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Untying the Sovereign State: A Double Reading of the Anarchy Problematique

Richard K. Ashley

Among theorists interested in problems of global collaboration and international order, the 'fact of anarchy' has long been understood as a foundational truth, a self-evident limit that virtually defines the compass of imaginable possibility. The theorist might recognise emerging problems of economy, ecology, equity, and security. He or she might recognise global imperatives for globally co-ordinated political responses. He or she might be interested, accordingly, in the political practices and the international institutional developments that might make possible collaborative global responses to transnationally experienced dilemmas. Yet, in general, the international theorist also recognises that global political collaboration, when and if it occurs, cannot be explained by reference to sheer imperatives for collaboration, no matter how urgent or widely perceived these imperatives might be. The greater the importance one attaches to international order, most theorists would say, the greater the need to respect the anarchic quality of international life, the absence of a central agency capable of effecting, administering, and enforcing rational global designs for order. How can there be governance *in the absence of a government*? How can order be constructed *in the absence of an orderer*? How can co-operation be facilitated *under a condition of anarchy*? The theorist knows that just these questions, with just these inflections, must be given pride of place in any serious inquiry into the problem of global collaboration.

These questions have a venerable lineage, but they have recently gained a special place and prominence, for they are echoed anew by what is no doubt one of the most influential of contemporary discourses in international theory: a discourse of the *the anarchy problematique*. This distinctive discourse is not well typified by pointing to individual scholars or to individual works.¹ It is better characterised by pointing to a tension that appears to animate it.

On the one hand, contributions to this discourse do not in general view national societies as materially self-sufficient units, each of which might effectively manage its own economy independent of the policies of other states. Quite the contrary, they take international economic and environmental interdependence to be an axiomatic condition of the post-war period — a condition that implies that states' best laid macroeconomic or environmental policies, charted independently and with an exclusive view to national interests, might prove mutually disabling rather than enabling.² Under such circumstances, co-operation would seem to be an imperative. On the other hand, contributions to this discourse presuppose a specific structuring of international political authority relations. They start from the premise that the world is to be understood not only in terms of the absence of a central agency of rule but also in terms of the presence of a multiplicity of states, each understood as a *sovereign* identity presiding over its respective national society and making decisions in the interests thereof. Such a structuring of political

Millennium

authority would seem to make competition, not co-operation, the most likely outcome. The tension, then, is plain, and the problem is clear: how, under a condition of anarchy, might lasting co-operation — policy co-ordination — become the norm? How might international regimes emerge and gain a relative autonomy *vis-à-vis* the immediate self-interests of individual states? How is it possible to establish lasting and reliably co-ordinated mutual expectations of state performance such that, from the vantage point of each, the shared expectations inscribed in regimes come to be regarded and valued as stable means of facilitating the co-ordination of action and, with it, the service of each state's self-interests under a condition of interdependence?³

My purpose in this essay is not to undertake a criticism of this discourse of the anarchy problematique — not, at least, in any mode of criticism that international theorists might find familiar. I do not pose the questions of this discourse's coherence or parsimony, its descriptive accuracy or empirical fit. I do not condemn it for undue abstraction, intimidating jargon, or lack of policy relevance. I do not question the intentions, the values, or the class affinities of theorists who contribute to it. And I do not seek to undertake an emancipatory critique that would expose this discourse as an ideology masking a more fundamental political truth, a repressive order. I do not, in short, impose a standard and pass a judgment.

I want, instead, to analyse this discourse with an eye to two questions. First, I want to ask *how* it works, *how* it gains significance in our culture, *how* it comes to be recognised as a powerful representation of a predicament so compelling and so self-evident that it seems to command attention. Second, I want to ask *how*, in the course of its development, this discourse has exposed its own rhetorical strategies and undermined the very foundations of the perspective it asserts, thereby opening up potentially productive avenues of inquiry hitherto closed off by it.

My rationale for this undertaking is simple enough. Theoretical discourse on the anarchy problematique is a theoretical discourse, true. But as a theoretical discourse, it does not stand outside of modern global life, as if at some Archimedean point, and its workings do not involve a language or an interpretive orientation that is alien to the knowledgeable practices at work in modern culture. Rather, my premise is that the self-evidence of this discourse's representations of the anarchy problematique is attributable to its readiness to replicate, without questioning, the interpretive dispositions and practical orientations that are, in fact, at work in modern culture and productive of the modes of subjectivity, objectivity, and conduct prevailing therein. Its representations are powerful because they replicate on the plane of theory some of the most effective interpretive dispositions and practical orientations by which women and men, statesmen and entrepreneurs go about their business, interpret ambiguous circumstances, impose meaning, discipline and exclude resistant interpretations, and participate in the construction of the conditions, limits, dilemmas, and prevailing ways of knowing and doing that we take to be the familiar truths of global life.

From this premise, I draw an inference. By carefully analysing the *workings* of theoretical discourse on the anarchy problematique — the knowledgeable practices by which it controls ambiguity and disciplines the proliferation of meaning — we may gain some insight into how the predicament it portrays and takes to be foundational is actively *produced* in history and through practice. By showing how,

on the plane of theory, these knowledgeable practices might be exposed as arbitrary and rhetorical rather than unproblematic, we may catch a glimpse of how in history the anarchy problematique might come to be understood, not as a necessary condition that the 'realistic' conduct of politics must take to be beyond question, but as an arbitrary political construction that is always in the process of being imposed. We may begin to see how these practices of imposition might be resisted so that the limits of the anarchy problematique might be transgressed. Explorations of new practices — and, with them, new modes of global political seeing, saying, and being — might thereby become possible.

Some Preliminaries

With this as my rationale, I shall analyse theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique, and the result of that analysis is an argument of sorts. Since the argument will take time to develop, let me offer a preview, attending to each of my two questions in turn. Along the way, I shall take the opportunity to introduce some key constructs — the notion of 'heroic practice' is one, and the notions of 'monological' and 'dialogical' readings are others — that will figure prominently in the more detailed presentation of my analysis to follow.

To the question of how theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique works — how it gains significance and is taken seriously as a powerful statement of a self-evident predicament — I offer a twofold reply. First, theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique obscures from view, and assumes already to be solved, the better part of the problem it purports to state: the problem of order in the absence of an orderer. One might readily stipulate that world politics is correctly characterised in terms of the *absence* of a central agency of rule visibly engaged in the issuing of commands and the enforcing of order. But the other part of this discourse's foundational premise — that the structure of world political authority may be understood to consist of a number of states and domestic societies, each an identical sovereign *presence*, already given — is problematical at best. The issue is not the truth or falsehood of assumptions. The issue is a practical matter, intimately and always a part of the problem of order in modern global life. How, amidst all the ambiguities and contingencies of a diverse global history, are actions co-ordinated, energies concerted, resistances tamed, and boundaries of conduct imposed such that it becomes possible and sensible simply to represent a multiplicity of domestic societies, each understood as a coherent identity subordinate to the gaze of a single interpretive centre, a sovereign state? This is a perennial problem of modern global politics. It is one that is always in the *process* of 'solution', perhaps, but never can one say that the process is complete, that a solution has been found, that resistances have been totally quieted, and that states now simply *are*. Yet this is precisely what theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique does say. Indeed, this is its originary claim, its foundational claim, the claim that must not be questioned if anything else it says is to be taken seriously.

Second, theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique can make this foundational claim because it appeals to, replicates, and productively deploys a knowledgeable practice that is at once pervasive and extremely effective in the disciplining of knowing and doing in modern culture. For reasons discussed

Millennium

elsewhere,⁴ I call this the 'heroic practice'. A brief introduction of this notion is due.

The heroic practice is as simple as it is productive. It turns on a simple hierarchical opposition: a dichotomy of *sovereignty* versus *anarchy*, where the former term is privileged as a higher reality, a regulative ideal, and the latter term is understood only in a derivative and negative way, as a failure to live up to this ideal and as something that endangers this ideal. On the one hand, the sign of 'sovereignty' betokens a rational identity: a homogeneous and continuous presence that is hierarchically ordered, that has a unique centre of decision presiding over a coherent 'self', and that is demarcated from, and in opposition to, an external domain of difference and change that resists assimilation to its identical being. On the other hand, the sign of 'anarchy' betokens this residual external domain: an aleatory domain characterised by difference and discontinuity, contingency and ambiguity, that can be known only for its lack of the coherent truth and meaning expressed by a sovereign presence. 'Anarchy' signifies a problematic domain yet to be brought under the controlling influence of a sovereign centre. Disciplined by this heroic practice, modern discourses of politics, upon encountering ambiguous and indeterminate circumstances, are disposed to recur to the ideal of a sovereign presence, whether it be an individual actor, a group, a class, or a political community. They are disposed to invoke one or another sovereign presence as an originary voice, a foundational source of truth and meaning. They are disposed to invoke a sovereign presence as a principle of interpretation that makes it possible to discipline the understanding of ambiguous events and impose a distinction: a distinction between what can be represented as rational and meaningful (because it can be assimilated to a sovereign principle of interpretation) and what must count as external, dangerous, and anarchic (because it has yet to be brought under the control of the sovereign principle invoked). In modern discourses of politics, importantly, only those contributions that replicate this interpretive attitude and invoke a sovereign voice as an absolute ground can be taken seriously; other contributions, less certain of their foundations and more ambiguous therefore, are themselves made objects of this heroic practice. They are either to be assimilated to a sovereign voice or, failing that, regarded under the sign of a dangerous anarchy, as a problem to be solved.

The second aspect of my reply to the question of how theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique works, then, is that it summons forth and replicates precisely the knowledgeable practice that participants in modern culture are disposed to take seriously and never question: the heroic practice. Looking upon global politics, participants in this discourse observe the absence of an arching sovereign presence capable of imposing a unique and coherent rational narrative of order. But upon observing this, they do not privilege the play of ambiguity, contingency, chance, and open-ended eventuation in their interpretations of global political possibilities. Were they to do that, they would have to acknowledge what, in modern discourse, cannot be acknowledged: that their discourse lacks some foundational principle in terms of which it is possible to discriminate the normal, the rational, and the necessary from the arbitrary and the dangerous events that must be brought under rational control. And so, calling upon the heroic practice, they do what must be done if modern discourse is here to proceed: they 'find' a

sovereign presence that must itself be immunised from reasoned criticism because it must be taken to be the principle of reasoning discourse in itself. They 'find' the *sovereign* state. Despite the fact that the state is an intrinsically contested, always ambiguous, never completed construct — a construct that is itself always in the process of being imposed in the face of never-quieted resistances — theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique must 'find' the state to be a pure presence already in place, an unproblematic rational presence already there, a sovereign identity that is the self-sufficient source of international history's meaning.

Together, the two sides of my reply to the first question suggest what I take to be an important proposition. Theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique exemplifies a paradox that is chronically produced and never escaped in modern theory and practice of international organisation. While the hallmark of those theories and practices called 'modern' is no doubt the celebration of the power of critical reason to demystify and explode arbitrary ideological limits imposed in history, the theory and practice of international organisation in the context of modern culture is dependent upon the imposition of an arbitrary ideological limit whose critical questioning is disallowed. Such a limit is not necessary in any absolute sense, to be sure. Its 'necessity' is contingent upon the presupposition that all discourse, to be counted as valid, must honour the historically specific interpretive attitudes and procedures in circulation in modern culture — the heroic practice above all. But once one accedes to the disciplines of modern culture — once one supposes that the heroic practice is indispensable to serious discourse — one knows that one must impose an arbitrary limit on the exercise of reason. That limit, one knows, is imposed through the specific historical fixing of a principle of sovereignty — viewed as an unquestioned and unquestionable foundation of critical inquiry — to one or another arbitrary historical interpretation of rational *being*. In theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique, the principle of sovereignty is affixed to an interpretation of the state and domestic society. The state, with its associated domestic society as a well-bounded ground, becomes *the* indispensable ideological principle. Paradoxically, the state becomes the 'pure source' whose impurity everyone knows, the independent 'origin' that never exists outside its representations, the embarrassing contingency that must be counted as 'necessary' because without it the heroic practice simply could not be done.

