

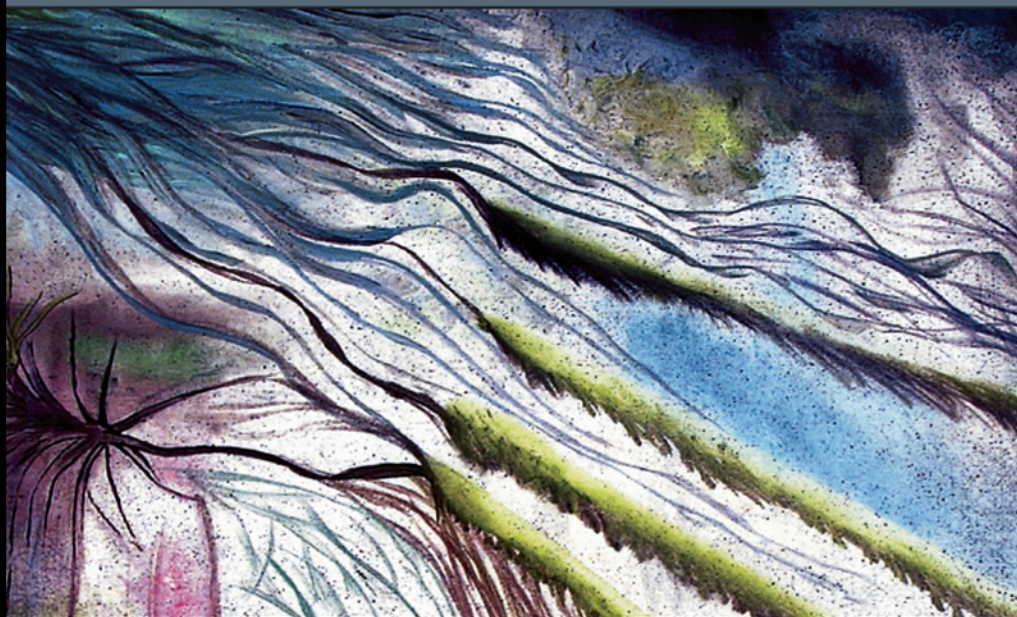


THE NEW INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SERIES

ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Self-Identity and the IR State

Brent J. Steele



Ontological Security in International Relations

The central assertion of this book is that states pursue social actions to serve self-identity needs, even when these actions compromise their physical existence. Three forms of social action, sometimes referred to as “motives” of state behavior (moral, humanitarian, and honor-driven) are analyzed here through an ontological security approach.

Ontological Security in International Relations develops an account of social action which interprets these behaviors as fulfilling a nation-state’s drive to secure self-identity through time. The anxiety which consumes all social agents motivates them to secure their sense of being, and thus the book posits that transformational possibilities exist in the “Self” of a nation-state. The book consequently both challenges and complements realist, liberal, constructivist, and post-structural accounts to international politics.

Using ontological security to interpret three cases – British neutrality during the American Civil War (1861–1865), Belgium’s decision to fight Germany in 1914, and NATO’s (1999) Kosovo intervention – the book concludes by discussing the importance for self-interrogation in both the study and practice of international relations.

This book will be of particular interest to students and researchers of International Politics, International Ethics, International Relations, and Security Studies.

Brent J. Steele is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the University of Kansas, USA.

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To Mindy Marie and the Little Belle: My sources of Security

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Foreword

Thomas Hobbes's triad of grounds on which states act – fear, glory, gain – is still pivotal to the study of politics generally, and global politics specifically. At the same time, however, it is often argued that emotions have no place in discussions of state action. Since Hobbes's principal ground for action – fear – is what psychologists call a basic emotion, there is a basic contradiction here that needs unpacking.

In this workmanlike book, Brent Steele takes it upon himself to investigate what it means for a state to feel secure. He does not start from fear, however, but from a variation of glory, namely honor. This is not because he does not acknowledge fear, but because he has other fish to fry, namely cases where fear cannot by itself account for the course of action taken. The thrust of Steele's argument is that security, in addition to being about fear, is also to do with the consistency of the story that the collective agent tells itself about who it is.

Steele's argument leans heavily on two works by British sociologist Anthony Giddens on the agency–structure relation and self-identity, respectively. For Giddens, agents are constrained and enabled by structure, by which he simply means sets of norms and resources. Steele posits that a polity needs ontological security, and treats that security as a norm and a resource. Giddens argues that in order to be able to “go on” an agent has to be able to tell a reasonably consistent story about where it came from and where it is going; it has to have a certain bearing. When this is not the case, the agent experiences shame. Steele posits that “States are ‘rational egoists,’ but they base their ‘egoism’ not upon (independent and exogenous) material structures but upon self-identity needs.” When there is a break in the narrative an agent tells itself about who it is, or “a temporary but radical severance of a state's sense of Self,” Steele, again with Giddens, posits that the state feels shame. This has been done before in International Relations (IR), perhaps most eloquently by Frank Schimmelfennig, but, contrary to Schimmelfennig, Steele insists that shame should be understood as a feeling whose source is internal to the agent. Steele contrasts shame with guilt, which he sees as a transgression of a recognized norm of a community. In Steele's world, others may say that you are guilty but they do not say shame

on you. Steele stakes his argument on this difference, for if shame is not an internal quality which arises and asserts itself independently of what other agents do, then it cannot be the inner-driven phenomenon that he needs it to be for states to appear as rational egoists.

The book fights on two fronts. In addition to exposing the mainstream view that emotions have no place in state action as fallacious, Steele also attacks extant post-structuralist work on ontological security for treating security exclusively as a question of reacting to others and hence neglecting internal debates about identity and indeed the element of agency overall. This attack follows logically from his Giddensian commitments, and makes the book part of a wider attempt by constructivists in contemporary IR theory to seize the middle ground between rationalists on the one hand and post-structuralists on the other. In this sense, it is a nice coda to the book by Emanuel Adler that was recently published in this series.

Steele's undertaking speaks directly to my own concerns. I have grappled with the tension between the work of the early Foucault, who treats identity as alterity, and of the late Foucault, whose key concern is the self's work on the self. During the 1990s, I was involved in a protracted debate with Ole Wæver about this question as it pertained to European identity. I highlighted the constitutive role of "others" such as Russia and Turkey to European identity, whereas Wæver highlighted the European self's relation to a previous incarnation of the self from which it was imperative to get away. As a result of that debate, I have come to feel that these are complementary and that this complementarity follows logically from the collective self being necessarily a composite phenomenon which is a result of struggle.

This is not the place to discuss constitutive intersubjectivity and its importance for the limning of an actor's self. Suffice it to say that Steele's work further strengthens my feeling that the self's work on the self is a key site for studying identity politics. In the degree that Steele is able to change the discourse that he writes up against, this text is able to carry off its own Giddensian program performatively. That is quite a feat.

Iver B. Neumann

Acknowledgments

As with anything I produce, this book's completion would have been unthinkable without the help of many friends, colleagues and especially family I've known over the course of several years.

This book began in an earlier form as my Ph.D. dissertation at the University of Iowa. Without the guidance of one individual – Rodney Bruce Hall – I might have neither finished earlier versions of this manuscript nor completed my Ph.D. I am especially grateful that Rod was not a mentor who micro-managed toward what passes these days as a “popular” research topic for students of International Relations. As such, I have made this topic “my own” as a labor of love rather than hard labor. I must also thank Rod for the many hours he spent looking over several drafts of this book, and for the time he spent in his office helping me sharpen my understanding of various bodies of major social theory. Rod not only is a fantastic scholar, but in my case has been a great mentor and friend. I only hope that someday I will have the opportunity to pay him back for all his mentoring, which continues to this day. I would also like to thank Friedrich Kratochwil of the European University Institute for serving as an external member on my dissertation committee, and providing critical, probing, and even entertaining feedback during my dissertation defense.

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encouragement in our graduate program, provided helpful guidance on Chapter 4, and in providing detailed suggestions about writing structure she also endeavored to improve my sophomore prose. Jeremy Youde and Jack Amoureux were above all wonderful friends and colleagues, providing detailed professional and theoretical advice, often over too many consumed cups of coffee. By creating an environment for theoretical innovation, Jeremy and Jack were (and continue to be) welcome sources of collegial support.

