensitive to informational, biological and social ontological questions include Brian Cantwell Smith and many members of the research faculty at the Santa Fe Institute, as cited previously. Both older 'general systems theorists' and contemporary adaptive, multi-agent systems theorists of the Santa Fe Institute variety focus on the instrinsic structural properties of the self-organizing, enabling, powerful entities that are so important in Wendt's philosophical realism.

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Replace the war of IR 'schools' with mutually respecting educative dialogue

Wendt knows, respects, learns from, and argues rationally with neorealists, classical theorists, postmodernists and other philosophically sophisticated social constructivists. This model should be followed more generally.

Looking back to the world of my teachers, and the era of debates between 'scientific' and 'classical' approaches to International Relations, the same point about the benefits of 'continuing education' in the sciences, the humanities (plus feminist and postmodern criticisms of classical humanism) can be made. In particular, those with good Classical educations were familiar with Platonic and/or Aristotelean Great Chain of Being metaphysics;[9] but how many of them encouraged their students to discover within the contemporary natural sciences the many modern, scientifically grounded, richly suggestive ontological hierarchies of living and non-living forms of informational-material being deriving in part from such ideas?

On the 'scientific' side of such debates, there was too strong a tendency to substitute the learning of statistics, computer programming or game theory for the hermeneutic, internationally paradigmatic experience of learning another's language, including the different ways of life embedded in its discourses. How few of the statistically and mathematically inclined among us have learned to appreciate the twentieth century's linguistic revolution in philosophies of social inquiry, or have had the patience to come to appreciate the complex subtleties of conversational turntaking?

But there were great naturalistic social scientists in that day, too. Behavioural general systems theorists like Kenneth Boulding, Donald Campbell, Noam Chomsky, Karl Deutsch, Morton Kaplan, James G. Miller, Anatol Rapoport, Herbert Simon and John von Neumann often were aware of, and respectful toward, the Classical roots of their ideas, even though they often spoke the philosophical language of an earlier generation.[10] Like Aristotle, these creative, interdisciplinary scholars responded to their ontological sensitivities and to their continuing multidisciplinary education by inventing or adapting linguistically-sensitive theories, theoretical languages and methodologies ontologically appropriate for studying human behaviour. And, as one should expect, their ideas have also been scientifically challenged, particularly by evolutionary oriented cognitive theorists, in extremely suggestive, ways.

Will Wendt's book be read as exemplary, mutually educative dialogue? Today, educational interdisciplinarity of this sort seems to have suffered. We need a positive peace among IR schools of thought, not just an icey, disrespectful truce, a war of words in which students are unfamiliar with different orientations' aspirations, inspirations, rationales and accomplishments. Both 'classicists,' Waltzeans, 'postmodernists,' anti-Aristotelean 'Galileans' like King, Keohane and Verba, and (perhaps to a lesser extent) Wendtean constructivist social theorists are likely to be unaware of the scientifically powerful, methodological implications of the shift toward 'ideas' that Wendt's book signifies.

[9] See the discussion in ch. 2 of Alker, *Rediscoveries and Reformulations*.

[10] See especially the discussion in H. R. Alker, 'Bit Flows, Rewrites and Social Talk: Towards More Adequate Informational Ontologies', in M. Campanella (ed.), *Between Rationality and Cognition* (Turin: Meynier, 1988) and its cited sources.

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Use a variety of heuristic substitutions for 'ideas'

When Wendt mentions 'ideas' and meaning- or identity- or interest-constitutive relationships, I think what additional, linguistic- or idea-sensitive literatures would help with the operationalization of related research programmes. Wendt's pedagogical citations to symbolic interactionist sociology since Mead and Simmel, to the mapping of role expectations in the sense of Kalevi Holsti's and Stephen Walker's pioneering work, and to culturally-oriented discourse analysis in the manner of Jutta Weldes, Roy D'Andrade or David Sylvan are highly instructive, if incompletely illustrated in his own book. So is Rodney Hall's Kratochwil-inspired systematic historical mode of analysis and Nicholas Onuf's classical-modern constructivism, which Wendt repeatedly cites.[11]