In order to answer the second of my two questions — the question of how this discourse might undermine its own 'foundations' and expose new ways of thinking and practising global politics — I shall pursue a specific strategy of analysis, a strategy of 'double reading', that will dictate the organisation of the presentation to follow. I shall read and analyse theoretical discourse on the anarchy problematique not once but twice. My first reading, which informs my answer to the first question, can be said to follow the interpretive model of the 'monologue'; my second reading makes possible an answer to the second question by following the model of the 'dialogue'.⁵ In their structuring, as we shall see, both the monological and the dialogical readings involve a play on the heroic practice's dichotomy of 'sovereignty' versus 'anarchy'.

The interpretive model of the *monologue* mimics the heroic practice that prevails in modern discourse and that is replicated in theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique. In the reading of a text or discourse, the model of the monologue

Millennium

gives pride of place to a supposed sovereign voice from which emanates a stream of statements about the world and which, therefore, is taken to be the fixed and determinate origin of what is rational and meaningful in the representations offered by a text or discourse. The model of the monologue thus orients a reader to bring interpretation to rest with the recovery of this self-identical and totalising sovereign voice, thus to determine indubitably what may be counted as the meaning of the text and what, by contrast, is extraneous, accidental, unintended, or 'anarchic'. Such a model might allow that this controlling sovereign presence is fixed psychologically, in the cognitive structures of individual authors; experientially, in the supposedly natural structures of the referent world which a text or discourse tries ever more closely to approximate in its representations; or socially and linguistically, in the 'deep structure' of an internally coherent code or grammar which provides the condition of intelligibility of any contribution to a discourse. What matters more than anything else is that this sovereign voice — this totalising source of meaning — is understood to be fixed and originary, having an existence prior to and independent of the representations apparent on the very surface of a text or discourse.

As presented in the next section, my first reading of theoretical discourse on the anarchy problematique will obey this monological model of interpretation. I shall treat this discourse as a well-bounded text that exhibits a 'hard core' unity in its representational claims, and I shall not take seriously its ambiguous, dynamic, and contingent connections to an array of 'marginal' themes. In seeking to disclose the sovereign presence which generates and provides the principle of unity of its hard core representations, I shall look to the heroic practice itself — regarding it not as a practice in its own right but as a kind of 'deep structure', an autonomous code, a fixed generative principle. The heroic practice, I shall say, is in itself the foundational presence to which this discourse endlessly returns, the totalising principle from which everything meaningful in this discourse originates. As in my answer to the first question, I shall say that it is the very source — the condition of possibility — without which this discourse's representations of the anarchy problematique could not be accorded their power of self-evidence.

Reading theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique in this way leads to an accentuation of its supposed boundaries, coherence, and purity of purpose at the expense of its historicity, its vitality, its dependence upon the arbitrary play of knowledgeable practices in its relations to the other 'texts' of a pluralistic culture. But it also does something more. By reading this discourse according to the interpretive model of the monologue, I shall myself be deploying the heroic practice to structure my reading, and I shall, accordingly, be subordinating this discourse's ambiguity and indeterminacy (its 'anarchy') to the search for some sovereign presence, some prior foundational source of meaning and power that exists independent of politics in history. And I shall end up by 'finding' that source in precisely the heroic practice that I, as a reader, have brought to bear. This heroic practice, I shall then affirm, is something necessary, fixed, and original — the deep, autonomous, and identical source from which derives the totality of what matters in this discourse.

The result, as we shall see, is to set up a dilemma, an unhappy 'either/or' choice with respect to the discourse so read. I shall caption this dilemma the *blackmail of*

the heroic practice. Having accorded the heroic practice the status of a deep and originary structure that generates a discourse's powerful representations, the monological reader is left *either* to enter the enclosure of a discourse and honour its powerful representations of a problematique *or* to stand aloof, repudiate these powerful representations, and initiate a counter-discourse that would promise to portray a different order of things. As I shall suggest, the options are far from rich in possibilities. The former amounts to a capitulation to the power of a discourse's representations, and the latter amounts to a dream that the deep structure of the heroic practice might be put to work in a different way, might find its sovereign presence in a different historical figure, and might give rise to a totally new and different construction of the world. The very poverty of the options should, however, tell us something. To undertake a monological reading — to impose the heroic practice in the interpretation of any historical field of practice — is to guarantee the affirmation of the time-honoured dichotomy of 'realism' versus 'idealism' by which internationalist discourse has long been disciplined.

The interpretive model of the *dialogue* does not affirm this dichotomy because it does not mimic the heroic practice. It instead inverts the sovereignty/anarchy dichotomy, now privileging the latter over the former. According to the model of the dialogue, a discourse or text does not emanate from a unique, autonomous, and rational source — some fixed authorial personality, some already given referent reality, or some autonomous 'deep structure' — which produces its meaning in a cultural void. A discourse or text is instead to be comprehended as an 'intertext' that penetrates and is penetrated by other texts in the cultural universe within which it moves and takes on meaning.⁶ It follows, according to the model of the dialogue, that the supposed fixity and 'deep structuring' of a sovereign presence, and the resultant 'hard core' homogeneity and continuity of meaning ascribed to a text, is always to be grasped as a problematical historical effect. A text's meanings and limits are ceaselessly dependent upon never finished processes of intertextual production — practices of interpretation and inscription involving the enframing and opening of contexts — that at once connect each text to and differentiate each from the other texts of a culture. The reader guided by the model of the dialogue will thus be disposed to explore how practices involved in the production of a text or discourse move to absorb and destroy, affirm and negate, anticipate and answer an innumerable variety of alien texts in an ambiguous, indeterminate, and productive dialogue. She will explore how these practices work to determine or put in question what a text or discourse is, what its 'deep' and sovereign source may be taken to be, what its boundaries may be taken to be, what it may be taken to mean, and what powers can be ascribed to it in history.

In contrast to the monological model, then, the dialogical model does not ratify stasis and closure: the necessity of an endless return to an origin, a 'deep structure', a rational sovereign voice of which all surface representations are merely elaborations. A dialogical reading instead starts from the premise that the continuity and stasis of a sovereign source of a discourse's meaning and power, when and if it occurs, is always a problematical effect that needs to be accounted for in terms of the working of discursive practices in history. There are simply no guarantees, the reader knows, that these practices will succeed in effecting the self-evidence of the sovereign principle of interpretation and practice around which a

Millennium

text or discourse might be structured. Amidst the hazards and ambiguities of a polyvocal historical dialogue, practices can misfire. 'Problemshifts' intended to answer competing claims by establishing a 'protective belt of auxiliary hypotheses' can have unintended consequences.⁷ They can expose a text or discourse to demonstrations that what is put forth as ultimate, originary, and self-evident is itself an hypothesis fabricated in history, arbitrarily imposed through practice encountering resistances, and succeeding only to the extent that all manner of resistant ways of knowing and doing can be silenced. Put positively, contributions to a discourse that might be meant to effect closure and stasis around a sovereign voice of a monologue can make possible new openings to the dialogical movement of history.

So it is with my second reading of theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique, as presented in the section after next. This second reading is not as elaborate as it might be. For although it is dialogical in orientation, and although it aspires to take seriously the vitality and movement of a discourse in history, the reading is confined in its focus to but one of numerous theoretical turns or problemshifts.⁸ This is the turn by which theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique has sought to incorporate 'nonstate actors'. As I shall indicate, this turn has no doubt been taken in answer to specific anomalies or conflicts of interpretation perceptible from the standpoint of the state-as-sovereign-presence which (according to the first reading) this discourse represents as part of its hard core. As I shall also indicate, this turn involves a specific analogical redeployment of the heroic practice, and it contributes to a considerably enriched depiction of the political predicament of modern global politics. In these respects, the turn to nonstate actors might be taken to affirm the necessity, continuity, and effectiveness of the heroic practice as a 'deep structure' of a monological discourse.

However, it will be the burden of my second reading to suggest quite a different result: the turn to nonstate actors renders radically unstable any attempt to represent a historical figure — the state or any other — as a pure presence, a sovereign identity that might be a coherent source of meaning and an agency of the power of reason in international history. Theorists of the anarchy problematique, like all theorists participating in modern culture, might continue to long for a pure representation of a sovereign being which could provide their necessary ground, the pivot upon which heroic practices in international politics might turn. But once nonstate actors are introduced into their discourse and taken seriously, every attempt to represent such a being is immediately undone. It is no longer possible even ideologically to represent a coherent sovereign presence, an identical source of meaning and power.

What results from this sort of reading, as we shall see, is not a destruction of a discourse but a 'deconstruction': an opening to new possibilities where formerly there was only the pretense of closure.⁹ No longer does one stand before this discourse as a victim of a blackmail of the heroic practice. One no longer has to choose either (1) realistically to honour those powerful historical figurations, such as states, that a discourse might effectively claim to embody the ideal of sovereignty or (2) idealistically to repudiate those figurations in the hope that an alternative discourse might erect an alternative sovereign presence. Alternative possibilities begin to present themselves.

In the conclusion, I shall briefly suggest that what has happened in this discourse — the turns it has made and the openings it has now made possible — should not be pooh-poohed as idle meanderings of intellectual conversation, of interest to academics but no one else. On the contrary, I shall risk the conjecture that in the turns, paradoxes, and openings of this theoretical discourse we can find the traces of a crisis in the practices of modern culture, including the practices by which relations of authority are represented and fixed in modern global life. I am, however, a long way from the conclusion. It is time to initiate a strategy of double reading.

A Monological Reading: The Enclosure of a Discourse

As promised, my first reading is oriented to supply an answer to the first of two questions: how is one to account for the significance and power of this discourse's representations of a global predicament? As also promised, my first reading of theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique conforms to the interpretive model of the monologue. It proceeds from its surface representations in search of the 'deep' sovereign presence that structures its representations and supplies the conditions of their significance in modern culture. In my monological reading of the discourse of the anarchy problematique, therefore, I shall begin with the text and its representations. What is this work that we read? How can its *hard core* representations of international politics be described?

A Description of a Discourse: The Theoretical Hard Core

In speaking of theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique I mean to call to mind that theoretical discourse that is self-consciously preoccupied with the problem of international co-operation under the condition of anarchy, where anarchy is taken to mean the presence of multiple state-actors and the absence of any historically effective centre of global rule.¹⁰ This discourse's hard core representation of that problematique can be said to have three closely related aspects: (1) the conception of the state as an identical decision-making subject presiding over a domestic society, (2) the conception of co-operation as joint action in the service of private ends, and (3) the conception of anarchy as a problematical situation for mutually reliable co-operative conduct.

The conceptualisation of states. For theorists of the anarchy problematique, there is only one warranted interpretation of those forms of social and political action that are said to be mediated by institutions of state and that, accordingly, find their authority in terms of the legitimations of the state. State-mediated political action is to be interpreted as resulting from decisions on the part of an identical subject having at any moment its own identifiable interests and authoritatively controlling at any moment some significant set of social resources, including especially means of violence. This interpretation, in turn, implicates the understanding of the state itself. Whatever else the state might be, theorists of the anarchy problematique are inclined to grasp it as an agency disposed and competent to choose among options, in the service of some non-conflicted set of interests that find their ultimate ground in a well-bounded domain of domestic society. Consistent with this understanding,

Millennium

the state must be further interpreted as a uniquely structured and sharply bounded entity having an identity — and identifying interests — independent of the pluralistic contests of international life at large.