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Finally, and most importantly, I have benefited from the most loving and supportive network of family a scholar could ever hope for. The entire Strohman family, including, especially, Dan and Sherry Strohman, have been fantastic in-laws whose assistance served to make it possible to write this book. I wish to thank the entire Akers family, and especially my

grandparents, Eldon and the late Dory Akers, who taught me valuable lessons about selflessness and unconditional love which I will carry with me always. My parents, Ted and Barb Steele, have been inestimable sources of encouragement and support throughout my life and academic career. The many rounds of golf that I have played with my father over the years have (most of the time, depending upon the consistency of my driving) served to alleviate my notoriously high levels of anxiety. My brother, Kyle Steele, has been my best friend, whose affable and jocular nature keeps me upbeat about life. I am especially appreciative of my brother's family – Lisa, Brenan, and Kaleb Steele. My nephews expect very little from me other than requiring me to be a rowdy uncle, a role I am all too willing to play, and one I wish I could enact more often.

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Brent J. Steele

1 Introduction

There are two positions that I confront in this book. The first derives from an assumption in International Relations (IR) theory that has been a target for critical security studies for some time – that nation-states are primarily concerned with their survival. This book seeks to expand upon those critical studies – problematizing that assumption by asking whether states desire something more than survival in international politics. By way of introduction, I should state that my decision to confront the survival assumption in IR theory was not made in a vacuum. I wrote the majority of this book during the post-9/11 era in a country where literally almost any policy can be legitimized if it can plausibly, even tangentially, be portrayed as securing the physical integrity of the United States and its citizens. Whether it be torture and all forms of prisoner abuse or the invasion of a sovereign state that posed no actual threat to the US, such policies have been enacted because they were perceived as necessary to protect the United States from some existential threat. The obvious costs to such policies were evident but not fully articulated and resulted in a counter-narrative that was less than effective and did not speak to my overwhelming concerns as an IR scholar and an American (in that order).

That counter-narrative asserts that the above policies, while supposedly shoring up American physical security, compromised America's position as a leading member of the international community and violated America's moral obligation to promote its security interests through legitimate, multilateral channels. The binary of "self" v. "collective" interest in this matter was hardly new, and operationally and theoretically it makes sense – either the US had an interest in unilaterally promoting its security, or it needed to formulate its individual security interests as a collective problem requiring collective action.¹ The former "interest" implies a selfish action, the latter a "moral" commitment to uphold collective principles. Yet politically it has become unpopular in the United States to reference these "moral" commitments to international standards. And so Americans are left with a choice – either pursue policies that are selfish yet (they are informed) best ensure their physical survival, or continue to uphold international standards that are popular with the international community but

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(they are also informed) compromise American security. With such a choice, Americans are usually forced to hold their noses and prefer the former over the latter. It is unfortunate that no alternative meta-narrative exists which, frankly, represents a “third possibility” – that the US has an interest in protecting its vision of who it is, an appeal that recognizes what can be accomplished (both good and bad) through an internal reflection that tackles who and what the United States (or any nation-state) has been, has become, or will be; an account that recognizes the importance of physical existence and social needs, but places the driving force for both upon the securing of self-identity through time.

Introduction to ontological security

The central argument of the book is that states pursue social actions to serve self-identity needs, even when these actions compromise their physical existence. I use an ontological security approach to make intelligible three forms of social action that are sometimes referred to as “motives” of state behavior (moral, humanitarian, and honor-driven). While IR scholars have developed various interpretations of these actions they have done so by differentiating them into dualistic “forms.” Moral actions, we are told, are “costly,” honor is “dangerous,” and humanitarian actions compromise the “strategic” or “realist” interests that states must satisfy for their own physical existence.² This dualism assumes that for states to pursue “non”-strategic actions they must be pulled in a direction that they otherwise do not wish to go (either by domestic groups or by the international community). Yet why do states themselves feel compelled to pursue such actions? How do such actions serve the national interest? How are moral actions rational? The short answer to such questions is that these actions satisfy the self-identity needs of states. Or, conversely, that if states avoided these actions their sense of self-identity would be radically disrupted, and such a disruption is just as important to states as threats to their physical integrity.

States pursue their needs through social action, yet not to impress an external society so much as to satisfy their internal self-identity needs, and this book explicates such actions as rational pursuits to fulfill the drive for ontological security, as developed from the structuration theory of sociologist Anthony Giddens.³ The traditional notion of security in International Relations theory assumes that nation-states have one driving goal in their relations with other states – their own survival. Thus they should calculate their foreign policy decisions with solely that goal in mind. The cases explored in this book directly contradict, to varying degrees, the survival assumption which pervades mainstream IR, and the ontological security approach elucidates the actions pursued in those cases.

While physical security is (obviously) important to states, ontological security is more important because its fulfillment affirms a state’s self-identity (i.e. it affirms not only its physical existence but primarily how a state sees

itself and secondarily how it wants to be seen by others). Nation-states seek ontological security because they want to maintain *consistent self-concepts*, and the “Self” of states is constituted and maintained through a narrative which gives life to routinized foreign policy actions. Those routines can be disrupted when a state realizes that its narrated actions no longer reflect or are reflected by how it sees itself. When this sense of self-identity is dislocated an actor will seek to re-establish routines that can, once again, consistently maintain self-identity.

Ontological security reveals how crises that garner the attention of states challenge their identity. As the disparate behaviors of states illustrate, identity needs compel them to pursue actions that are seemingly irrational – yet such behavior must have made sense to the state agents who decided upon that course of action at the time. While the costs of ignoring physical security threats are obvious, such as “missile gaps,” world wars, eventual arms races, etc., little work has been done on the *costs of ignoring threats to ontological security*. Consistently ignored threats to ontological security produce what I refer to as “shame” for nation-state agents. Shame is used as a metaphor to understand how identity disconnects can compel states to pursue social actions which sacrifice physical security interests but strengthen ontological security. As developed in Chapter 3, shame is a problem in ontological security — nation-states seek to avoid it at all costs; however, its presence is *needed* if a state is going to confront its disrupted self-visions and therefore regain ontological security (although the former does not always guarantee the latter, as will also be demonstrated). Shame produces a deep feeling of insecurity – it is a temporary but radical severance of a state’s sense of Self. Its presence means that a state recognizes how its actions were (or could be) incongruent with its sense of self-identity. Ontological security-driven action, because it attempts to change behavior in relation to experienced shame, is thus self-help behavior.

Compared to the manner in which IR theorists have treated social action, using the need for ontological security in states leads to novel empirical findings. For example, humanitarian forms of social action presented a puzzle to mainstream IR theorists in the 1990s, who often understood such actions as a form of empathy that, in the following author’s view, contradicts the “self-help” behavior predicted by neorealist theory:

[Prosocial behavior] is derived from an assumption of other-regardingness – a sense of community or collective identity that fosters the well-being of others. Evidence that state behavior is motivated by this kind of *empathetic* identity would contradict neorealism, since such behavior would not be predicted by any neorealist theory.

(Elman 1996: 24, emphasis added)

Elman’s statement about “humanitarianism” being prosocial is still the basic assumption in IR theory, and the concomitant proposition in the above

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quotation is that such behavior contradicts the notion of “self-help.” And so IR scholars have attempted to explain these actions as the *reconstitution* of interests due to mitigating influences outside capability distributions. For instance, liberal scholars have argued that shifts in domestic coalitions explain “costly moral action.”⁴ For constructivists, humanitarian action develops from changes in social or collective identities (as Elman posits above). And English School solidarists like Nicholas Wheeler would argue that the defense of individuals is a principle which states uphold through interventions because it establishes the order that members of international society value.⁵ Regardless of their differences, all of these non-materialist accounts commonly assume that humanitarian or moral action is socially determined by collective intersubjective understandings that can best be understood by looking at changes in international or domestic context. At the very least, this research has concluded that what drives states to intervene on behalf of others is *empathy*; therefore the strangers who are being saved are not really “strangers” after all because “we tend to help those we perceive as similar to ourselves” (Finnemore 2003: 157). The whole concept of empathy implies a *connection* with others. The source for the repetition of this affective pull, according to this view, can be found at the international level in institutions of international law, organizations, norms, or regimes.

There is thus an environmental focus in many mainstream approaches – and it is one whose import goes well beyond the issue area of humanitarian action. The biggest departure the ontological security account finds with all mainstream approaches is one of their shared core assumptions, according to Lebow that “identities and interests at the state level *depend heavily* on international society. . . . Actors respond primarily to external stimuli. Realist, liberal and institutionalist approaches all focus on the constraints and opportunities created by the *environment*” (Lebow 2003: 336, 347, emphasis added).

Yet the same constructivists who place such an emphasis upon social environment, who thereby tacitly de-emphasize reflexive agency – when our needs are heavily intertwined with those of a community we have less control over what or who we are as individuals – also recognize “the need to adumbrate the mechanisms by which actors *free* themselves from dominant discourses and possibly transform the culture that is otherwise responsible for their identities” (Lebow 2003: 269, emphasis added). Furthermore, Finnemore states:

We lack good understandings of how law and institutions at the *international* level create these senses of felt obligation in *individuals*, much less states, that induce compliance and flow from some change in people’s understanding of their purpose or goals . . . pursuing these issues will take us down a road we have lately avoided – toward understanding change.