The literature of the previous several paragraphs suggests multiple additional substitutes for Wendt's 'ideas': 'information' in the generative, Aristotelean sense; 'language (games or grammars)' as understood by Wittgenstein, Chomsky, or Lakoff; constitutive rules in Searle's Rawls-inspired discussion of the pragmatic rules embodied in performative speech acts; the quasi-genetic list-processing programmes or procedures in the (inter-) organizational theories of March and Simon, Robert Axelrod, James Bennett or Lars Erik Cederman.

Employ defensible microsociologies of macroconstructivist practices

If neorealism was temporarily served well by the heuristic suggestiveness of microeconomics, shouldn't Wendt's macro-sociologies of international politics do at least as well with microsociology, avoiding the Waltzean mistakes about levels, interactions and reductionism that he rightly deplores? My pragmatic, linguistic, ethnomethodological predilections point to alternative versions of Wendt's ideational socialization practices which I think could greatly enhance the capacities of his constructivistically inclined students to tackle the different cultural varieties of macropolitics, and the replicable quality of IR's best research products.

Meaningful behaviour, social action and interaction, culturally shaped practices and institutions are the ideational-material 'stuff' of International Relations. 'Idealists' like Wendt, Onuf, Kratochwil, and Katzenstein emphasize the role of ideas, norms, beliefs, values, contexts, interests and identities, all shaped and reshaped individually and collectively by what are known sociologically as 'socialization processes'; their interlocutors emphasize the importance of 'deeds', 'material contexts', and 'force'. As Wendt knows, these are all 'micro' components of what sociologists call social action, or contexted social practices. Many versions of qualitative microsociology are noted for their careful, detailed, 'minute' representation of various types of socializing word use and word play, of the multiple forms and moments intentionality, of social action, and institutional practices; but consensus on the relative value and replicability of different microsociologists does

[11] See the case studies in Rodney Hall, *National Collective Identity: Social Constructs and International Systems* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999) and V. Kubalkova, N.G. Onuf, P. Kowert (eds.), *International Relations in a Constructed World* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1998).

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not yet exist. Wendt's students need to learn how to improve upon this situation, how to do scientifically defensible and practically helpful case studies. *Social Theory* has some good 'application-oriented' footnotes, including those noting Wendt's own co-authored, more specific studies. But not much is said there on how to fill in the large, nearly empty, more or less grey, boxes of his three cultural ideal types of anarchic socialization practices.

In my own research experience, quite a few concepts from microsociology or social psychology have been shown to be representable with only modest distortions in Roger Schank and Robert Abelson's formalized pragmatics, their modelled, constitutive hierarchy of human and social goals, plans, themes, roles, scripts, and (most recently) Memory-Organization Packets. Their rigorous, replicable construction of such internationally-relevant 'things' from primitive vocabularies, grammatical word types, Latin-like case relationships, atomically meaningful phrases, and more complex meaning molecules still stands as a largely unknown, Mendelian progenitor of microconstructivism's scientific assault on macropolitics. This literature stimulated more than a decade of relatively recent work on artificial intelligence and international politics. In particular we were inspired by Abelson's associated, but slightly earlier (1973), multilevel reconstruction of the Cold War script widely used by conservative Americans to make sense of new events.[12]

Practically oriented discourse grammars (which Wendt briefly mentions) or what Rom Harré calls ethnomethodological 'role-rule' models have long inspired social psychologists of a variety of linguistically oriented, microconstructivist stripes, only some of which have been computationally oriented.[13] More systematic, computationally articulated approaches to phenomenologically-oriented conversation analysis also show great promise for International Relations.[14] If Wendt's ontological 'idealism' is to be taken seriously in the formation of new research programmes, it should be emphasized that the performative quality of speech acts—so important for Derridean postmodernists, Habermasian critical theorists, as well as Onuf and Kratochwil—finds its 'natural' formal expression in LISP's constructivist modelling