To be sure, theorists may observe that the latitude of state decision-making may be small or changing; that the rationality of state choices may be a bounded rationality; that the state may be subject to internal as well as external pressures; that domestic groups may voice strong opposition to state principles and practices; that nonstate actors may interfere with state actions; that the interests of states may change; or that the subjectivity of the state is capable in principle of learning. None of this, however, necessarily poses a challenge to the interpretation of the state from the standpoint of the anarchy problematique. From that standpoint, all that it is necessary to say is that the state is a decision-making subject uniquely presiding over some well-bounded domestic domain from which its authority derives and that the state is competent to make choices and deploy coercive means in the service of some coherent set of interests originating within this domain prior to the moment of decision itself.

The conceptualisation of co-operation. Theorists of the anarchy problematique understand co-operation as an instrumentalist relation. They focus on situations of interdependent decision-making involving conflicting as well as complementary interests among states, and they understand that co-operation means that one or more states take decisions such that resulting joint outcomes are likely to serve the interests of other states. To co-operate in international politics is, from this point of view, to make decisions and embark on courses of action that are advantageous for other actors. As Robert Axelrod and Robert Keohane put it, 'cooperation occurs when actors adjust their behavior to the actual or anticipated preferences of others'.¹¹

It should be evident that such a definition of co-operation is a very narrow one. It does not embrace the question of the social coproduction of the conditions and subjects of political interaction. Among other things, it excludes the question: how, by way of what global practices, do institutions of state come to be recognised, bounded, and empowered as agencies competent to have interests, make decisions, administer some division of global space, mobilise some span of social resources, wield violence, and participate in the making of international history? It should be no less evident, however, that this narrow understanding of co-operation is entirely consistent with — indeed, it is necessitated by — the understanding of the state as a singular decision-making agency having a unique set of already invested competencies and already formed interests.

The conceptualisation of anarchy. Within the context of the anarchy problematique, anarchy is taken to refer to a situation characterised by a presence and an absence. Present on the world scene are multiple states, each interpreted as an identical decision-making subject competent to wield means of violence. Absent from the world scene is any global agency, any single centre of universal authority, capable of guaranteeing promises, coercing compliance, or planning and effecting rational designs for global order.

What is significant about this understanding of anarchy is that it describes a condition in which co-operation, as just discussed, is anything but a foregone conclusion. Absent a centre of paramount power, a lasting co-operative order

cannot be unilaterally asserted, as if by grand design. It must be constructed and affirmed historically through the interactive decisions and actions of states. It must be produced through the very difficult business of establishing lasting and reliably co-ordinated expectations of state performance such that, from the vantage point of each decision-making state, the matrix of shared expectations comes to be regarded, not as an abstract co-operative ideal, but pragmatically, as a means of facilitating the co-ordination of action and, with it, the service of each state's self-interests. For students of the anarchy problematique, such stable matrices of shared and mutual decision-orienting expectations — such *regimes* — are the acme of international order amidst anarchy. How such regimes are constituted and changed through state decisions and actions — and how, in turn, they affect state interests, decisions, and actions — is the stuff of inquiry on the anarchy problematique.¹²

For students of the anarchy problematique, then, the problem of international order is that international politics is a lot like Jeremy Bentham's Panopticon, *except* . . . except that the central guard-tower is missing, the prison cell walls are plastic, the prisoners themselves are armed, and the cell doors are never locked and always slightly ajar.¹³ How is co-operation possible in such a setting? How might prisoners who value co-operation proceed to establish conditions in which the chances of co-operation would be improved and the durability of co-operative arrangements increased? What behavioural expectations — what kinds of rules, norms, principles, procedures, rights and duties — would they seek to establish? More importantly, what strategies might individual prisoners most effectively pursue in order to establish them? This is the sort of question asked.

One question is not asked: how might the interests of my country best be served? Although analysts of the anarchy problematique might presuppose a potential for strategic thinking on the part of the state, they themselves should not be likened to 'strategic thinkers' in the more familiar and dreary senses of that term. Theorists of the anarchy problematique generally would not 'identify with the national state', and certainly they would never ground their focus on the state in some mystified and hence unexaminable commitments to the nation as the highest embodiment of community and to the state as the one sure voice and arm of the community in an anarchic world. Although they might be inclined to advise the state, they are not disposed to do so out of some sense of patriotic duty. Although they might want to serve political interests, they are not inclined to identify their research-relevant values with the national interest.

Thus, it is highly unlikely that one would find a modern-day theorist of the anarchy problematique responding to oil embargoes by wondering aloud as to how we might swiftly take and secure Persian Gulf oil fields. Equally rare would be a theorist of the anarchy problematique who would respond to liberal philosophers' theories of international distributive justice by asserting that there is no question of justice beyond community and that the nation is community's highest embodiment. Today's theorists of the anarchy problematique would respond to oil embargoes by interpreting OPEC as an international regime and by wondering about its effects on monetary, trade, security, and development regimes. They would welcome liberal theories of international distributive justice, and they would try to interpret them as calls for international regimes.

Such dispositions reflect two noteworthy facts. The first is that theorists of the

Millennium

anarchy problematique view the state, not in its historical particularity, but abstractly, as an idealised decision-making subject. The state, as noted, finds its meaning and practical significance, not amidst the historically established significations shared among a nation's people, but from the totalising standpoint of a theorist who gazes across the face of the planet and asks: where stand the most encompassing centres of political decision-making and coercive control? Where are the principal effective loci of power on behalf of reason? The second noteworthy fact is that theorists of the anarchy problematique are primarily internationalist in their research-relevant social values. The relevant values orienting the research enterprise — peace, social welfare, economic stability, human dignity, ecological preservation, justice, and so on — do not find their register and significance in the 'private' interests of individual states. They find their register and significance from the transcendent standpoint of an international community that would or might be realised were strategies of co-operation intelligently pursued.

A Diagnosis in 'Depth': The Heroic Practice as 'Deep Structure'

To note this much is of course to offer a good deal more than a simple description of the hard core of a discourse. *Apropos* a monological reading, it is to begin to introduce a diagnosis of a deep structure to which the sensibility, significance, and power of such a hard core depiction might be attributed. The hard core representation of the anarchy problematique, this diagnosis says, is grounded in, depends upon, and owes its practical force to the heroic practice, conceived as a deep structure, a condition of intelligibility and significance. Were it not for the prior presence of the heroic practice, the depiction of a global predicament in terms of the anarchy problematique would lack definition, would not be compelling, and would be deprived of the presumption of self-evidence. It would be unable to orient and circumscribe discourse on international collaboration. This diagnosis rests on two premises.

The first premise merely restates elementary aspects of the heroic practice. It will be recalled that modern political discourse largely turns on a simple dichotomy: sovereignty versus anarchy. Sovereignty signifies a homogeneous and well-bounded rational order of politics finding its focus in a hierarchical centre of decision to which all questions of interpretation can be referred; and anarchy is then defined residually, as an opposed domain of practice which, for lack of a centre, involves the undecidable interaction of plural interpretations and practices. In modern discourses of politics, sovereignty is the regulative ideal — so much so that political progress is to be understood in terms of the assimilation of ambiguous and contingent events in space and time to a prior sovereign presence, itself considered the centre and origin of truth and meaning in such a narrative of progress. Anarchy, by contrast, betokens a field of equivocity and indeterminacy yet to be assimilated and, therefore, as a field of problems, hazards, and perils that might put the pure presence of a sovereign identity in jeopardy. In this monological reading, this dichotomous scheme is to be conceived as a deep structure — something fixed and already in place.

The second premise addresses the immediate sources of the power of the anarchy problematique, its compelling significance as a description of self-evident dilemma

of collaboration and institution-building. According to this premise, the anarchy problematique is powerful because it is understood as an ineluctable consequence of a single indisputable fact of international life, namely, the absence of a centre of global rule. The anarchy problematique's power inheres in its status as a representation of a self-evident truth, and it is accorded the status of self-evidence because it is understood to derive, with the force of logical necessity, from this one inescapable fact of our time.

With these two premises at hand, my diagnosis can now be restated: the power of the anarchy problematique is attributable to the effectiveness of the heroic practice in the disciplining of interpretation and conduct in modern life. The heroic practice — the commitment to the hierarchical sovereignty/anarchy opposition — supplies a necessary condition for the binding inference of the anarchy problematique from the absence of central rule. Put differently, the absence of central rule is determinative with respect to the anarchy problematique only thanks to heroic practice, that is, only on the condition that the opposed terms of the heroic practice are taken to exhaust interpretive possibilities. The diagnosis really amounts to two claims, one negative and one positive.

The negative claim is that in the absence of the heroic practice as a deep and enclosing structure of discourse theorists would be deprived of the ability to deduce the hard core representation of the anarchy problematique from the empirical fact that the world lacks a centre of global rule. The deduction would be unwarranted and would not be given credence. The absence of a central agency of rule would mean only that, an absence of a central agency of rule. It would not mean necessarily that the domain would be populated by a number of states, each an identical subject that is able and disposed to make choices, that has its own identifiable set of interests, and that controls some significant set of social resources, including means of violence. It would not mean necessarily that collaboration within this domain would be dominated by a logic of instrumental co-operation among these states. It would not mean necessarily that parties to this domain would be ceaselessly preoccupied with the expectation of war and the distribution of coercive means among states. It would not even mean that the domain would be populated by similar units. These would be possibilities, of course, but only some among many.

The positive claim is that when the discipline of the heroic practice is taken to be binding, then the anarchy problematique *can* be deduced as a necessary consequence of the absence of central rule in global life. The deduction may be schematised in two steps. First, when one holds to the sovereignty/anarchy dichotomy, and when one observes that there is no encompassing sovereign centre capable of reconciling conflicting interpretations of international life, then it follows that international political life must be regarded as an anarchic domain — a fearsome domain in need of the rational discipline of a centre. The question then becomes one of how this discipline shall be imposed. It is a question issued with the force of an imperative, for according to the heroic practice, to simply acknowledge diversity, difference, and ambiguity is to allow that one is a potential object of discipline when and if a powerful sovereign presence is imposed. Second, when one additionally holds to the interpretation of sovereignty as a well-bounded rational identity that can be taken to be a source of meaning in an anarchic world, it puts

Millennium

before one a kind of template that can guide the 'search' for the sovereign presence capable of imposing the requisite discipline. More accurately, one has before one a way of reading all of those historically contingent limitations on what people know and do that might be seen, just now, to traverse the surface of global life. Starting as it were from the 'top', at the most encompassing level of global generalisation, one then scans gradually downward until one finds those specific limitations on knowing and doing that might just now seem more or less effectively to work as boundaries discriminating between what is, relatively speaking, an 'inside' of uniformity and continuity susceptible of monological interpretation and an 'outside' of difference and discontinuity. At this level, one stops. Here on the 'inside', one says, one has 'found' the sovereign presences required. These, just here, are the rational identities that must be taken to be the ultimate sources of meaning and the effective agencies by which a dangerous anarchy on the 'outside' can be controlled. By the logic of the heroic practice, it is necessary that these 'inside' domains be so interpreted.

From these two steps it follows that the search for order must begin by locating the plural identical subjects who are to be regarded, not historically, but in just these frozen, abstract terms. One must regard states as singular subjects, existing independent of history, and capable of making rational decisions bearing upon the means they wield. One must privilege just these idealised state-subjects as the centre of political analysis, the true register of social interests, the entry point of meaning in international life, and the necessary agents of action. And one must acknowledge that, among just these state-subjects, competition over relative means is likely to be a fact of life, and co-operation is reducible to a problematical matter of constrained rational action, co-action, bargaining, and mutual learning regarding the intentions of others, collaborative possibilities, and possible long-run emergent consequences. There we have it: the anarchy problematique.