(Finnemore 2003: 160–161, emphasis added)

One response to Lebow and Finnemore's calls is to acknowledge that emancipation is much more difficult if we view that which must be transformed as the mountain of some embedded international "variable" (culture, identity, society, etc.). Furthermore, outside-in approaches, by focusing on international context, fail to conclude that social actions which appear to us to be driven by international context, such as "humanitarian" or "moral" actions, might instead be rational responses meant to fulfill a sense of self-identity. Actors might not be able to "free" themselves from international context, but they can free their Selves from routines which ultimately damage their self-identity. This does not mean that they will do so, however, but it does imply that the possibilities for "humanitarian" actions rest not upon a change in international context – nor even what to me seems like a Herculean effort to transform the discursive or ideational culture within which states operate – but upon a state interrogating its sense of Self.

Such an understanding of social action would address why states in similar structural contexts pursue *different* policy choices. Why would the United States fail to stop the genocide in Rwanda but feel compelled to do so in Kosovo (albeit in limited fashion in both cases). Are we to believe that the "social" context of world politics changed that remarkably in those five years? Why would the British fail to intervene (until 1995) in Bosnia but be so adamant about an intervention, through NATO, in Kosovo? These situations threatened the ability of states to effectively narrate their sense of selves and thus the context that did change was internal to each state's sense of self-identity. In 1999, NATO leaders were influenced by the recall of past disasters in weighing whether to intervene in Kosovo. Beginning with the Holocaust prior to and during World War II and leading up through Rwanda and Bosnia, these crises were discursive resources used by state agents that resulted in national remorse and ontological insecurity. The source for each NATO member state's particular insecurity differed – yet all equally wished to atone for past policy disasters that radically disrupted their sense of Selves. By looking at the British case of neutrality in the American Civil War, the Belgians in the First World War, and the case of the Kosovo intervention, we can better understand *why* states feel compelled to pursue (what appear to us) moral or "costly" actions and, most importantly, why such action is rational and in a state's *self-interest* even if it contradicts our prevailing conception of state security.

This does not imply that ontological security "determines" the actions of states – nor, furthermore, that politics plays no role in such action. Like the realist who assumes that leaders use politics and rhetoric to satiate the masses and activate them to engage in unsavory "security" policies, ontological security scholars assume that state agents use politics to secure self-identity commitments. Indeed, is there anything *more* political in social life than the struggle over identity?

Interpreting ontological security

How do I demonstrate my argument? Because I am interested in how actors create meanings for their actions and this book is a “motivational” or “intentional” account of action (see Kratochwil 1989: 23–25), and because I explicate the intentions of those actions where, instead of what necessarily “caused” them, my study is informed by the *Verstehen* approach to social scientific inquiry. Also known as the “interpretivist” or “hermeneutic” approach, *Verstehen* assumes that facts and observations are not independent entities reducible to the law-like generalizations of the physical sciences. Rather, understanding the objects of inquiry means also understanding, in a holistic manner, what processes motivate those actions. This is made possible by

plac[ing] an action within an intersubjectively understood context, even if such imputations are problematic or even “wrong” in terms of their predictive capacity. To have “explained” an action often means to have made intelligible the goals for which it was undertaken.

(Kratochwil 1989: 24–25)

What does it mean to interpret action rather than explain it through causal analysis? The ontological security process – a process which deals with matters such as self-identity, the creation of meanings for actions through a “biographical narrative,” how actors decide upon certain actions to promote a healthy vision of the self to others, how the internal dialectic of a divided or severed Self overcomes (but not always) insecurity, and how all of this influences the place of the national self in an international context – lends itself to an interpretive approach. In short, one must properly evaluate the context in which the self-regarding behavior of states takes place: “because reflexivity is the way in which people actively make social reality, it cannot be separated from the social context in which it occurs. Indeed, it is an integral part of this social reality” (Tucker 1998: 57).

Mervyn Frost (1996: 26–28) notes several requirements for the interpretivist. Three are noteworthy here: (1) that the interpretations (of the investigator) be tested against the self-understandings of the investigatees; (2) that the investigator stresses the importance of the constitutive language of the investigatees; (3) that the investigator take notice of the value systems of the investigatees. The third requirement does not mean that the investigator must value the same system as the investigatees, but it does require the investigator to recognize how those values influence the latter’s decision. In this sense, the central objective of scholars engaged in the “normative turn” in IR deals

[n]ot [with] whether ethical principles *ought* to guide behavior in this realm or what the content of such principles *ought* to be. Rather, the question to be addressed concerns the roles that *ethical standards* or

codes of conduct actually play in a social setting considered by many to be antithetical to the operation of normative principles.

(Young 2001: 161, emphasis added)

Furthermore, and equipped with an ontological security interpretation, using three of Frost's interpretivist requirements means that I seek to reconstruct the motives behind the actions of state agents in each empirical case. By resurrecting these accounts, we might recognize not only the theoretical importance of ontological security but also the rationality of those state agents.

Interpretive approaches are not without their problems – because interpretation captures the context and contingencies of social action, it falls prey to relativity; all actions are a product of their context and environment. Thus it becomes difficult to generalize about social action precisely because the continuities in action (between time and place) cannot be recognized. Therefore part of my inquiry into the empirical puzzles reviewed in this book includes a proper understanding of not only the *context* of those actions but also the underlying *continuity* the decisions for those actions serve. I do this precisely because self-identity is secured through ontological security, which is itself defined by a “sense of *continuity* and order in events” (Giddens 1991: 243).

Finally, interpretivist approaches sometimes disregard the importance of how power (and power relations) structure human behavior. Contrary to how it has been portrayed in certain accounts (Barkin 2003), structurationist-constructivism has placed a central emphasis upon power as an analytical concept – demonstrating how power might be constituted through moral authority (Hall 1997) or moral prestige (Lowenheim 2003). Nicholas Onuf emphasized how different types of rules – instruction, directive, commitment – when coupled with resources (which vary across actors), lead to different types of behavior: “agents do the ruling by getting other agents to accept their ideas and beliefs. They do so by example and by indoctrination. Rule in this form is *hegemony*” (Onuf 1998: 75).

While it is important to inquire about how the resources one agent possesses may be used to compel other agents toward a type of behavior, ontological security explicates how “resource possession” brings greater responsibility because the possession of resources is itself an identity commitment. One must account for capabilities as a component of self-identity in order to understand how, when, and why shame is triggered in the ontological security process. To consider power relations is not only necessary to avoid the problems of interpretive approach; it is vital for recognizing which types of situations threaten the self-identity of nation-states.

Comprehensiveness of argument

Since I seek to demonstrate a more comprehensive interpretation of what motivates states, or what sense of “security” they intend to satisfy, I am not explaining the *outcomes* of decisions but rather seeking to understand the

motivations behind a decision-making situation. I am arguing not that ontological security *falsifies* alternative accounts of state action but that it provides a more *complete* understanding of what motivates states in their actions. As Martha Finnemore posited, her “argument is not so much that neorealism and neoliberalism are wrong as they are grossly incomplete” (Finnemore 1996: 27). The “alternative explanations” sections in each case study chapter reveal how these explanations are logically inconsistent or grossly incomplete for understanding what motivated each of these states. Finnemore has recently termed this method “abduction,” which involves: “present[ing] hypotheses that ... quickly prove insufficient to explain events” (Finnemore 2003: 13).

As will be noted in Chapter 3, traditional security studies derive ontological assumptions from strategic schools such as realism that view state motivations as fixed across time and state agents, and myopically connected to the survival drive of states. The theoretical assumptions generated in these studies build off this ontology – because security interests are similar across all actors, they should act in a manner “predictable” according to the assumptions we make about which conditions drive those interests.⁶ In fact, Hedley Bull sees a direct connection between the two as one of value. Because order is a goal uniform across societies, *predictable behavior itself is a value*:

There does in fact exist a close connection between order in the sense in which it is defined here, and the conformity of conduct to scientific laws that afford a basis for (the researcher to) predict future behavior. ... Moreover, if we ask why men attach value to order ... *at least part of the answer is that they value the greater predictability of human behavior* that comes as a consequence of conformity to the elementary or primary goals of coexistence.