[12] See Valerie Hudson (ed.), *Artificial Intelligence and International Politics* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), all of whose contributors were influenced by Roger Schank and Robert Abelson's *Scripts, Plans, Goals and Understanding: An Inquiry into Human Knowledge Structures* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1977). My 'Polimetrics: Its Descriptive Foundations', in N. Polsby and F. Greenstein (eds.), *Handbook of Political Science* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1975), culminates in an application of Abelson's approach to making sense of New International Economic Order debates and policy preferences. Subsequently, Schank and Abelson's students developed programmes simulating various politicians' attachment of new senses to various pre-existing actions or objects, a process that Searle argues is the essence of the construction of new, and the reproduction of old, institutional realities. This early, rigorous, IR-focused, but often neglected, technically demanding literature is explicitly meaning- or identity- or policy-constitutive in Wendt's sense.

[13] Many social psychologists in the 1970s and 1980s found Rom Harré and Paul Secord's humanistic, ethnomethodologically motivated *The Explanation of Social Behavior* (Totawa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield, 1972), and Harré's subsequent books, highly suggestive of a socially constructivist philosophical realism that Wendt also finds richly developed by Roy Bhaskar (a Harré student) and Anthony Giddens.

[14] An exemplary, constructivist study of alternative possible threat interpretations and crisis developments in the Cuban Missile Crisis, built up from textually grounded typifications of agent-action conversational turn takings, is Thomas Schmalberger's *Dangerous Liaisons*, a 1998 Geneva Ph.D. dissertation and simulation downloadable from http://www-rcf.usc.edu/~thomass/index.html.

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conventions.[15] In ways that complement this computationally-oriented work, Searle's discussion of the explanatory causation attributable to the cultural, linguistic 'backgrounds' of intentional action and institutions also merits careful attention by systematically, linguistically inclined, social constructivists.[16]

Persuade causality seekers to take constitutive analysis seriously

While agreeing with those wishing further to differentiate for research training purposes among Wendt's 'ideas', I am very impressed by his *methodological* sense of the constraining role of 'materialistic' ontologies on neorealist and neoliberal theorists of international relations. When he says these and other scholars should be looking for 'constitutive', as well as causal, links to or from ideas, I agree. His independent judgments regularly fit, and help better articulate, my repeated experience in the North American context of scholars employing positive and negative research heuristics which sidelined or excluded the meaning/identity/action constitutive research approaches and operationalizations reviewed in the previous three paragraphs.

Specifically, as an illustration, consider Wendt's argument[17] (*contra* King, Keohane and Verba[18]), that 'there are significant *analytical* or *methodological* differences between causal and constitutive theorizing', brought on more by ontological than epistemological differences. Of course, '[n]ot all "interpretations" are equally valid', and therefore they are empirically comparable or testable. Moreover, the distinguishable *explanation* and *understanding* stories we have to tell (in the sense of Hollis and Smith), are both theoretically based, not reducible to 'description' or 'descriptive inference' versus 'causal inference'. Wendt's hypothesis, that King, Keohane and Verba (perhaps unequally) hold non-linguistic, non-ideational, naturalistic ontologies of social phenomena (and therefore related notions of their proper 'accounting'), powerfully accounts for the conscious decision of the authors of *Designing Social Inquiry*—despite my repeated urgings to the contrary long before the book was published—to avoid serious mention of any of the rigorous, qualitatively-oriented question sets, methodologies or representations surveyed so far in this article.

[15] On the special relevance of LISP, in the context of delineating the cultural repertoires of civilizations, see Alker, *Rediscoveries and Reformulations*, ch. 3. For accessible, but rigorous uses of LISP and speech act theory, see David Sylvan and Steven Majeski, 'A Methodology for the Study of Historical Counterfactuals', *International Studies Quarterly*, 42 (1998), pp. 79–108; Gavan Duffy, Brian Frederking, Seth Tucker, 'Language Games: Dialogical Analysis of INF Negotiations', *International Studies Quarterly*, 42 (1998); as well as Duffy's, Mallery's, Bennett's and Thorson's contributions in Hudson's *Artificial Intelligence and International Politics*.