This diagnosis explains at least three noteworthy features of theoretical discourse on the anarchy problematique. First, this diagnosis explains a seeming contradiction. It explains why theorists of the anarchy problematique can be statist, on the one hand, and internationalists, on the other. It explains why they can be committed to the state as an agency of action and, at the same time, can define their values on a global plane.

Second, the present diagnosis explains why discourse on the anarchy problematique, unlike, say, the writings of nationalistic security specialists, is so full of ritualistic references to anarchy.¹⁴ Students of national security who are nationalistically inclined — whose writing and speaking is animated first and foremost by a commitment to the interests of the nation — have no more reason to speak of global anarchy than fish have reason to speak of water. Certainly they have no reason to apologise for orienting their work to the ear of the state. In the orbit of *Orbis*, anarchy is not a problem to be solved but a fixed background condition that all participants in a discourse simply take for granted, and the state can be regarded as the necessary embodiment and instrument of the communal values of a nation as these are expressed in a dangerous world. Among internationalist contributors to *International Organization*, by contrast, 'global anarchy' cannot be taken to refer to a background condition toward which one might rightly acquiesce, and the turn to the state is likely to be received grudgingly, self-consciously, with a nagging sense

that the turn compromises the universalist programs that participants in modern culture might be expected to pursue. For these theorists, therefore, the term 'global anarchy' is especially functional. A reference to 'global anarchy' announces in a single word a programmatic intention that is immediately and unmistakably recognised by all who subscribe to the heroic practice of modern discourse. It announces an intention to regard global life as a place and time potentially subordinated to the ideal of a sovereign presence, a universal rational principle of interpretation and conduct. It also explains and excuses a turn to statism by announcing an intention to regard this turn not as an end in itself but as part of a story of the emergence of a universal centre or principle — a monologically interpretable regime, say — that might negate anarchy's dangers.

Third, this diagnosis helps us to see why game theory holds such an extraordinary attraction for so many theorists of the anarchy problematique. In part, surely, the attraction is to be found in game theory's function as 'metaphor' and 'analogy', in Duncan Snidal's senses of these terms.¹⁵ As metaphor and analogy, game theoretic representations compactly convey all the premises of the story that theorists of the anarchy problematique want to tell: the identical decision-making states, the options, the joint outcomes, the preferences, the co-operative and conflictual possibilities, and the absence of any higher binding authority, save those authorities already implicit in the constraining of options and the specification of preferences. Surely, too, part of the attraction is to be found in game theory's function as 'model' and 'theory', to again rely on Snidal's terminology. As model and theory, game theory, with its promise of deductive power, permits the theorist to put history into motion and proffer coherent and parsimonious accounts of the possible making and unmaking of lasting co-operation under varied conditions and by way of varied strategies.¹⁶

In perhaps the largest part, though, the attraction is found in game theory's value as a 'performance' that enables a connection between the theorist's own abstract and universalising perspective, on the one hand, and the specific historical situation of his 'audience', the state to which the theorist speaks, on the other. It is a performance that can be imaginably enjoyed by the state only if one presupposes a particular intersubjective situation shared by theorist and state alike: a situation that locates the discourse of theory and state, not amidst the particulars of historical time and place, but at a distant and totalising vantage point from which it becomes possible to express all dilemmas in terms of universally interconvertible values and to resolve the contesting projects of history within a singular synchronic gaze. As a performance, therefore, a game theoretic representation invites the state, as audience, to join the theorist in finding the meaning of its present, not in the particularities and expressed interests of the here and now, but within a singular universalising narrative that promises to connect the immediacy of the present to the absent future and the absent perspectives of other states as well.

A Dialogical Reading: The Opening of a Discourse

This diagnosis is, as I say, relatively simple — perhaps too simple. Taking seriously what theorists of the anarchy problematique have taken most seriously, the first reading has concentrated exclusively upon the hard core representations of a

Millennium

discourse and upon the 'deep structure' to which the significance of these representations is supposedly due. In the process, however, it is arguably unfair and, what is more important, arguably quite wrong. The error is not just a failure to acknowledge that theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique is far richer and more subtle than a single-minded focus on its hard core might make it seem. The more significant error is that the reading imposes an antihistorical closure upon this discourse because it proceeds according to the interpretive model of a monologue, not the model of a dialogue. It does to this discourse what participants in this discourse are disposed to do to international politics.

Proceeding on the model of a monologue, the first reading obeys the principle of interpretation it ascribes to the discourse it interprets. *In the very structuring of its interpretation, the monological reading obeys the heroic practice.* It is oriented to bring analysis to rest in the recovery and recognition of a coherent and objective principle — a sovereign source — in terms of which the otherwise seemingly discrepant practices of a discourse might be reconciled. Not surprisingly, it finds what it is oriented to find. It brings to light a 'deep structure', the heroic practice itself. Yet in so doing, a price is paid. The monological reading participates in representing the heroic practice as something profound, objectively given, and mysterious — as if it were an autonomous, extra-historical, and extra-political origin of powers in its own right.

The monological reading of theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique thus leaves the reader with the dichotomous choice of positions mentioned earlier: the choice titled the *blackmail of the heroic practice*.¹⁷ One must be either 'inside' this discourse or 'outside', either for or against. On the one hand, in order to enter this discursive enclosure — even if one's interest is criticism or reform — one must adopt a subjective standpoint that affirms the objective and originary powers of the heroic practice and interpret everything in its terms. One must resign oneself to complicity with the knowledgeable practices by which the anarchy problematique is constituted as a self-evident and objective condition of life. On the other hand, in order to stand outside this discursive enclosure — thus to repudiate hard core representations of the anarchy problematique — one must condemn oneself to a position of practical futility, no matter how self-righteous it may be. Saying no to a powerful discourse that participates in the construction of the self-evident 'truth' of the anarchy problematique, one is left to construct subjective counter-truths that cannot be effective precisely because they remove themselves from the workings of the objective sources of power in history.

Here, then, is the recapitulation, mentioned earlier, of the famous dichotomy of *realism* versus *idealism* by which modern discourses of international politics are disciplined. Itself a replication of the heroic practice, my monological reading affirms a hard and fast opposition between an order of the 'real' in which subjectivity and objectivity are fused as one and an order of the 'ideal' in which subjective principles of interpretation and practice are radically disjoined from the objective conditions of practice. Such an affirmation is no accident. It is an inevitable consequence of interpreting the workings of the heroic practice under the tutelage of an interpretive model that itself recapitulates the hierarchical dichotomy of that practice. No matter how critical one's intentions, to read the anarchy problematique through the lens of a monological model is to replicate a

ritual by which the heroic practice is accorded the status of a necessary and objective structuring principle and the anarchy problematique is affirmed as a self-evident condition to which all reasonable deliberations on global collaboration must conform.

A dialogical reading corrects this error. Giving pride of place to practice over structure, surface over depth, and historical movement over stasis, a dialogical reading does not honour the interpretive rule that a valid reading must come to rest in a sovereign principle of interpretation, itself regarded as the profound and objective source from which 'surface' representations derive. Rather, it explores how the ongoing 'surface' conversations of a theoretical discourse work within a rich, ambiguous, and indeterminate history to effect the objective ground they presuppose and, at the same time, potentially contribute to its undoing. It thereby makes it possible to pose the second of the two questions orienting this essay: how, in the course of its development, might this discourse expose the rhetorical strategies by which it works and, in doing so, undermine its purported foundations and open avenues of thinking and doing hitherto closed off?

In a dialogical reading, the heroic practice is not approached as a deep structure — something autonomous, originary, profound, and prior to the theoretical representations of whose significance and power it is supposedly the necessary condition. The heroic practice is instead seen for what it is. It is seen as a knowledgeable practice — at once an orientation and a procedure — that is widely circulated in a culture and by way of what people do on the very surface of life. It is seen as a practice that is more or less successfully replicated in a wide variety of ambiguous and indeterminate sites to discipline interpretation, fix meanings, impose boundaries, discipline what people can know and do, and, among other things, dispose people to the further replication of the practice itself. Insofar as it is put into circulation and replicated in this way, the heroic practice may be understood to be a productive principle of a modern 'discursive political economy.'¹⁸ It is a productive principle of an 'economy of power' by which are constituted the socially recognised modes of subjectivity, objectivity, and conduct that we know to be characteristic of modern life: the sovereign subjects who are understood as the rational and self-sufficient origins and centres of meaning and power, the objects which are to be subordinated to a rational will, and the conduct which is taken for granted as the normal, natural, and above all rational way of doing things in the world.

So understood, the heroic practice is not a code, grammar, or structure occupying its own autonomous plane of being outside of history and independent of practice.¹⁹ It can be said to 'exist' at all only to the extent that it *works* in history and through practices that replicate it to discipline what people know and do. And the heroic practice is able to work effectively in this way only to the extent that replications succeed in taming the hazardous events of an ambiguous and indeterminate history so that it becomes possible reliably to impose the boundaries that the heroic practice itself presupposes: the boundaries between the identical figures who may be taken both as the true and sovereign subjects of reason; and on the other hand, of the alien and indeterminate domain of anarchy that these subjects might aspire to control. Once heroic practices become unable effectively to impose these boundaries — once it is no longer possible practically to orchestrate

Millennium

more or less co-ordinated discriminations between the domains of sovereign reason's presence and the anarchic domains of its absence — the effectiveness of the heroic practice dissipates. The heroic practice is disabled as a practical means of disciplining what people know and do. It is no longer possible to effect stable representations of the unambiguous and indubitable grounds of sovereign identity to which replications of the heroic practice must refer.

My dialogical reading of theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique examines its replications of the heroic practice in just this light. It is interested far less in describing its hard core representations and far more in exploring the practices by which this discourse moves to assimilate and fend off, anticipate and answer those events, happenings, and other 'texts' which, in the hazardous historical dialogues of a culture, might put the anarchy problematique's hard core in doubt. In the terminology of Lakatos, my dialogical reading attends far less to the ostensible power of a hard core in itself and far more to the way in which theoretical turns and problemshifts might contribute to its elaboration and empowerment and/or to its subversion and disablement.²⁰ As indicated earlier, my reading attends in particular to one turn among many: the turn to incorporate 'nonstate actors'. As we shall see, the most significant contribution of this turn is not the closure it imposes but the opening to history it makes possible. It opens the way to a new problematisation, a radically revised interpretation of the anarchy problematique.

Nonstate Actors: The Elaboration of a Global Predicament and the Problematisation of the State as Sovereign Presence

As theorists of the anarchy problematique understand, there are good reasons not to confine one's inventory of 'actors' to the sovereign state represented in the hard core. Succinctly put, the state is simply not the only actor whose conduct makes a difference in the determination of consequential international political outcomes, and upon inspection, even the social entity to which the signifier 'state' might be appended is seen to be a complex amalgam of potentially contesting individuals and agencies, each of which can be understood as an actor in its own right. Even if one wanted to privilege the state as a key actor, one must not assume that through the sheer invocation of national will or collective purpose, those who claim to speak the voice of the state will immediately and effortlessly succeed in winning the hearts and minds of every group within a territory, focusing their loyalties upon a single centre, excluding alien influences, and committing the energies of every group fully to a uniform cause. This might seem possible when military security questions are placed foremost on a national agenda. Even then, however, there will be resistances to be checked, alien interests intruding, competing interests to be won over at a cost, bargains to be struck, and discrepant interpretations within the state itself. And when military security issues do not reign supreme, the 'realist' image of a unitary state wielding means of force becomes a symbol of a reality now distant — a reality displaced here and now by the multiple actors, means, communication channels, and issues of 'complex interdependence'.²¹ By its turn to the consideration of nonstate actors, theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique has sought to accommodate these themes

within a perspective still anchored in the hard core representations discussed earlier. There is much that could be said about this turn. I shall confine myself to four points.