(Bull 1977: 7–8, emphasis added)⁷

To recognize within a “case” the importance of ontological security, I employ in Chapters 4–6 what has been termed the “case-narrative” approach. Scholars using case-narrative seek to resurrect, within each case, meaning as it relates to agents’ understanding of an event. Friedrich Kratochwil describes the contextual purpose driving such an approach:

The single (historical) case study, on the other hand, focuses right from the beginning on the issue of delimiting the case by providing a narrative “plot” and examining its coherence and “followability” critically. Here getting the context right and making judgment calls as to the important dimensions that develop throughout the observation is the actual puzzle. ... Thus judgment and quick recognition (reasoning by analogy rather than through logical inference or subsumption), both of which depend substantively on experience rather than deductive rigor and formal elegance, are required and provide help for orientation. To

that extent the knowledge appropriate for such an environment is exposure to many cases, the actual training and recognition for conjunctures rather than abstraction and formalization.

(Kratochwil 2006: 22–23)

Thus, the case-narrative approach does more than interpret – armed with a refined theoretical account, it reconstructs a particular “story” in the case by looking for conjunctures that would not have been recognized, would not have appeared, may not have even *existed* otherwise. And yet the ontological security approach to cases, while it interprets the continuity being sought by state agents, also recognizes the points at which that continuity is radically disrupted. Thus, in order to understand the purpose behind state actions, a certain focus must be given to periods of *disjuncture* in the narrative of state Selves – for within that disjuncture the disembodiment of a state Self is revealed.

The case study chapters therefore include a presentation and then dismissal of the available alternative interpretations of each case. After setting out the broad historical setting for each case study, I present some alternative interpretations for what happened in each case. This includes, generally, three sets of interpretations – strategic, economic, and ideational. While I present specific versions of these alternative interpretations in the following chapters, let me clarify what these sets of interpretations generally entail in measurement terms.

Strategic arguments have taken many forms, and they, along with economic arguments, form the basis for “traditional security assumptions.” Strategic arguments assume that states are driven by the need to survive and motivated to pursue interests derived from power:

The concept of interest defined as power . . . infuses rational order into the subject matter of politics, and thus makes the theoretical understanding of politics possible. On the side of the actor, it provides for rational discipline in action and creates that astounding continuity in foreign policy which makes American, British or Russian foreign policy appear as an intelligible, rational continuum.

(Morgenthau 2006: 5)

Strategic interpretations are indeed just that, interpretations, and Morgenthau’s words indicate that understanding “rationality” in this way helps us makes sense of what is *motivating* the “actor.”⁸ The strategic incentives approach takes several forms, whether it assumes that an element of state power is “credibility” or reputation (Mercer 1996), which might allow one state to compel other states to “do what they otherwise would not do.” Deterrence theorists since Thomas Schelling (1960) have predicted behavior by assuming that a state’s reputation for resolve increases this ability to control its environment. The focus here is upon outwardly driven behavior

(hence the word “strategic”) – states as relational beings that take into account their welfare in relative terms. Therefore in each case study I review the strategic incentives that existed for states to pursue the decisions that were made. As the reader will notice in the Belgian case, such strategic interpretations have almost no ground to stand upon, but they are still entertained. When available, I use existing historical accounts that used strategic interpretations to understand these cases.

Economic structuralist accounts understand states as structuring their behavior to maximize profits. Thus I ask in Chapters 4 and 6 which economic incentives could have motivated the analyzed states. How would British neutrality increase Britain’s (real or perceived) sense of economic well-being? Did NATO’s Kosovo operation open markets in southeastern Europe for Western economic interests?

Finally, and for lack of a better term, those accounts outside the ontological security interpretation that still posit an ideational, rather than material, incentive for the actions of states I term *ideational accounts*. For instance, I discuss, and then dismiss, the liberal interpretation for British neutrality in Chapter 4, the “cognitive” or “misperception” argument for why Belgium fought Germany in Chapter 5, and the liberal or “public opinion” interpretation for each NATO member state’s participation in the Kosovo operation in Chapter 6. Again, these are motivational accounts that posit a different “ideas-based” assumption for state action – namely that states are motivated to pursue policies which satisfy domestic-level coalitions or groups, or, in the case of cognitive arguments, assert that nation-states sought to satisfy their physical security but that the intervening variable of cognition forced them to misperceive such a threat.

Conceptual definitions

Biographical narrative

The biographical narrative is what Giddens also terms the “narrative of the self”: the story or stories by means of which self-identity is reflexively understood, both by the individual concerned and by others (Giddens 1991: 243). All states justify their actions, even when such actions compromise existing international principles. States “talk” about their actions in identity terms, and this is necessary because “only in the telling of the event does it acquire meaning, the meaning that makes such events politically relevant” (Lang 2002: 13). *Those specific “tellings” which link by implication a policy with a description or understanding of a state “self” constitute a state’s biographical narrative.* Narrative is the locus from which we as scholars can begin to grasp how self-identity constrains and enables states to pursue certain actions over others.

Discourse analysis is used in the case studies not only to explicate the content of a state’s biographical narrative but also to reveal how a discourse’s

effects constitute certain types of action: “discourse analysis is about studying meaning, and it studies meaning where it arises, namely in the language itself” (Neumann 2001: 3). In other words, as I have stated previously, I assume that actors must create meanings for their actions to be logically consistent with their identities. This means that state agents must explain, justify, and/or “argue” what a policy would mean about their sense of self-identity. Self-narratives are one manifestation of a “reality production,” as they form the meaning of an agent’s self-identity. Jennifer Milliken avers that:

beyond giving a language for speaking about (analyzing, classifying) phenomena, discourses make intelligible some ways of being in, and acting towards, the world, and of operationalizing a particular “regime of truth” while excluding other possible modes of identity and action.
(Milliken 1999: 229)

Admittedly, Giddens himself has a rather selective view of what represents “motivational language.” Relating language back to his core concept of recall, Giddens posits that there are two forms in which agents can “recapitulate past experiences in such a way as to focus them upon the continuity of action.” One is discursive consciousness, or those forms of recall an actor is “able to express verbally”; the other is practical consciousness, involving “recall to which the agent has access in the *duree* of action without being able to express what he or she thereby ‘knows’” (Giddens 1984: 49).

So the first problem with looking at discourse is that it is only one of two possible recall mechanisms. In short, we can measure discursive consciousness; practical consciousness we cannot. This problem is real, but by looking at discursive consciousness we are still able to capture much of the “agency” that is taken for granted in mainstream IR. Even if this is an incomplete practice for measuring “ontological security,” until we develop a method to read the minds of decision-making groups, analysis of discursive consciousness is the best we can do and it is a large improvement on existing assumptions made by social scientists about actor motivations.

A second problem with discourse analysis, according to Giddens, is that we can read *too much* into actor language.⁹ While this problem of overemphasis, like the limited picture of discursive consciousness, is also real, it too can be circumvented, because Giddens distinguishes slips of the tongue from what he calls “well-ordered speech.” The former are more apparent at the individual level, while the types of language we see international actors use look more like the latter. Well-ordered speech “is geared to the overall motivational involvements which speakers have in the course of pursuing their practical activities” (Giddens 1984: 103), and therefore, in structuration theory and in this study, the discourse that surrounds crisis decisions is more well ordered than it is “slips” of diplomatic tongues. This makes sense if we accept that “anxiety concerning the actual form of speech will be heightened only when the actor has a specific interest in getting what he or

she says “exactly right” (Giddens 1984: 104). Since international actors have just such an interest when they justify their actions (or inactions) to themselves and others, we can assume that the words they employ have definite purposes connected to their interests, rather than being unimportant slips.¹⁰

Discourse analysis helps accomplish three objectives in these case studies. First, it explicates how actors connect a policy choice with a particular narrative about self-identity. In other words, *it uncovers how state agents justify a policy by reasoning what such a policy means or would mean about their state’s respective sense of self-identity*. Second, discourse analysis specifies *when* considerations of self-identity lead to a certain policy decision. While “large-N” studies in social science attempt to determine which factors “cause” certain outcomes, they do not specify when such factors within cases obtain during a decision-making process, whereas I analyze the discourse used by British policy makers before, during and after Lincoln’s issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation to identify how the timing of the British decision relate to the timing of British understanding of the American Civil War. Third, this analysis uncovers how the actors create meanings not only of their vision of state self-identity but also of identity threats (what “causes” them, why those threats must be dealt with, which policy can best confront these threats, etc.).