[16] There is a remarkable overlap between Searle's explanation-relevant concept of 'background' abilities and the ontological, semantic and pragmatic presuppositions of Pierre Bourdieu, Schank and Abelson, and the narrative theorists reviewed in chapters 3–4, and 8–10 of Alker, *Rediscoveries and Reformulations*. For example, the discussion of 'life themes' on pp. 144–9 of Schank and Abelson richly suggests ways of operationalizing Wendtës thinking about identities as well as Amartya Sen's concept of 'life projects' in his famous discussion of 'rational fools'. My own, proto-Wendtian attempt to talk about historically changing states and inter-state cultural forms, ch. 5 of my *Rediscoveries and Reformulations* on 'the end of power politics', is also cast in Schank-Abelson terms.

[17] Wendt, *Social Theory*, pp. 85–8.

[18] King, Keohane and Verba, *Designing Social Inquiry*.

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The allergy involved—like the allergy of so many economically-inspired participants in the 'neo-neo-' debate to all or most forms of sociological international theorizing in the 1970s and 1980s—is clearly a deeply held one. In the case of such distinguished, intelligent, relatively open-minded scholar-authors, I refuse to reduce differences in their orientations to matters of ignorance, training, pride, or ideological blinkers.[19] Most constructively, Wendt's ontological-constitutive analysis really adds a lot to our understanding of the authors' orientations, the immense analytical and methodological popularity of the King, Keohane and Verba book in contemporary American political science, as well as that book's equally astounding omissions. Resistance to the required teaching of competing philosophies of social inquiry, *including but not limited to* the sort that Wendt and I cite, is almost as strong. Hiring and promoting priorities and practices regarding theoretical and methodological training positions in American Political Science Departments show similar biases.

Should we be content, for educational purposes, to stick with Wendt's treatment of the difference between constitutive and causal accounts? Asking how something has become ['recognized' for] what it is, surely differs from standard causal explanations. Fitting actions to some, but not other, orienting intentional patterns and intentions is surely meaning constitutive rather like D'Andrade's 'schema' fitting, Schank-Abelson 'script' fitting, and Searle's LISP-like constructivist focus on institution-building ways of 'treating X as Y (with new properties) in context C'. And Wendt helpfully distinguishes 'constitutive' relations from causal ones between X and Y on the basis that X and Y do not exist independently of each other, nor does X precede Y temporarily in the constitutive case.[20]

Wendt even provides a paradigm-changing answer to the seemingly perennial job talk questions: 'What is your dependent variable? What are your independent variables? Which came first, agents or structure?' by clearly explicating the view that 'agents are both independent of culture and dependent on it . . . agents and structure [can] be both 'mutually constituted' *and* [causally] 'co-determined'.[21] When will our job-filling professoriat be ready for such replies? Hopefully, regularly teaching Wendt might speed up the arrival of that time.

Actually, as the above supplements to Wendt's argument suggests, there already is a rich, but often more complicated literature on rearticulating the mix of constitutive and causal determinations or 'social causation' that this Wendt quotation suggests. Additionally, I find Hidemi Suganami's lucid discussions[22] of how narratives make something more intelligible than before by giving an account of how it came about, a Wendt-relevant, provocative attempt at synthetically transcending the Hollis-Smith-Wendt 'two stories account' of explanation and understanding. So is

[19] Personal dispositions and orientations are importantly prior to these influences, of course. The ideological distortions of the Cold War era—downgrading Marxian specialists on 'interpolation', Hegelian-Marxist 'internal relations', dialectical modes of inquiry, the constitutive role of social class *vis à vis* identities and interests, and sociology and social science more generally—should also be mentioned as of likely possible relevance.

[20] Wendt, *Social Theory*, p. 79ff.

[21] Wendt, *Social Theory*, p. 180ff.