First, it should be noted that the turn involves a reopening of themes that virtually define liberal pluralist discourses of international politics: the discourses of neofunctionalism, transnationalism, transgovernmentalism, modernisation, micro-economics, liberal peace and conflict studies, public policy, decision-making, and, more recently, political psychology, to name a few. Within these and other liberal pluralist discourses, private choice-making actors are the autonomous origins of meaning, registers of social value, and irreducible agents of history's making. They are truly sovereign figures.

So long as one condition is satisfied, these pluralist discourses permit the sign of the private choice-making 'actor' to be affixed to biological individuals, households, firms, interest groups, political parties, states, terrorist organisations, multilateral institutions, and even social classes. The condition is that the individual or group be interpretable *according to the heroic practice*. It must be susceptible to interpretation as a well-bounded sovereign identity possessing its own 'internal' hegemonic centre of decision capable of reconciling 'internal' conflicts and capable, therefore, of projecting a singular presence, a coherent voice in the ambiguous and polyvocal world 'outside' its recognised bounds. It must be comprehensible, in short, as a sovereign presence — an autonomous source of meaning — whose coherent 'inside' exists in opposition to an indeterminate 'outside' which it takes to be an object of its rational will. People, groupings of people, or social relationships that cannot be so interpreted are, within these pluralist discourses, denied recognition as actors and marginalised in pluralist narratives of history. People, groupings of people, or social relationships that evidently cannot be so marginalised — that cannot be politically ignored — must be interpreted in just these terms: either as identical choice-making actors or, like markets or communication networks, as consequences of the choices actors make.²²

Understood in this way, the turn to nonstate actors evidently does not involve a repudiation of the heroic practice as an interpretive orientation. It involves a redeployment of the heroic practice to accommodate other modes of sovereign being — other rational voices of meaning that must be heard and taken seriously — besides the sovereign figure of the state that is given a privileged place in the hard core representation of the anarchy problematique.

Second, it may thus be said that the principal intent of this turn is not to displace the sovereign state so central to the hard core. It is to complicate this hard core representation by the introduction of (1) other actors whose actions and interactions are equally interpretable in terms of the heroic practice and (2) varieties of structured social relations, most especially markets and communication webs, whose formation and change can be comprehended in terms of the choices of actors. In effect, the state becomes a sovereign presence among sovereign presences and the emergent properties to which they give rise; and even the state itself is seen to be decomposable into a number of subsidiary bureaucratic elements, themselves differentially positioned to interact with nonstate actors (*e.g.*, issue-specific constituencies) and other elements of the state.

Third, for theorists of the anarchy problematique, the acknowledgement of

nonstate actors can be seen to promise a solution to an analytic problem in the study of regimes as emergent institutions facilitating international co-operation. If it is true that within this discourse regimes are taken to be of potential importance in enabling co-operation, it remains the case that their historical efficacy has proven extraordinarily difficult to assess. The question is: what is the effect of a regime on the behaviour of its member states? Oriented toward the inference of a possible causal relation, the very putting of this question presupposes not only the ability to detect the presence and stationarity of a regime but also the ability to offer a well grounded answer to the counterfactual question: what would states be disposed to do in the absence of the regime whose influence is in question? It becomes possible in principle to answer this question, and hence to infer the impact of a regime, if one can offer a theoretically informed assessment of the domestic political processes and the internal policy processes that bear on states' behavioural dispositions. Within a pluralist frame of reference, this in turn becomes possible only when one allows for the presence of nonstate actors and for the decomposition of the state into the various elements that make up the policy process.²³

Fourth, and most importantly, the introduction of nonstate actors permits theorists of the anarchy problematic to formulate and address a much elaborated understanding of a predicament of modern global governance. This elaborated interpretation may be very crudely summarised in terms of two overlapping images, one a 'lateral image' and the other a 'vertical image'.

In the *lateral image*, which may be associated with the motif of 'transnationalism', the world consists of a broad array of actors — the state intermingled with all others — each a sovereign presence in its own right, some highly mobile and some less so, and the several constructing the mutual conditions and limits of action through utilitarian logics of interaction. The state, on this image, is distinguished primarily by its effective claim to the means of violence, its ability to trade in the coin of legitimacy, and, above all, by its fixedness to a territory. The territoriality of the state, in the lateral image, is more of a constraint relative to nonstate actors than it is an advantage. The territorial state is in a weak bargaining position because nonstate actors with greater mobility can exploit resources, markets, and coalition-building opportunities available on a global scale, effectively redirecting the movement of political resources in ways that might either support or undermine the local conditions of stable rule within territorial bounds. The boundaries of the state — the competencies it has, the resources it can command, the range of social conduct subsumable under its interests, and the limits on its authority — are thus seen to be dependent upon interactions with and among nonstate actors.

In the *vertical image*, which conforms most closely to the motif of 'statism', the world consists first and primarily of territorial spaces, each coextensive with the sovereign compass of a state, where the boundaries define conditional limits to the mobility and interaction of other actors, and where the limits defined are conditional upon decisions of states to impose them. The state, on this image, is a privileged actor precisely because it is uniquely endowed with the ability to impose spatial parameters upon the interaction opportunities — the markets and the emergent coalitions — available to other actors. According to the vertical image, the state's territoriality is an advantage. Indeed, where the question of political boundaries is concerned, the state is the only truly sovereign figure; on this

question, the state alone is the origin of meaning and the independent source of power.

In theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique, the two images not only overlap but also join in tension to describe the predicament. On the one hand, the lateral image cannot be totally subordinated to the vertical because (1) scientific and technological progress and the development of human freedom is seen to depend upon the unfettered flow of communications and peoples, (2) capital accumulation in an integrated world economy is understood to depend upon the transnational mobility of nonstate actors and the resources they control amidst worldwide market structures, and (3) progress and stability in any one territory is dependent upon global ecological factors that are unsusceptible to piecemeal management and control. Should the mobility of nonstate actors be too constrained, they would no longer be able to take advantage of economies of global scale. Should transnational communications be too much restricted, social and economic progress would suffer. World markets would collapse, economic contraction would set in, and in all locales, environmental deterioration, social dislocations, and political instability would result.

On the other hand, the vertical image cannot be entirely subordinated to the lateral because the territorial state, with its organisational resources and privileged claim to the means of violence, is taken to be necessary to the protection of property rights, the maintenance of order, and the provision of the social conditions in which freedom can be sustained and production can flourish within territorial bounds. Especially in late capitalist societies, sustained economic growth has come to depend upon the growing administrative rationality of the state — including especially its administration of the economy — and the legitimation of the state, in turn, has come to depend upon its capacity to sustain capital accumulation within its territory. To a considerable extent, therefore, the sustaining of global growth cannot be left to choices of nonstate actors in the contexts of the global markets and webs of communication in which they might participate. It must be possible selectively to exclude disturbances emanating from beyond domestic bounds, and externalise costs emanating from within, that would disable state programmes, undermine the conditions of capital accumulation locally, and/or undo the local coalitional structures upon which the state's effective rule depends.

Obviously, the equilibrium is precarious; the danger, great. Should boundaries be too much determined in reflection of the lateral image — should it prove impossible to manage and buffer the national economy in ways sustaining capital accumulation and political stability locally — the resulting domestic social dislocations might precipitate the radical transformation of internal coalitional structures. A 'nationalist' coalition guided by the vertical image might come to dominate and might impose restrictions on communications and the mobility of nonstate actors. Should boundaries be too much determined in reflection of the vertical image — should boundaries be effected in a way that tends too much toward the exclusion of disturbances, the restriction of communications, and the externalisation of domestic costs — it would potentially contribute to the disablement of other states' efforts to sustain local growth and stability. The result might be to invite reprisals and still further restrictions on mobility and communications. And should states be unable to establish informed and reliable

Millennium

mutual understandings of one another's policy commitments and the likely consequences thereof, each state's policy deliberations would be beclouded by uncertainty and risk. To minimise immediate risks, each state, once again, might be disposed toward policies informed by the vertical image.²⁴

In short, the danger looms: the fragmentation of the world economy, economic stagnation, ecological deterioration, pervasive political crisis, and war. It is easy to understand why theorists who know the world to confront a predicament so described would be preoccupied with the problem of reliable global collaboration among governments in the absence of central rule. Elaborated in this way, the anarchy problematique virtually demands the theorist's attention.

Yet there is a problem here. It is evident that the turn to the incorporation of nonstate actors (and structures emerging from their decisions) is in itself consistent with the heroic practice. It is evident, as well, that the turn permits an enriched and far more compelling rendition of the anarchy problematique. What may be immediately less evident — and what now needs to be noticed — is that the turn threatens to undo what is without doubt the most important of the three key elements of the hard core depiction of the anarchy problematique discussed earlier: the representation of the state as a well-bounded rational unity and agency of reasoning action having at any moment its own identifiable interests and authoritatively controlling at any moment some significant set of social resources. This 'undoing' may be understood by reference to a contradiction.

Consider first what is entailed in representing the state as a sovereign presence, a rational unity. At a bare minimum, the state must be represented as an entity having a coherent set of interests and possessing some set of means that it is able to deploy in the service of these interests. This in turn requires that the state be represented as an entity having absolute boundaries unambiguously demarcating a domestic 'inside' and setting it off from an international 'outside'. What must characterise the 'inside' is the realisation of the heroic practice's regulative ideal of a sovereign identity — an identity that not only reconciles the contesting interpretations in a unique and universally recognised interpretation of a national 'interest' but also effectively mobilises social resources, as means, by appeal to this 'interest'. What must characterise the 'outside' is that here, beyond the boundary, contesting interpretations and practices are recalcitrant in the face of the sovereign voice of interpretation that reigns 'within'. The sovereign interpretation of universal interests reigning 'within' here encounter resistant interpretations, and extractions of resources in the name of the state are here recognised as arbitrary, not necessary to the fulfillment of a universal truth. What defines the boundary is precisely the point of difference between these two domains: those domains of interpretation and practice that are subordinated to a singular hegemonic centre (the domains of the domestic) and those that are not (the international). The requisite of absolute boundaries is not a trivial one. If one cannot inscribe such an absolute and unambiguous boundary, then one must allow that the boundaries of the state and domestic society are themselves open to interpretation and, with different interpretations, might be taken to include or exclude different understandings of what universal interests of the state might be and different understandings of the resources that might be legitimately summoned in the name of those interests. At the very moment of representation, one must say that the

state *cannot* be represented because one cannot decide what is to be included in it and what must be excluded from it. In other words, in the absence of the ability to presuppose an absolute boundary, one would have to acknowledge that all claims regarding state interests and state means are intrinsically disputed. It would be impossible to decide what the state is.