Critical situations (self-identity threats)

Also discussed in Chapter 3, critical situations, according to Giddens, are “radical disjunctions of an *unpredictable* kind affecting substantial numbers of individuals” (Giddens 1984: 61). These are situations which disturb the “institutionalized routines” of states. It is largely unimportant whether I as a researcher decide that a series of events meets this definition. What is important is whether agents (or policy makers within each state) interpreted an event as a “critical situation.” In the strict sense, states solely concerned with their survival-based (traditional) security will interpret critical situations in a much different way than states concerned about their ontological security. Critical situations are identified by having three conditions. First, as the definition implies, they are situations which affect substantial numbers of individuals. Second, also from the definition, they are situations which largely cannot be predicted. These are situations that catch state agents off guard – if an agent could foresee a critical situation it would be able to adapt, presumably, to its effects a priori. Critical situations at the interstate level include one additional condition. According to my theory, critical situations threaten identity because agents perceive that something can begin to be done to eliminate them. Linked to the issue of identity disconnects, *agents must perceive that they are capable agents, or they must possess a capacity to alter/prevent/transform these critical situations so that they no longer threaten their identity*. As will be revealed, some agents surely perceive this to be the case but obfuscate to attempt to absolve themselves

from doing any action or accepting any responsibility for past “failures” (in self-identity terms). Such obfuscatory language can lead to policies which haunt the Selves of states.

As I demonstrate in my case studies, the American Civil War constituted a critical situation for the British, and the German ultimatum was a critical situation for the Belgians in August 1914, as was the (1998–9) Kosovo crisis for NATO member states.

Shame

As discussed in Chapter 3, shame is defined by Giddens as “anxiety about the adequacy of the narrative by means of which the individual sustains a coherent biography” (Giddens 1991: 65). Therefore shame at the level of states translates into state anxiety over the ability to reconcile *past (or prospective) actions* with the biographical narrative states use to justify their behavior. Shame represents insecurity regarding issues of self-identity.

What constitutes evidence of shame? Since it proves difficult to measure emotions on the collective level of states, we can only measure the posited *effects* generated by those emotions. Shame is indicated by two forms of discursive expression. One is *expressed remorse for past wrongs* and could develop, in its most extreme form, into formal apologies made by state leaders. These are *references to a self-disconnect in the context of a policy action*. Since states change policies for a variety of reasons, this means in methodological terms that we must identify whether *remorse* played an important role in states choosing a particular course of action or whether other factors, such as a strategic or economic incentive, were more important.

Shame is also evidenced when state agents conduct counterfactual exercises by indicating how a policy action would be inconsistent with and harmful toward a state’s sense of self-identity. Not only may shame exist to compel action, but *its absence may also prevent certain courses of action as well*. In this sense, states perform counterfactual exercises (“if ... then”) to determine whether certain decisions would produce problematic outcomes, and we should expect that certain choices were eventually eliminated as “illegitimate” because they would have resulted in either externally or internally originated shame. As the case studies demonstrate, such “at the time” counterfactuals were exercised by the British in 1863 and the Belgians in 1914. These empirical referents of shame are indexed by the theoretical forms that shame can take, what I refer to as “retrospective” and “prospective” shame.

Defense of cases

There are three general reasons for why I chose to explore (1) British neutrality in the American Civil War, (2) Belgium and World War I, and (3) NATO’s Kosovo intervention.

First, the British and NATO cases help me demonstrate the position I advance in Chapter 3 – that the material capabilities of actors are a factor in “shame” production. That is, because they possess the greatest capabilities, hegemonic units (like nineteenth-century Britain and 1999’s NATO) are confronted with a greater set of choices for action in any situation. Whether they are bound by “objective” material forces or not is of little consequence because I am positing that powerful states *perceive* that they have leverage over situations and thus they have *choices for action*. I thus chose two cases where we can observe this fluid possibility of agency. The cases illustrate how material forces influence self-identity commitments.

Second, these cases represent situations where states pursued materially costly policies that influenced their relative capabilities in a negative way. The Belgian case is the most radical of the three – where in 1914 Belgium sacrificed the physical legitimacy of its state to satisfy its ontological security (in an effort to secure its “honor”). All three of these cases, furthermore, provide important puzzles for the traditional security literature, which assumes “survival” as the primary (perhaps only) drive states seek to satisfy. They also demonstrate the intensity with which and the context in which states are committed to collective v. self-identity. The Belgian case provides an additional window onto the evolving concept of “honor” in IR theory. Honor is often assumed to operate only at the level of great powers, as a type of “prestige” (see Gilpin 1981) that allows states to control others without the use of force. Honor, in this respect, is simply a currency of economic and military power. Smaller countries like Belgium in 1914, according to this view, are not driven by honor because they have none – being without a history of economic or military superiority. And, furthermore, if honor is simply a currency of economic and military power, then honor is a finite resource, as stated by Richard Ned Lebow (quoting John Finley): “it is the nature of honor that it must be exclusive, or at least hierarchic. When everyone attains equal honor, then there is no honor for everyone” (Finley 1954: 126; Lebow 2003: 272). As such, we would expect the Belgians not to be driven by honor because their lack of capabilities translated into a *lack of agency*.

Yet the Belgian case demonstrates that small states have a strong obligation to their sense of Self and that with such an obligation they can exercise an enormous amount of agency. With the Belgians backs against the wall, the knowledge that the Belgian state would actually cease to exist hardly constrained Belgian action. If anything, such knowledge *emancipated* the Belgians to realize their sense of Self (who they were and what they stood for). What the Belgian case also demonstrates is that small states also have an obligation to international society (what I term their “external honor”). While this latter observation echoes that made by the English School perspective, the fact that the international principle of sovereign independence was upheld by a small state is not often explicated in international society approaches, where the emphasis is upon great power agreements (like the “Balance of Power” system constructed during the nineteenth-century “Concert of Europe”).

Finally, all three cases represent historically important points in time. The outcome of the American Civil War might have been different had Britain involved itself in the conflict in some fashion. An altered outcome would have been even more likely had Britain supported the ultimately vanquished Confederate forces. This could have led to a permanently separated American nation-state.¹¹ While Belgium's decision in 1914 to fight Germany did not necessarily contribute to the ultimate German defeat in 1918, it did slow the German advance down enough to provide Britain and France with further time to mobilize and respond. And the Kosovo operation, as well, has been called the first "humanitarian war," by supporters and critics alike. Whether one agrees with this statement or not, the operation represents one of the first cases where a collective security organization was used to "save strangers" from ethnic-cleansing policies.

State agents as a "level of analysis"

This book is centered upon a concept that has been used in the field of social psychology to understand individuals. Political science has not been opposed to using such research to supplement existing theory, but, as one scholar notes, most political scientists use social psychology to "refine and amend rationality assumptions that pervade the discipline ... [thus] the interest has been in cognition and its failings" (Finnemore 2003: 154).¹² Using an individual-level need to interpret the behavior of collectives brings up the problem of "levels of analysis." In many ways this issue is part of the agent-structure "problem" writ large.¹³ The many IR scholars who have applied any individual need to states have had to deal with this albatross and we might even argue that this is in many ways a trap that all IR (and even political science) theorists must attempt to elude prior to employing an empirical "test." That almost all theorists have failed at this task seems to suggest an inherent futility in dealing with this issue – the multitude of strategies that have been used to address the issue suggests a pervasively unsatisfied discipline regarding the levels-of-analysis problem.

One strategy has been simply to point out the ubiquity in IR theory of individual-to-state ascription, what we might term the "everyone does it, so I can do it" answer to the level-of-analysis (L.o.A.) quandary. Alexander Wendt noted in a recent forum on the "State as Person in IR" in *Review of International Studies* that

such attributions pervade social science and IR scholarship in particular ... all this discussion assumes that the idea of state personhood is meaningful and at some fundamental level makes sense. In a field in which almost everything is contested, this seems to be one thing on which almost all of us agree.

(Wendt 2004: 289)

In my earlier work, I have also used a similar escape hatch for this problem: ‘most models of International Relations base the needs of states on some type of individual and human need’ (Steele 2005: 529, original). I now recognize that there exist several further (and more productive) ways to understand the issue of state personification. The strongest evidence for the pervasiveness (but not necessarily, as noted on p. 15, persuasiveness) of individual-to-collective ascription has been demonstrated by research on the use of emotion as an ontological basis for state behavior. All mainstream approaches to IR – neorealist, neoliberal, and conventional constructivist alike – assume some type of human emotion operating at the level of states.¹⁴ There is no such thing as the “cold, calculating” nation-state – it does not exist in reality or, indeed, in even the most “rationalist” approaches to international politics. Neta Crawford ably demonstrated in her seminal article (Crawford 2000) and her likewise seminal book (Crawford 2002), that neorealist and neoliberal approaches to international politics accept two important emotions – fear and hate – as the “engines” which drive state behavior (Crawford 2000: 120–123). That these approaches have ascribed *only those two* emotions says more about the agenda of mainstream IR than it does about the “irrationality” of emotion as a social reality of world politics.