[22] Hidemi Suganami, 'Agents, Structures, Narratives', Paper delivered at the September 1998 SGIR/ECPR-ISA conference, Vienna. Suganami also rejects the agent-structure dichotomy in favour of the multicultural classification of causative factors into mechanistic, volitional, and coincidental ones.

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the more systematic framework of 'causal complexes' comprised of five necessary elements of social being—historically constructed corporeal actors, meaningful, historically structured action, regulative and constitutive rules implicated in every action and the constitution of actors, resources as competences and skills, and relational/positioned practices—'realistically' articulated by Heikki Patomäki.[23] In my own recent work on conflict prevention, with help from Thomas Schmalberger, I have been following a simplified version of the Sylvan-Majeski-Schmalberger approach.[24]

Can we go beyond standard texts?

Stepping back from the very North American engagement of the above section—would many British scholars prescribe high tech representational aids for resolving ontological *cum* pedagogical problems?—I wish to make several additional comments. In the Dialectics of World Order project, Tahir Amin, Thomas Biersteker, Takashi Inoguchi and I have had repeated occasion to ask: which approaches to International Relations and International Systems travel well? What does the very unequal acceptability of IR approaches in different parts of the world signify? The attempt to build globally acceptable paradigms introduces hermeneutic considerations—like the value of explicitly Aristotelian roots for productive engagements with Chinese and Islamic scholars—that Wendt does not address.

Surely, for example, many British IR scholars—with their sophisticated analytical-philosophical training and their own social-historical tradition of analysing international society—will like Wendt's work, while wishing that it was more profoundly historical. More than most North Americans, but like their fellow Europeans, they will appreciate Wendt's serious, civil engagement with postmodernist scepticism, his willingness to take Richard Ashley's challenging contributions as constitutive (in part) of his own Social Theory project. My own European sensibilities agree with them.

But will the book do well and become a standard work in the non-Anglo-American world? The homogeneous, almost ahistorical universalism of his theorizing represents an hegemonic, American style that some scholars from former or aspiring hegemonic states can appreciate, but most others will not. Despite evidence of a collaborative application of his constructivist theories to Eastern Europe during the Soviet era, Wendt's state-centric security focus will be attacked by scholars from countries in East Asia, Russia, Africa and Latin America where regional orientations to security questions and problems of human security and state capacity building now predominate. Even though his Deutschean conditioning variables for the cultural-evolutionary development of a Kantian world order—interdependence, homogeneity, a common heritage, self-restraint—can be run backwards, in spatially segmented ways, to produce the different patterns of

[23] Heikki Patomäki, 'How to Tell Better Stories about World Politics', *European Journal of International Relations*, 2 (1996), pp. 105–133.

[24] Alker, Hayward R., Thomas Schmalberger, Andrew Blum, Anita Schjolset, 'Testable Understandings of Structured Histories', Paper presented at the International Studies Association, Washington, DC, February 1999.

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ethnically and religiously fragmented integration observable in the world today, his universalism will remain an acquired taste for many.

Given his purposes, Wendt's state-centric separation of the mode of destruction from economic actors, issues and processes can be defended. But it certainly will be attacked as well by those of us who have found that securitizing speech acts at the beginning of the new Millenium increasingly invoke comprehensive, human security agendas. And what about those of us who have found it useful to think ontologically in terms of contradictory, accomodating, interpenetrating and overlapping world-orders with multiple aspects not limited to the security domain? How to fit ecological challenges, ethnic and civilizational conflicts, transnational crime and terrorism, and the human insecurity of highly gendered refugee populations into Wendt's style of sociological thinking remains a big challenge.

Of course, just as Raymond Aron, Martin Wight, Vladimir Lenin, Robert Cox, and Immanuel Wallerstein provided alternative 'standard' texts for many in the American-dominated Cold War era of IR theorizing, the world may soon see an era when no standard text dominates the teaching of International Relations. I hope that era will come to pass, and that Wendt's book will then still be read as partly prophetic of the post-hegemonic world that has emerged.

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