Now consider what the predicament says about the status of the state as a rational identity and agency of reasoned action. If it suggests nothing else, the predicament suggests that there are *at least* two equally valid readings of the boundaries of the state and domestic society, understood as a sovereign identity. One reading, depicted by the vertical image and associated with a statist interpretation, holds that the domestic 'inside' of the state encompasses the entirety of the territory occupied by the state to the exclusion of other states, including all the interpretations and practices at work upon this territorial surface. It thus leaves no room for nonstate actors as unconditionally sovereign presences having their own autonomous interpretations of political boundaries and equally to be counted as independent sources of historical meaning. It submits that these nonstate actors, their interests, and their interpretations of necessary political boundaries are to be regarded as entirely conditional upon the unique interpretive authority of one figure, the sovereign state, which alone decides if they are to be granted an independent role in the making of history. The other reading, depicted by the lateral image and associated with a transnationalist interpretation, holds at a minimum that the 'inside' of the state's territory is considerably less exclusionary, reserving some residual zone *within* its territory for the truly autonomous interpretations and practices of mobile nonstate actors. The effective boundaries of the state, this reading holds, are conditional upon what these mobile nonstate actors know and do — the coalitions they form, the interpretations they impose. Once this second reading is introduced, moreover, we might easily add a third, a fourth, a fifth — indeed as many readings of the boundary as there are nonstate actors and combinations of nonstate actors which might profess to know what the necessary limits and competencies of the state are. The point, though, is not the number of possible readings. The point is that the predicament implies that the boundaries of the state, far from being absolute and unambiguous, are intrinsically contested. This contest of interpretations over the limits of the state and domestic society — the range of interpretations and practices that may be subordinated to the claimed central will of a state, the resources that may be summoned in its name — is precisely what the predicament is about. The only way to deny this contestedness of boundaries is to negate the predicament by denying the lateral image any independent significance.

The contradiction, then, is plain. If the theorist wants to represent the state as a rational identity under the sign of 'sovereignty', then he must pick up his pen and inscribe its boundaries as absolute and fixed independent of practice, and with this stroke, he must say that the predicament just outlined addresses what is not a political problem but a technical problem. This predicament, he must say, is a problem that emerges only because some nonstate actors privileged in the lateral image hold to false or illusory interpretations of the true state boundaries that the theorist, in his majesty, already knows and has already inscribed. Those nonstate actors whose interpretations comport with already inscribed boundaries of

Millennium

the state might be counted as rational agents whose understandings of political life are to be taken seriously in theoretical discourse. Those nonstate actors who hold to discrepant and hence 'illusory' interpretations, he must say, are not really rational sovereign beings whose interpretations must be listened to, given credence, and reconciled in the domestic *political* discourse that the theorist, professing the uniquely sovereign voice of the state, is prepared to take seriously in his representations. With the wave of the theorist's hand, the vertical image is given absolute priority, and nonstate actors of the lateral image — at least those whose interpretations do not comport with the privileged interpretation of the state — are deprived of their status as sovereign sources of meaning. They are put outside the boundary he has drawn, located under the sign of 'anarchy', and thereby regarded as objective problems and dangers to be brought under control by *technical* means (the means of law and violence) at the state's disposal. What basis, though, does the theorist have for making the inclusionary/exclusionary decisions entailed in his inscription of boundaries? None beyond the arbitrary decisions of the state valorised in the vertical image. And what basis does the state have for making this decision? None at all. For the state, in this logic, is reduced to that most metaphysical of figures: a well-grounded rational identity that determines its own grounds, a well-bounded sovereign presence that decides its own bounds, an already legitimate power that defines for itself the social basis of its own legitimacy and power.

If, by contrast, the theorist confronts this metaphysical conceit and concedes that he has utterly no rational basis for deciding which nonstate actors can be counted as sovereign sources of valid interpretations and which cannot, then he cannot disregard the independent force of the lateral image, and he must take the predicament seriously as a political problem. And once he does that, he can no longer depict the state and domestic society as a rational identity under the sign of 'sovereignty' because he must acknowledge that at the very moment of representation, the boundaries of the state and domestic society are as undecidable as the predicament is real. His pen quavers above the paper upon which he would draw the boundaries of the state as a sovereign identity. No sooner does he attempt a tentative jotting than he must reach for the eraser. For if each jotting of boundaries privileges the interpretations of some nonstate actors, each also excludes other sovereign beings whose interpretations are equally valid and who can equally claim to control the pen. And so his hand trembles just above the surface, anxious to write but unable to decide how to do so. The figure he would erect at the very hard core of his discourse — the figure of the sovereign state as a rational identity, origin of meaning, and agency of reason in history — simply cannot be represented.

This, to be clear, is not to raise anew the tired issue of whether or not the theoretical representation of states as 'rational unitary actors' actually corresponds to a 'referent reality'. It is not to pose the familiar issue of the external validity of theoretical assumptions — an issue to which theorists of the anarchy *problematique* have their long practiced response.²⁵ It is to suggest that theorists of the anarchy *problematique*, by their turn to incorporate nonstate actors in their theoretical discourse, have come face to face with an entirely different problem. They have shown that in theory as much as in any other domain of modern culture, it is impossible to arrive at any stable *representation* of the state and domestic society as

a well-bounded sovereign identity, an unproblematic origin, a final ground upon which a rational understanding of international politics might be built. Thanks to this discourse's incorporation of the sovereign voices of nonstate actors, any attempt even to depict the state as a sovereign identity in its own right is immediately revealed for what it is — one among any number of possible representations, all equally arbitrary and each writable only through the manifestly political exclusion of others. Theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique can no longer write the sovereign state as a source of meaning and reasoned conduct existing prior to the play of politics in history — not 'literally' and not 'figuratively', not as 'fact' and not as 'fiction', not as 'scientific' statement and not as deliberate 'ideology'.

Another Problematisation, Another Problematique

This second reading of theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique has followed the interpretive model of the dialogue, but as noted earlier, it may also be understood to involve the strategy of analysis called deconstruction.²⁶ As displayed here, deconstruction is decidedly not a complete and superior theory, a new philosophical framework, or a set of normative standards which can be deployed to criticise a given text or discourse. Likewise, deconstruction does not approach a text or discourse as if on the basis of some higher logical principal, from the standpoint of some superior reason, or with an eye to the nullification or condemnation, or affirmation or praise, of the text or discourse it would analyse. Deconstruction cannot even be said to be an approach to a text or discourse from the outside, from some other place, beyond the text or discourse on which and in which it works. Instead, the strategy of deconstruction works within a discourse to show how, in Jonathan Culler's words, that discourse 'undermines the philosophy it asserts, or the hierarchical oppositions on which it relies, by identifying in the text the rhetorical operations that produce the supposed ground of argument, the key concept or premise'.²⁷ Rather than impose alien standards to pass judgment on a discourse, deconstruction appeals to a discourse's own terms to show how it undermines, undoes, and displaces its own most central and certain voices.

In the case of theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique, the central and certain voice undone and displaced is the voice of the sovereign state anchored and legitimated in a well-bounded domestic ground. As I have tried to show, the introduction of nonstate actors to this discourse might have been meant as a 'theoretically progressive problemshift,' an elaboration of an 'auxiliary hypothesis' that would serve to bring under control certain anomalous and problematic practices that might have put a hard core in doubt. As I have also tried to show, though, the effect of this introduction of nonstate actors is precisely to destabilise that hard core so that it can no longer be simply represented as something foundational, given, and prior to the interpretation of political problems of global collaboration. Unless this discourse can manage to effect a kind of amnesia that would permit it to forget the multiple sovereign voices it has invited into its conversation — unless it can devise some rhetorical means of muffling the disparate voices of nonstate actors to which, until recently, it has turned a deaf ear — it will no longer be able simply to refer to the state as a sovereign rational identity whose

Millennium

decisions might be taken to be the elemental sources of reason and meaning in world politics. Likewise, it will no longer be able to represent the problem of co-operation and international regime-building as an instrumentalist relation involving situations of interdependent decision-making among sovereign states. And it will no longer be able to represent international anarchy in terms of the presence of multiple sovereign states and domestic societies as well as the absence of central rule.

True enough, theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique will continue to be able to acknowledge an absence, a lack. It will be able to say that there is no universal sovereign figure, no totalising centre of world politics capable of deciding and enforcing what shall count as rational and true in global compass. But it will no longer be able to put to work the heroic practice and infer from this absence the necessary presence of multiple sovereign states and societies, each a well-bounded rational identity in its own right. Any such figure of a sovereign state, it will now have to say, is nothing more and nothing less than an arbitrary political *representation* always in the process of being inscribed in history, through practice, and in the face of all manner of resistant interpretations that must be excluded or silenced if the representation is to be counted as a self-evident reality.

Does this mean that theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique, having deconstructed its own foundations, should now be cast off as a programme turned regressive? Is it to be repudiated as an ideology unveiled? Not at all. The effect of deconstruction is not to set up a standard by which a theory might be judged to fail, thus to make way for a wholly new and different enterprise having its own hard core. The effect of deconstruction is to enable an opening of a discourse by showing that the foundations that gave it its supposed identity, that supplied its evident fixity of purpose, and that defined its seemingly necessary limits were never so secure as they might have seemed. They were never more than effects of practices of representation that could be made to work only so long as competing voices of an always equivocal culture could be excluded or silenced. Now, with the entry of these disparate voices and the deconstruction that results therefrom, theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique opens up questions that hitherto could not be asked. In particular, this discourse has made it possible to pose a crucial political problem that it had hitherto necessarily treated as already solved: *the problem of the representation of the state and domestic society as a sovereign presence in global politics*.

The importance of the opening to this problem can be seen by recalling a question brilliantly posed by Kenneth Waltz nearly a decade ago and since taken as exemplary for theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique: how to 'conceive of an order without an orderer and of organizational effects where formal organization is lacking'.²⁸ The introduction of the problem of representation of the state and domestic society made possible by the dialogical movement of a theoretical discourse does not lead to an abandonment of this question. But it does imply that this question cannot be reduced to the familiar 'hard core' formulation: how do states, as rational identities and sovereign voices of their respective domestic societies, reliably co-operate with respect to those practices actually or potentially crossing their boundaries? How is this possible in the absence of a central agency of rule? With the introduction of the problem of the representation

of the state, this reductionist rendition of Waltz's formulation cannot do. Such a formulation is seen to obscure from view, and to assume already solved, the better part of the problem of 'order without an orderer'. It must be displaced by another.

In a world of difference, change, and the mobility of people, information, and social resources, how are contesting interpretations disciplined, practices orchestrated, and resistances tamed so as to differentiate a multiplicity of political times and spaces, each represented as a well-bounded domestic society, each understood as subordinate to the sovereign gaze of a state, and the several understood to comprise a continuous, self-evident, and necessary structure of world political life? How, moreover, can this be done given that the attempt to represent any one state and domestic society as a well-bounded and continuous identity necessarily involves the externalisation of resistant practices onto other places and times and might thereby spell the undoing of attempts to similarly represent other states and domestic societies? And how can this be done in view of the fact that theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique has ruled out three ways in which such an orchestration of representations might be accomplished by appeal to an extra-historical centre?

First, the theorist cannot displace anarchy and declare the problematique moot by usurping unto himself the part of a central conductor who can orchestrate, by fiat, what at any time and place the necessary and true boundaries of state and domestic society must be represented to be.

Second, the theorist cannot invoke a logic of international politics to explain this effect, for international politics finds its meaning precisely as a correlate of the recognition of domestic society as a prior, well-bounded presence. To speak of international politics as a source of causes would be to presuppose the accomplishment of the very effect — the representation of a multiplicity of well-bounded states and domestic societies — that is in question.

Third, the theorist cannot account for this globally orchestrated representation by appeal to the handiwork of some central autonomous and powerful authorial figure: a world state, a hegemon, a natural law, a God, or a functional imperative of humankind whose necessary course of development and practical consequences are already unambiguously known and beyond dispute.

With the opening to *this* formulation, the anarchy problematique now really is an *anarchy* problematique. It is a problematique whose posing of the problem of 'order without an orderer' does not presuppose *any* central ordering presence competent and empowered to represent and fix the boundaries of state and domestic society — be it a world government, a preponderant territorial state, an arching ideology, a coherent set of representational norms, or the theorist's own heroic and arbitrary conceits. It is now a problematique in which the inscription of the very boundaries, the self-evident grounds, and the power of states and domestic societies is rendered as part of the problem whose hazardous, never-completed, and always political 'solution' in history is to be subjected to critical scrutiny, not stipulated as a foundation that already circumscribes the way in which international politics is studied and practised.