Emotion is also the primary resource for neoconservative philosophy, playing a vital role in sustaining the Bush administration’s foreign policy agenda. Despite the tough talk often associated with neoconservatism, the purpose behind neoconservative visions of the national interest is to imbue such foreign policy actions with emotional content and *meaning*. In fact, while neoconservatism shares much with democratic peace perspectives and while neoconservatives in the Bush administration has used the latter as a resource to counter criticism of its Iraq policy, this appeal to emotion is what primarily distinguishes neoconservative philosophy from the radical self-interest celebrated by liberal philosophy, as eloquently noted by Michael Williams in the context of neoconservatism’s critique of the “liberal individual”:

the reduction of action to nothing more than the pursuit of self-interest gives rise to a destructive combination of hedonism and despair. Lacking any broader vision within which to locate their lives, liberal individuals are driven by (often base) impulses and ephemeral self-gratification that ultimately renders life empty and “meaningless.”

(Williams 2005b: 312)

In short, individuals are emotionally connected to the nation-state. The state agent creates an emotional connection that fetishizes the *authority* of a nation-state to promote the “national interest” – thus in neoconservative philosophy the citizen’s existential experience can only be completed through the State itself. Furthermore, and as noted by Oded Lowenheim and Gadi Heimann (2006), several authors such as Rose McDermott (2004) and Jonathan Mercer (2005) demonstrate how emotions are *necessary* for

rational action.¹⁵ Lowenheim and Heimann additionally assert that another motive, revenge, is driven by emotional and social factors.

Indeed, the need for ontological security is uniformly driven by emotion even though the behavior that serves the social construction of self-identity (of course) varies. As I discuss in more detail in Chapter 3, ontological security is intricately related to the processes of memory, narrative, and action:

What is needed by any theory that posits the self as a collection of memories is a mechanism by which the system sets priorities ... the primary role of emotion in humans is to alert the individual experiencing the emotion that action in some situation is necessary and to motivate or energize that action.

(Singer and Salovey 1993: 121–122)

Emotions prioritize the information that swamps agents and help in the coordination of action.

Jennifer Mitzen, one of the few scholars working on ontological security in IR theory, while noting the above “everyone does it” strategy as one of her three “defenses” for, in her terms, “scaling up” ontological security from individuals to states, also posits that “the fact that everyone else treats states as people, however, does not justify my doing so” (Mitzen 2006b: 352). Mitzen then offers two more important defenses for ontological security at the state level: (1) the ontological security of states satisfies the ontological security of its members (individuals); (2) assumptions about individuals help explain macro-level patterns. The first defense, that “inter-societal routines help maintain identity coherence for each group, which in turn provides individuals with a measure of ontological security” (Mitzen 2006b: 352) is persuasive, but not without its problems. This position is probably necessary for Mitzen’s view of ontological security (more on this in Chapter 3), where the individuals of a state are homogenized so as to lend the state a coherent identity, thus making the rather, in her account, more permanent (and socially dependent) nature of self-identity through time seem inevitable. But it fundamentally obscures the *political* and *normative* nature of the ontological security process. Each opinion leader of a state must independently interpret the self-identity that shapes his or her policy choices and then bring that interpretation to the bargaining table when discussing a course of action. Because of the nature of human beings, individuals within states disagree as to, first, what the interests of their states are and, second, how one course of action over another fulfills those interests. By reifying ontological security to all members of a society, we miss out on the very interesting political process of self-identity contestation. This relates to my view of “reflexivity” in states as contrasted by reflexivity in typical social agents. Reflexive monitoring of the actions of states involves much more than routinized action, and Mitzen’s “scaling” de-emphasizes the narrative-based disagreements that occur in national debates over self-identity and policy. In

other words, state interests and identity are always up for grabs; each is formed and reformed by the individuals who constitute those states. Mitzen, by contrast, like neoliberal and neorealist theories before her, black-boxes the state, lending theoretical elegance to the ontological security story of states by short-siding the possibilities of state agency. The second problem with Mitzen's defense is that it also provides no real guidance to the methodological quandary – where are we to look for “evidence” of ontological security in Mitzen's account? This is probably a result of her ontology as well – where there is little mention of the importance of narrative in the ontological security process (as there is, by contrast, in Giddens's account).¹⁶

We have a third defense, related to Mitzen's – what we might call the “raise the white flag approach” – and an example is provided by one of the other few IR scholars besides Mitzen who has done work on ontological security. Bill McSweeney's answer to this quandary is simple:

It follows from the analysis of social action as purposive, reflexive, monitored, routinized, that collective actors, including states, cannot strictly be agents. It makes sense, however, and for some purposes is essential, to treat the state and other collectivities as unit actors, *as if* they were agents. Their action is subject to the same logical and sociological analysis as that of individuals or other collectivities. It makes sense to speak of states as if they were agents when the agency of individuals in a representative capacity carries the allocative and authoritative resources of the state with it.

(McSweeney 1999: 151, emphasis added)

In other words, McSweeney concedes the argument that states are not people, but considers it necessary for both ontological (because individuals are in charge of state resources) and methodological reasons to consider states “as if” they are people. Although “states” may be the functional units of traditional security models, state leaders are the ones who decide on certain policies. As such, “agentic action” is implemented by leaders: “[b]eing an agent is to be able to deploy a range of causal powers . . . action depends upon the capability of the individual to ‘make a difference’ to a pre-existing state of affairs or course of events” (Giddens 1984: 14).

McSweeney's is a more narrow version of, in my view, the most sophisticated answer to the L.o.A. “problem.” It is the position taken by Anthony Lang (2002) and various English School scholars, and it is this primary strategy on individuals v. collectives I also use as a basis for my position in this book: because they represent their state, state agents “are the state” because they have the moral burden of making policy choices *and* the capacity to implement those decisions. This fourth defense does more than what McSweeney proposes in that it views “states [as] structures that constrain and enable those individuals who hold positions of *responsibility* in the state” (Wheeler 2000: 22). While on an individual basis these leaders will differ in terms of their own ontological security, they all share the same

collective commitment to *state* self-identity. Thus, this position does not deem the personal insecurities of leaders irrelevant, but what is more relevant is how leaders recognize the position of their state's "Self" in international society. Anxiety over their respective state's place in the world will still be evident no matter how each individual feels about his or her own sense of integrity.¹⁷

The focus here, then, is upon how narrative provides both an ontological and methodological referent for ontological security. For Lang, who impressively synthesizes the work of Hans Morgenthau and Hannah Arendt to form a theory of agency and state behavior, the answer to the L.o.A. question is "to look to the formal representatives of the community." Lang's ontology squares with this methodological decision, in that

These representatives not only represent the interests of the citizens of a state, they also represent the state to the representatives, and thus citizens, of other states. . . . The representative or diplomat embodies the state in moments of agency. Even more importantly, Morgenthau's conception of state agency implies that only in those moments of diplomatic (or military) action does the state *really come into existence*. Otherwise it only exists in potential; the representative *must actualize the power of the state*.

(Lang 2002: 16–17, emphasis added)

Lang justifies the agent-as-state position as necessary because of the "essentially normative character" of state agency as it relates to the national purpose. Most importantly, it is in those moments when the state is challenged ontologically that a state leader must "actualize" the presentation of the state. Lang's position on this view is the one I take, and thus use, to defend the position that *ontological security obtains for states because state agents seek to satisfy the self-identity needs of the states which they lead*. "State agents," of course, can be construed in many ways, but methodologically this will become clearer in the case study chapters, where I define, a priori, the "agents" for each of the policy decisions (what I term my "spatial parameter").

But the ontological distinction of "agents as states" can be further developed using this compelling approach to narrative. As psychologist Mark Freeman asserts, the person doing the narrating limits the number of relevant events in a particular history by "decid[ing], out of the possibilities that exist, what sort of story will be told" (Freeman 1993: 198). History exists, memory organizes history, and narrative expresses that organization to ourselves and others.

This does not presuppose that ontological security – by "individualizing states" – neglects the influence that the social environment has upon what the narrator says. As Freeman also states, "the way we understand the world, and talk and write about it, is socially constructed" (Freeman 1993: 198). The social construction of self-identity is just that – yet, as the three

cases explored in this book demonstrate, the conundrum that state agents confronted dealt with who they were as embodiments of the state. The concern in each of these cases is not what international society would think of the respective states, but how, upon reflection and in the future, the state itself would be able to organize those actions in a future narrative that maintained a sense of self-integrity.

A sense of Self presupposes a distinction from the surrounding environment – the mere act of recognizing ourselves is the first of many in a process meant to extract who we are from what surrounds us. *Narrative provides a coherence to the Self*. It creates the “person” of the state. Without narrative, without a state agent collecting the history of a nation-state into a story that informs current actions, the Self of a state does not exist. Freeman, writing about Augustine’s narrative in *Confessions*, posits that

had he [Augustine] merely written a chronicle of past experiences rather than a history, these experiences themselves would need to have been “re-presented” in all of the openness and uncertainty that had initially surrounded them; all that would have been said is “and then,” “and then,” “and then” (and so on), as if he had no idea at all of the whole of which these episodes were a part.