Conclusion: Theory and a Global Crisis of Representation

So it is with a dialogical reading. It begins from the premise that while absolute

Millennium

openness is never more than a romantic ideal, antihistorical closure anchored in some supposed absolute foundation is never more than a problematical historical effect. It is an effect that at all times encounters resistance and that at all times is in jeopardy of coming undone. A dialogical reading ends, if it can be said to end, with the posing of questions that put supposed foundations in doubt and open the way for a widening range of replies, further questions, and further problematisations. The reader is thus situated as one who need not be victimised by a blackmail of the heroic practice: either realistically to honour or idealistically to repudiate the hard core representations of the anarchy problematique. The reader can question the practices by which, in history, ambiguous circumstances are interpreted, boundaries are imposed, and resistant interpretations are dispersed or silenced so that it becomes possible to inscribe hard core representations as a self-evident reality, a necessary truth that structures the international politics of our time. The reader can also explore ways in which, under various circumstances, these practices might be resisted or disabled; boundaries might be put in doubt and transgressed; representations might be subverted, deprived of the presumption of self-evidence, and politicised and historicised; new connections among diverse cultural elements might become possible; and new ways of thinking and doing global politics might be opened up.

There will no doubt be those who say that such a way of looking at international theory and practice is altogether too unsettling, too open, too ready to entertain the undecidable play of ambiguity and chance in history — in a word, too ‘anarchic’. It puts altogether too much in doubt, they will object, at just the moment when international dangers loom and certainties are most required. After all, the objection continues, if theorists and practitioners are to put reason rigorously to work in answer to the perils of modern global life, then they cannot question everything at once. To do so would be to put in doubt the foundations that must not be doubted — the sovereign origin of truth and meaning whose own arbitrary origins must not be uncovered — if reason is to have the absolute ground it requires. The objection must be taken seriously. For it is an objection that is likely to be issued, not just by theorists of the anarchy problematique, but from every quarter of modern culture. To it three rejoinders are due.

The first is that the objection amounts to a classic ‘argument from despair’ of the sort that Martin Wight once lamented. We may well understand why the objection is put. It bespeaks the paradox, mentioned some time ago, chronically produced in modern theory and practice and recapitulated in modern approaches to international politics and international organisation: despite modern discourse’s heralding of reason as a critical emancipatory force that will break through all traditional barriers and expose every ideology for what it is, the heroic practice pervasively replicated in the disciplining of modern life requires that reason find its origin and ground in an indispensable ideological limit, a sovereign voice that is itself immunised from reasoned criticism. A sovereign presence must be imposed and privileged as an unquestioned source of truth and meaning because without it the heroic practice could not be put to work as the productive principle of the discursive political economy by which the proliferation of meanings is disciplined and the experience of modernity is produced. Yet to understand the cultural practices that give force to the objection is not to accept that objection unless one is

prepared, as a matter of blind cultural faith, to regard those practices as necessary. As Wight observed, 'it is not a good argument for a theory that we shall be driven to despair if we do not accept it'.²⁹ Updating Wight, we may observe that it is not a good argument for conventional representations of the anarchy problematique that without them participants in modern culture will despair of the sovereign foundations required to replicate the heroic practice, bring the ambiguity and indeterminacy of global politics under control, and impose modern modes of subjectivity, objectivity, and conduct thereupon.

The second rejoinder is that the undoing of the conventional hard core representations of the anarchy problematique is not *my* doing. It has not resulted from *my* assertion of some alien standard of criticism whose authority modern discourse might dispute. It has resulted from the turns and problem-shifts — the turn to incorporate nonstate actors, in particular — that a modern theoretical discourse has undertaken in order to accommodate disparate voices active in modern global politics. My dialogical second reading, involving the strategy of deconstruction, has only served to bring to light a consequence of this turn to nonstate actors: the radical undecidability of all attempts to represent the state and domestic society as a well-bounded identity that might be counted as a sovereign source and stable ground of truth and meaning in international history.

The third rejoinder is that when the theorist gulps hard, swallows the objection from despair, and addresses the expanded dimensions of the anarchy problematique opened up by this turn, two important observations on contemporary global politics can be made. The first is that the desperate longing for sovereign foundations for the interpretation and practice of politics is today anything but an exclusive preoccupation of modern theorists. It is a preoccupation in evidence throughout the entirety of modern culture — wherever the heroic practice disciplines political conduct. The second observation explains the first. It is that the problem of representation is not a problem today encountered by theorists alone. On the contrary, it is perhaps the primary political problem of modern statecraft, and just now it is a problem that is nearly everywhere proving to be extremely difficult to solve. One may go so far as to speak of a contemporary cultural crisis of global proportions. It is a global crisis of representation — a crisis in the enframing and fixing of the sovereign grounds of domestic society that the modern state, as a focus of legitimate violence, may be claimed to represent.

How may this crisis be understood? In answer, several approaches might be tried. But one direct approach would begin by attending carefully to the political problem of representation chronically encountered in modern statecraft. The problem is brought into view by considering what modern discourses of politics, centring on the question of the legitimation of the state's law and violence, necessarily exclude.

One may observe at the outset that modern discourses of politics, including the most critical, are disposed to view the state as a unique and central focus and reserve of violence and rational administrative resources presiding over a domestic space and securing legitimacy and a right to exist by virtue of its claim to represent the rational will of a population of sovereign men who inhabit just that domestic space.³⁰ Whether one speaks of the bourgeois state, say, or the socialist state, modern discourses of politics hold that the legitimacy of the state's conduct is

Millennium

ultimately to be grounded in a kind of compact between the 'reasoning men' of a domestic population and the state — the former as the primary source of truth and meaning and the latter as the site and resources that 'reasoning men' reserve for the exercise of force and violence wherever history refuses to bow to 'man's' reason. The state, obeying the force of reason, will not be disposed to turn its coercive means against reasoning man; as a representation of 'man' in domestic society, it will deploy its means to tame those 'anarchic' perils of history that threaten to escape the will of 'man' as a free and rational being. 'Reasoning men' of domestic society, in supporting the state and obeying its law, will not surrender any part of their freedom; they will obey the limitations that supply the essential conditions of their autonomous being in history. Clearly, such interpretations of the state and the problem of legitimation recapitulate the heroic practice: the state, on such accounts, is legitimate to the extent that its law and its violence represents the rational identity of a sovereign source, a well-bounded domestic population, that exists in opposition to anarchic dangers beyond its bounds.

Yet it is equally clear that such interpretations require the exclusion of a question that may be regarded as foundational because it goes to the very constitution of foundations: how is the domestic domain of sovereign men who might willingly submit to the law and violence of the state constituted, bounded, and set apart from other domains — the domains of the criminal, the foreign, the external, the perilous, the 'anarchic' — so that it may be taken to provide the unproblematic ground to which all discourses of legitimation refer? How, in other words, is a 'domestic society of sovereign men' enframed, inscribed, and fixed in its content so that it may be understood, not as an arbitrary representation in itself, but as an originary source of truth and meaning that the state can be claimed to represent? The exclusion of this question is no accident. For in the discourses of modern statecraft, it is a *dangerous* question. It is a question whose asking must be endlessly deferred because to ask it is to render problematic and political what must be taken to be unproblematic and beyond politics if discourses of state are to secure legitimacy through the claim to represent an unquestioned ground: the will of a domestic population of 'reasoning men' already in place.

To observe the practical import of the exclusion of this question — to see that it is a necessary exclusion in modern political life — is to come face to face with the chronic problem of representation in modern statecraft. The problem may be posed in terms of three closely related propositions.

First, the primary problem of modern statecraft is not one of securing consensual understanding among an already well-bounded domestic population of 'sovereign men' regarding the proper interests to be collectively served, and it is not a problem of deploying means of state to solve social dilemmas, repel threats, and serve interests consensually defined. The primary problem of modern statecraft — a problem never finally resolved — is to stabilise the sovereign grounds of legitimate violence in modern politics by enframing and inscribing the domestic domain of 'sovereign men' which the state can be understood to represent.

Second, crucial to this practice of inscribing domestic society is what might be called a *double exclusion*: on the one hand, to be successful, this practice must exclude all manner of resistant interpretations from the domain of 'reasonable' domestic discourse so that it is possible to represent 'domestic society' as a

sovereign identity existing in opposition to a region of ambiguity and indeterminacy known under the sign of anarchy. In effect, differences, discontinuities, and conflicts that might be found *within* all places and times must be converted into an absolute difference *between* a domain of domestic society, understood as an identity, and a domain of anarchy, understood as at once ambiguous, indeterminate, and dangerous. On the other hand, if the resulting representation is to be understood not as one among many contesting interpretations but as an indubitable ground that the state's law and violence might represent, it is necessary also to exclude or silence those voices that would expose this rendering of 'man in domestic society' for what it is: a representation imposed in history and through arbitrary practices of exclusion. It must be possible, in sum, to enframe and represent domestic society — itself an exclusionary practice — and to exclude from serious discourse all reflection on the fact that domestic society is never more than an effect of arbitrary practices of representation. To study successful instances of modern statecraft is to examine the ways in which this double exclusionary practice is repeated time and again in the face of countless contingencies so that 'domestic society' may be inscribed and reinscribed as an identical ground which the state in turn may be claimed legitimately to represent and effectively to serve. To study unsuccessful instances of modern statecraft is to study how and why, in the face of various resistances, this double exclusionary practice fails to work so that the boundaries of domestic society are made susceptible to transgression, differences between 'inside' and 'outside' echo 'within', and the supposedly secure grounds of state legitimation give way to an openly politicised contest of interpretations of 'man' in domestic society.

Third, in modern global politics, this problem of statecraft cannot be managed piecemeal, in each of a multiplicity of sites. If it is to be possible to speak of a system of coexisting, mutually recognising sovereign states, each presiding over a well-bounded domestic society, then in practice one condition must be satisfied. The double exclusionary practices that work to fix the boundaries and grounds of 'domestic society' in any one locale — thus to stabilise the foundations of legitimation discourses just here, in the time and place of any one state — must have the effect of enabling, not disabling, the double exclusionary practices in other locales — thus to make possible the stabilisation of 'domestic' foundations of legitimation discourses over there, in the times and places of other states. Satisfying this condition, or at least approximating its satisfaction in practice, is without doubt the primary 'international organisational' task of modern statecraft. Four points help to specify the dimensions — and the extraordinary difficulty — of this task.

1) For the constitution of any one state and domestic society, taken in isolation, the problem is not all that complex: the double exclusionary practice must work to convert differences within the time and space of a domestic society to a difference between a domestic society, understood as a rational identity, and a dangerous anarchy beyond the spatial and temporal bounds of domestic society. The principal result must be to constitute a self-identical figure of 'sovereign man' — rendered as a free and mobile being at the centre of domestic narratives of truth and meaning — whose rational will the state represents. Conduct undertaken in the name of the state, if it is to be recognised as legitimate, cannot

Millennium

question or limit modes of knowing and doing understood under the sign of 'man' so inscribed. On the contrary, the state's law and violence must work to break through barriers, overcome obstacles, and tame resistances that would limit sovereign modes of knowing and doing, preclude the assimilation of ambiguous events and disparate social resources to a sovereign will, and, in so doing, put a figure of sovereign man in doubt.

2) The problem of the constitution of the state and domestic societies cannot, however, be practically resolved in isolation. Its resolution, if resolution there be, must come in the context of a system of multiple states and domestic societies, each dependent on the effective workings of exclusionary practices, and the several practices being potentially mutually disabling. The problem, in general, is that the exclusionary practices that work to inscribe an unproblematic figure of 'sovereign man' at the centre of one 'domestic society' might entail the inscription of the modes of doing and knowing of other 'domestic societies' as external dangers to be excluded, arrested, or controlled. The problem is not necessarily a serious one if modes of conduct undertaken under the sign of sovereign man are neither especially mobile nor especially demanding of global resources within the times and spaces of multiple domestic societies, for then the exclusionary practices that would impede this conduct do not constitute serious resistances to the doing, and hence the stable being, of a figure of sovereign man. They do not constitute threats to the stability of the 'domestic societies' of which this figure of man is taken to be the centre and source. But if modes of conduct undertaken under the sign of man are at once highly mobile and demanding of global resources crossing the times and spaces of multiple domestic societies, then the exclusionary practices that would constitute domestic societies through the exclusion of this *mode* of conduct themselves come to be recognised as dangerous from the point of view of those discourses of legitimation where this figure of man is central.

3) When this occurs, the sustained coexistence of mutually recognised states and domestic societies becomes dubious at best, and one may speak of a global legitimation crisis of the first order. Although the immediate result is likely to be an ever more vocal pronouncement of political boundaries and a visible pitting of state against state, such a crisis is not at bottom an interstate crisis, a clash of well-bounded rational identities. It is in important respects just the opposite. It results from the fact that practices that would inscribe 'man in domestic society' as a stable ground of state legitimation — practices involving the taming of ambiguity and the exclusion of resistances — have become mutually disabling so that dangerous questions are not silenced but echoed in successively louder voices. What are the boundaries of domestic society in space and time? What is normal and belonging to the 'inside' of domestic society and what is 'dangerous' and necessarily to be excluded and violently controlled? Who is the 'man' who would decide this difference — the domestic 'sovereign man' whom the state must represent? How, by way of what arbitrary practices, are these boundaries and this 'man' *politically* written? It is a crisis of space, of time, of political identity.

4) The primary task of modern 'international organisational' statecraft is to defer such a crisis so that it becomes possible to constitute a multiplicity of spaces and times, each recognised as a well-bounded domestic society centering on a figure of 'sovereign man' and subordinate to a state as a focus of law and violence that representing this 'domestic man'. It is a task whose successful performance depends upon *the orchestration of the inscription of man and domestic society in ways that make possible the co-ordinated displacement of anarchic dangers, not from one 'domestic society' onto others, but beyond the places and times of 'man' in every 'domestic society' of a multistate system.* This, obviously, is no mean task. For it is of necessity a task of orchestration that must proceed in the absence of a conductor, an agency competent and empowered to comprehend the problem as a problem and to solve it by imposing a score.³¹ And it is a task made ever more difficult to perform to the extent that the state system is universalised and to the degree that claims on space and time inscribed beneath the sign of 'man' become ever more extensive.

These several points provide but the barest of outlines of the problem of modern statecraft — the fundamental problem of representation — but they are sufficient to suggest the avenues of inquiry that theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique, by virtue of its recent opening, has now exposed. It is true that this discourse's turn to nonstate actors has spelled the undoing of the hard core of this discourse's conventional representations of the state and domestic society as a sovereign identity. It is true, too, that this undoing is unsettling. Absent the ability to represent the state and domestic society as an uncontested sovereign source of reason and meaning in international history, theorists might sense that they are unable to establish firm foundations, put the heroic practice to work, and assert some measure of discipline in the interpretation of global life and its dangers. But if that is so, it is also the case that this discourse, disabused of its idealisations of the state, has shown that it is no longer possible for theory to defer an encounter with the problem of representation in world politics.

Theory must now ask: does the crisis of representation in its own hard core in some way rehearse on the plane of theory a contemporary crisis of representation in modern statecraft? Does the theoretical introduction of nonstate actors, so destabilising for theoretical representations of state and domestic society, recapitulate the emergence of equally destabilising modes of conduct in global politics — modes of conduct that are inscribed under the sign of a universally mobile 'sovereign man', that effect control over enormous social resources and that claim the whole world as a compass of movement? Does the resulting inability of theorists to decide boundaries and inscribe stable foundations suggest that in world politics, too, boundaries and foundations of conduct are politicised and in doubt? If it is no longer possible to conduct oneself as a modern theorist who innocently invokes a sovereign voice and replicates the heroic practice, might this imply that participants in global political life are likewise experiencing a loss of faith in this most pervasive of knowledgeable practices in modern culture? And if, in the wake of these unsettling developments, it is now possible and necessary to think anew the meaning of theoretical knowing and doing, might participants in global politics similarly explore new modes of political seeing, saying, and being under equally unsettled circumstances?

Questions such as these do not invite certain answers. They are not oriented to the problem of disciplining an ambiguous history. They are oriented, on the contrary, to the exploration of possibilities hitherto closed off. It is to the credit of theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique that they can now be asked.

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REFERENCES

1. As a signifying gesture, it is perhaps useful to cite the names of Keohane, Krasner, Jervis, Lake, Ruggie, Oye, Lipson, Axelrod, Waltz, and so on; but it must be understood that what is signified is the disciplined conversation — the discourse — among these authors and writings and not their individual contributions. Relevant texts would include the Special Issue of *World Politics* (Vol. 38, No. 1, October 1985) edited by Kenneth Oye; Robert Jervis, 'Cooperation Under the Security Dilemma', *World Politics* (Vol. 30, No. 2, January 1978); Oran Young, 'Anarchy and Social Choice: Reflections on the International Polity', *World Politics* (Vol. 30, No. 2, January 1978); Robert Axelrod, *The Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Basic Books, 1984); Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1984); and most, though not all, contributions to Stephen Krasner (ed.), *International Regimes* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1983).
2. On this aspect of the anarchy problematique, see Raymond Duvall and Alexander Wendt, 'The International Capital Regime and the Internationalization of the State', paper prepared for the German-American conference on international relations theory, Bad Homburg, Federal Republic of Germany, May 31-June 4, 1987.
3. It should be clear that theoretical discourse of the anarchy problematique is very much beholden to a neorealist interpretation of the modern state system. For my analysis of this interpretation and its limits, see Richard K. Ashley, 'The Poverty of Neorealism', *International Organization* (Vol. 38, No. 2, Spring 1984).
4. See Richard K. Ashley, 'The Powers of Anarchy' in Hayward R. Alker, Jr. and Richard K. Ashley, *After Neorealism: Anarchy, Power, and Community in International Collaboration*, in preparation.
5. On the monological versus dialogical (or heterological) 'approaches' to the interpretation of texts, see especially Mikhail Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics*, trans. R. W. Rotsel (Ann Arbor, MI: Ardis, 1973) and *The Dialogic Imagination*, trans. Michael Holquist and Caryl Emerson (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1975). See also, Julia Kristeva, 'Word, Dialogue, and Novel' in Toril Moi (ed.), *The Kristeva Reader* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 31-61.
6. For a useful introduction to literatures drawing upon the intertextual construct of intertextuality, see Thais Morgan, 'Is There an Intertext in this Text: Literary and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Intertextuality', *American Journal of Semiotics* (Vol. 3, No. 4, 1985), pp. 1-40. For works illustrating the pertinence of the construct to the study of global politics, see James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro (eds.), *International/Intertextual Relations: The Boundaries of Knowledge and Practice in World Politics* (Lexington, MA: Lexington Books, forthcoming).

7. This terminology — frequently put to use in discourse of the anarchy problematique — is of course due to Imre Lakatos, 'Falsification and the Methodology of Scientific Research Programmes' in Imre Lakatos and Alan Musgrave (eds.) *Criticism and the Growth of Knowledge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970).

8. For a further discussion bearing upon other turns in this discourse, see Richard K. Ashley, 'The Powers of Anarchy' *op. cit.*

9. The notion of deconstruction is due to Jacques Derrida. See his discussions in Jacques Derrida, *The Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983) and *Positions* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1981). A valuable introduction is Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism After Structuralism* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1982).

10. The classic rendition is found in Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1979).

11. Robert Axelrod and Robert O. Keohane, 'Achieving Cooperation Under Anarchy', *World Politics* (Vol. 38, No. 1, October 1985), p. 226.

12. Undoubtedly the best statement of this theme is to be found in R.O. Keohane, *After Hegemony*, *op. cit.*

13. See Jeremy Bentham, *Collected Works*, Volume 4, ed. John Bowring (New York, NY: Russell and Russell, 1971). See also Michel Foucault, 'The Eye of Power' in Foucault, *Power/Knowledge*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon, 1980); and *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Pantheon, 1977). For a treatment of the Panopticon image bearing upon international politics, see Richard K. Ashley 'The Eye of Power: The Politics of World Modeling,' *International Organization* (Vol. 37, No. 3, Summer 1983).

14. Kenneth Oye's opening words to the *World Politics* Special Issue are representative: 'Nations dwell in perpetual anarchy, for no central authority imposes limits on the pursuit of sovereign interests . . .'. See also Kenneth Oye, 'Explaining Cooperation Under Anarchy: Hypotheses and Strategies', *World Politics* (Vol. 38, No. 1, October 1985), p. 1.

15. Duncan Snidal, 'The Game Theory of International Politics', *World Politics* (Vol. 38, No. 1, October 1985), pp. 45-57.

16. Duncan Snidal, *op. cit.*

17. I am playing on a metaphor from Michel Foucault's notion of 'blackmail of the Enlightenment'. See Foucault, 'What Is Enlightenment?' in Paul Rabinow (ed.), *The Foucault Reader* (New York: Pantheon, 1984), pp. 42-3.

18. See Michel Foucault, 'The Subject and Power', an Afterword to Hubert Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1983). See also Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Random House, 1978).

19. For a further discussion, see my 'The Powers of Anarchy', *op. cit.*

20. See Imre Lakatos, *op. cit.*

21. See Robert O. Keohane and Joseph S. Nye, *Power and Interdependence: World Politics in Transition* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1977).

22. Implicit here is a notion of methodological individualism, albeit one imperfectly observed since 'individuals' at the centre of action are not necessarily 'human individuals'.

23. For an example of this argument see Robert O. Keohane, 'The Study of International Regimes and the Classical Tradition in International Relations,' unpublished manuscript, Harvard University, June 1986, pp. 24-6.

24. It should be observed that the recurring fear evoked in this discourse is precisely that either image, pursued to the extreme and without attention to the other, produces the same outcome: 'closure' or the fractionation of the world economy.

25. Waltz's position on this issue is perhaps representative. In general, Waltz holds that 'theoretical statements [including assumptions] are nonfactual elements of a theory The worth of a theoretical notion is judged by the [explanatory and predictive] usefulness of the theory of which it is a part'. Later he adds, that 'we know that assumptions are neither true nor false and that they are essential for the construction of theory. We can freely admit that states are in fact not unitary, purposive actors. . . . But all of this has always been

Millennium

known, and it tells us nothing about the merits of balance-of-power theory'. Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 119. Compare with Milton Friedman, 'The Methodology of Positive Economics' in Milton Friedman, *Essays in Positive Economics* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1953).

26. For another example, see Richard K. Ashley, 'Living On Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War' in James Der Derian and Michael Shapiro (eds.), *op. cit.*

27. Jonathan Culler, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

28. Kenneth Waltz, *op. cit.*, p. 89.

29. Martin Wight, 'Why Is There No International Theory?' in Herbert Butterfield and Martin Wight (eds.), *Diplomatic Investigations* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966).

30. For a fuller development of this interpretation of the modern state, see Richard K. Ashley, 'Living On Border Lines: Man, Poststructuralism, and War', *op. cit.*, and 'The Powers of Anarchy,' *op. cit.*

31. The notion of 'conductorless orchestration of collective improvisations' is due to Pierre Bourdieu, *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), p. 73.