(Freeman 1993: 29–30)

There is no idea of the “whole” that is the state without a story about that state. And state agents are the ones who construct the Selves of states through narrative. Without narrative, we only know “that state” spatially (although even here one could argue that a satellite photograph will not reveal the borders virtually ascribed there through centuries of give and take). But conceptually, the “idea” of the state cannot exist without this narration to develop a sense of *continuity*. The reason states have an ontological security is because they have a historical account of themselves that has been “built up” through the narrative of agents of the past, present, and the future.¹⁸

Cultivating the “new (security) research agenda”

Rodney Bruce Hall proposes a new “research agenda” that proceeds from his established proposition that “the notion of state interests varies with variations in societal self-identification” (Hall 1999: 294). If, as in Hall’s study, institutional form (i.e. Westphalian state) solidifies identity, then identities and interests should remain wholly fixed over long periods of time. Or, put another way, identities generate new institutional forms which then, in turn, institutionalize these identities. But state interests change all the time, and if this is the case, then identity changes are possible *within similar institutional forms*. Ontological security helps connect interests to these sudden engagements with identity.

Hall also notes that this research agenda should

focus in part upon the economic component of the notion of societal security and state security. . . . In the heyday of popular nationalism no form of government that did not diligently seek to provide for the economic well-being of its people was capable of surviving the social upheaval attending the spectacle of the “world in depression.”

(Hall 1999: 295)

We should understand, however, that individuals look toward their states to provide “societal needs” defined outside of economic and other materialist criteria. Hall states that there exist empirical anomalies arising since the Cold War, such as

Secessionist and irredentist movements [that] have created conditions under which members of multilateral security institutions such as NATO have been forced to reconceptualize their own security identities and interests . . . these events portend significant changes in the structure of civil–military relations, as the armed forces of national-states are deployed for purposes that *fail to conform to traditional notions of the security interests of national-states*.

(Hall 1999: 296–297, emphasis added)

This is important, for it begs the question of *why these movements, or crises, generate a need to “reconceptualize” security identities and interests*. We can surmise where Hall is going in this passage, since it is placed toward the end of his seminal book. We might look to a new institutional form, say a supranational organization, that can better capture this new conception of security (and thus collective identity) than the national-state could. I agree that these post-Cold War transformations leave us with a puzzle, but one can look back into history, as I do in this study, for other similar puzzles. Identity change has always had implications for forceful responses, and the relationship between a society and its military thus has an impact upon foreign policy structures. The cases in this book demonstrate how contemplation of the use of force rarely conforms to these traditional notions of security interests. As the flurry of studies challenging traditional notions of security suggests, IR scholars might wish to rethink the “default” position strategic arguments hold in our field.

While Hall focused on how changes in social *collective* identity render institutional forms obsolete, I intend to show how changes in *self*-identity render certain security interests inoperable. And, like Hall, I see social agency as fully responsible for these changes because I share the assumption that “we possess social agency that may enable us to organize [our] future quite differently” (Hall 1999: 299). As such:

Our social agency levies upon us the burden of responsibility for that future ... if we own up to the system-transforming capacity of our social agency, *we must also own the consequences of the decisions we make in executing that agency.*

(Hall 1999: 299, emphasis added)

Knowing this means that these *consequences in themselves* are generative, or, more specifically, they may produce a need for leaders to change policy decisions to avoid similar consequences in the future. These consequences need not be in physical terms – equally costly are those situations that change the embedded context in which states can plausibly see and talk about themselves. Indeed, “what we call ourselves says a lot about us” (Hall 1999: 299).

We must therefore understand that human construction is hardly a linear process:

[H]istory is neither cyclical nor progressive, and practitioners of international relations are neither necessarily rushing toward catastrophe nor toward global cooperation and passivity. *History will go where the changes that we effect in global social orders lead it.*

(Hall 1999: 300, emphasis added).

But understanding social structures as the social constructs of people, arranged to fulfill the social purpose of a state, is a step in the right direction. With that goal in mind, I shall conclude this chapter by outlining the focus of the remaining chapters of the book.

Chapter summaries and conclusion

The inquiry proceeds through six additional chapters. Chapter 2 critically reviews two binaries that permeate IR theory: (1) self v. collective identity; and (2) moral v. selfish action. Reviewing several bodies of social theory, from the work of Reinhold Niebuhr and Max Weber to the critical theory of IR post-structuralists, I argue that these dichotomies, taken separately or together, have shielded IR theory from the possibility that states, as internal reflective actors, act “morally” to serve their self-visions. Regarding state identity, I first demonstrate how the predominant assumptions about the “rational, ego-driven” state of neorealist and neoliberal theories are a misguided set of assumptions about the identities of nation-states. Additionally, social constructivists and English School solidarists have placed too great an emphasis on how “collective identity” or “collective principles” have influenced, in turn, the individual interests of states. I then propose that humanitarian or moral actions can be a form of rational social action when they serve the self-identity needs of individuals and/or states.

After deconstructing these dichotomies in Chapter 2, in Chapter 3 I apply the concept of ontological security to IR theory. Ontological security-seeking

behavior is fulfilled through the reproduction of action that takes the form of routines. I argue that it is possible to explicate the internal mechanisms which provide ontological security and also address some of the limits states face to realizing their ontological security, factors that impede or enable states to experience shame or serious disconnects with self-identity: (1) material and reflexive capabilities; (2) crisis assessment; (3) state biographical narratives (illocutionary discourse); and (4) co-actor discourse strategies (perlocutionary discourse). I then refer back to these factors in each case study.

Chapter 4 reviews Britain's pursuit of security in the nineteenth century. I demonstrate how the Emancipation Proclamation (EP) prevented British involvement in the American Civil War, arguing that the EP changed the meaning of the American Civil War for the British, thus clarifying why nineteenth-century Britain remained neutral in a conflict whose increased duration had dire economic consequences for its citizens and whose outcome would have important consequences for its future relative power trajectory. By focusing on British opinion leader debates occurring both before and after the issuance of the Proclamation, I assess the EP's impact upon Britain's decision not to recognize the Confederacy. I argue that the British engaged in ontological security-seeking behavior in order to affirm their sense of self-identity. Because the EP changed the *meaning* of the American Civil War for the British, neutrality following the EP fulfilled British ontological security.

Chapter 5 addresses how ontological security informs a nation-state's conception of honor, and how self-identity needs can completely jeopardize the physical existence of a state. Germany issued an ultimatum in July 1914 that demanded unfettered access through Belgian territory. Yet even though the Belgians knew that if they chose to fight the Germans they would face disastrous consequences, they fought anyway and suffered a catastrophic defeat and lost control of their country until the end of the war. The Belgian decision to fight the Germans provides the starkest contradiction of IR's mainstream "survival" assumption regarding the behavior of states, *and* it challenges the prevailing (but underdeveloped) understanding of a "just war" in light of the reasonable chance for success condition. Because of this, the case provides an opportunity to interpret why the Belgians chose to fight thereby explicitly ignoring their own physical security. In this case, an ontological security approach serves two important purposes. First, it theoretically provides a deeper understanding of honor as a concept in IR theory. Second, ontological security is used to demonstrate how Belgian honor was based on the internal need to confront threats to self-identity and the external need to reinforce a social (or collective) identity to the greater European community. By fulfilling these identity commitments, Belgium received widespread recognition and admiration from fellow European states. I use historical evidence and the discourse of Belgian and European leaders to demonstrate how an ontological security approach

helps make intelligible the seemingly irrational Belgian decision to fight the German army at the beginning of World War I.

In Chapter 6, I use an ontological security argument to interpret NATO's 1999 Kosovo operation, to understand how state agents in a collective security organization confronted what they perceived to be a threat to their individual states' *self*-identities. While Chapters 4 and 5 are, to some degree, ontological security "success stories" in the sense that both 1860s Britain and Belgium in 1914 made a reflexively engaged decision to avoid ontological insecurity (or "shame"), I argue in Chapter 6 that each NATO member state's past policy failures generated ontological insecurity and that this disconnect changed the set of policy choices for Kosovo. While NATO member states secured self-identity by intervening in Kosovo, they did so only after reflexively considering past failed opportunities to address the identity threat of humanitarian crisis. This chapter uses the concept of shame as a metaphor to understand how identity disconnects can compel states to pursue social actions which sacrifice physical security interests but strengthen ontological security. Using the concept of the biographical narrative, I identify the (re)sources of shame that each individual state's agents used to create meanings for the NATO action. These narratives linked state actions to self-identity commitments. Like other cases in the book, this case problematizes traditional security interpretations of state behavior, but in addition this case implicates the common assumption of (certain) constructivists and English School solidarists that "humanitarian" actions need result from collective identity interests. While this was a collective security action, each participating NATO state had to create *individual* meanings for its own self-interest to intervene in Kosovo. Thus, this case demonstrates the importance that self-identity plays in the social actions of states and shows how "humanitarian" actions, because they serve self-identity, are rational.

I conclude in Chapter 7 by discussing the importance of what I term "self-interrogative reflexivity" in the ontological security process. The ability to reflexively monitor action is rather consistent across individuals, while the British, Belgian, and NATO cases demonstrate that states vary in their self-interrogative reflexive capabilities. While ontological security is something all states seek to achieve, they all face barriers to doing so. I thus propose four "sites" which might better stimulate nation-states into self-interrogative reflexivity: social movements, non-governmental organization (NGO) and transnational actor counter-narratives, international organizations, and autonomous domestic and international media. I also propose two strategies international actors can use to incite targeted states to reflexively engage their sense of Self. Self-interrogative reflexivity applies not only to states, however, and in this concluding chapter I also discuss how IR scholars must better recognize their own role in producing the meta-narratives which shape political action. With this in mind, I conclude with some implications for the future of the ontological security research program.

In sum, the book explores how “humanitarian” or “moral” action is a “security interest” of certain states when it helps secure self-identity (especially when it compromises a state’s physical existence). The book demonstrates that self-identity, reflexivity, and shame (all part of the ontological security process) are important aspects which are always at play in foreign policy decision-making processes; and it establishes, even in the limited contexts of the case studies, that states are more concerned with satisfying their drive for ontological security. Thus, an ontological security approach, I assert, explains *more* phenomena than materialist or strategic interpretations of state behavior. And finally, the book reveals that the words which states use to describe actions (of themselves and others) matter and, related to this, that non-forceful events (events where no force is used or where such force poses no physical material threat to an examined state) have implications for foreign policy decisions.

2 Identity, morality, and social action

At one time international politics was thought to be a realm devoid of morality. Anarchy begot the need to survive, the need to survive begot self-help, and the fear of a sucker's payoff marginalized inter-state cooperation and ethical behavior. This view has changed only slightly, with a "normative turn" in IR recognizing the limited importance of values, norms, ideas, and ethics.¹ Thus IR theorists amended the theoretical sequence by understanding the international realm as a community or society of states that observed principles and rules within anarchy. States responded, in turn, to international signals, regimes, institutions, rules, and principles that pulled them in a direction that allowed for a limited, but significant, place for moral action. Thus, the nation-state that acted morally did so because of its membership in a society that was constituted by an intersubjective web of meanings. States mutually agreed upon rules that, when reciprocally observed, allowed them to pursue certain self-interested goals. The possibility that states possessed normative concerns that were internally generated, that they had a selfish interest in "acting morally," was a possibility largely ignored by IR theory.

This chapter confronts two related sets of issues regarding the social actions of agents (and, specifically, nation-states). The first section examines how theorists have viewed social actions as driven by either collective societal factors or self-regarding internal phenomena and how the origins for these actions influence an agent's identity. There are largely two bases to theorize about identity – the collective (which engulfs or shapes the Self) or an oppositional Other against which an agent identifies (the so-called Self v. Other "nexus"). The second section expresses how social action has been largely dichotomized between "selfish" v. "moral" actions. Accounts provided by Max Weber and Reinhold Niebuhr demonstrate how this dichotomization preceded, and then enveloped, IR theory. Niebuhr's theory also engages selfish v. moral interests as a level of analysis issue – the individual can be moral, but nations cannot.

As implied above, the two sets of issues are linked – collectively driven actions are often assumed to be moral because they serve to reinforce the ideals of a society, as they require agents to transcend their sense of Self.

Those ideals, whether they are intersubjectively constructed (i.e. positive law) or universalist-absolute (i.e. natural law), represent mutual agreements. Conversely, self-interested actions are amoral, if not also immoral. In this vein, “honor” as a concept in IR theory is uniquely positioned, considered to be either “selfish” (resulting from prideful motives) or “moral” (as its bestowment depends upon community-sanctioned principles).

Where can we find a third position regarding the collective (moral) v. individual (selfish) dichotomy? Ironically, it exists within Niebuhr’s social theory, where the basis for moral action can be found in, perhaps even depends upon, the self-interest of individual agents in realizing their own self-identity. This is the primary position that I defend in subsequent chapters regarding nation-states. While individual states may engage in behaviors that reinforce or distinguish them as part of a larger community of states, they only commit to foreign policy actions through time which they perceive as securing their self-identity or their sense of ontological security. What have appeared to us (scholars) as the “humanitarian” or “moral” actions of states actually represent a form of rational action because they serve to reinforce the state drive of ontological security as such actions confront threats to *self*-identity. Thus, it is problematic for IR theorists, or any social theorists for that matter, to separate “rational” acts from “moral” acts, implying that moral action cannot be rational.

Environment, structure, and identity (collective and self) in International Relations theory

IR theorists who are concerned with collectively driven actions in international politics make, to varying degrees, an assumption about the basis of international environment and how that environment constrains and shapes the interests of nation-states. What theorists call this environment varies; certain scholars equate the international environment to an international “structure,” which could be material (as it is in many systemic approaches),² but might also be constituted by “shared knowledge and intersubjective understandings [that] may also shape and motivate actors” (Finnemore 1996, 15).³ Certain constructivist and English School approaches to IR have focused upon the degree to which international structures shape the interests of nation-states, and it is not surprising then that both schools have made international law a focus of their acumen (see Kratochwil 1989; Onuf 1989; Bull 1977; Wheeler 2000). When Hedley Bull speaks of International Politics as an “anarchical society” he asserts that states are constrained by social norms (Bull 1977). Bull’s thesis demonstrates that states do have a self-interest in upholding the order of the sovereign state system. Even when they transgress the rule of sovereignty, states are compelled, at minimum, to plausibly legitimate these transgressions. Furthermore, when great power states become consumed by international security at the point when domestic security is no longer such a concern, international politics can be

considered a “mature anarchy” (Buzan 1991). The order of the system is its functional logic, although, as Mervyn Frost points out, order is constitutive – that is, it is not so much that “order is a primary goal of basic social arrangements, but [that it is] a constitutive characteristic of all of them” (Frost 1996: 118). In other words, states might value order but without order we would have no states. Nevertheless, the emphasis upon order in English School approaches demonstrates how environment is essential to state behavior.

By positing that “actors do not have a self prior to interaction with an other,” and that, furthermore, a “principle of constructivism [is] that the meanings in terms of which action is organized arise out of interaction” (Wendt 1992: 402, 403), what Michael Williams (2005b) and others have termed “conventional constructivism” emphasizes the environment and, directly, the interaction which happens within that environment.⁴ It is an ontological position that provides fertile ground for causal analysis. Such a strategy was identified by Giddens in his remarks about structural sociologists, such as Peter M. Blau, who separated the psychology of individuals from social structures for the express purpose of “causal explication” (Giddens 1984: 213). By holding the “person”-ality of individuals constant one can demonstrate how structures constrain their behavior. To do this we must de-emphasize the possibility that the “structure” itself was in part patterned by the persons who reproduced it to begin with. Like the structural sociology criticized by Giddens, conventional constructivism separates structure from agent for the express purpose of observing a causal mechanism,⁵ largely ignoring a huge piece of the theoretical puzzle.⁶

For the conventional constructivists, giving ontological primacy to the environment creates a systemic “logic of cultural selection” regarding states. The primary purpose for such environmental emphasis is purely methodological, not so much an approximation of social reality as an analytical overture to be taken seriously in positivist IR. Make no mistake; this environmental logic paves the way for causal analyses which “integrate” constructivist insights regarding intersubjective understandings (see Harrison 2004; Mitchell 2002). This is because scholars can ascribe and aggregate a measure of “culture,” like dyads of rival states for a Lockean logic of anarchy, or simply the pure total of democratic states, and see how those levels correlate with state behavior or political development (defined by “democraticness”).⁷

The practice of focusing upon cultural structure has been attacked from a variety of angles. Wendt himself admits that making state properties dependent upon systemic cultural structures is the “more contentious” of the two relationship sets. It makes state identities “given” prior to the formation of structure, or what is at least given is the fact that states have a desire to interact before they meet any other units. Indeed, this is precisely the line of criticism Naem Inayatullah and David Blaney make of Wendt, because he “says nothing about the actors ‘prior’ to their interaction.

Haven't actors already constructed some sense of self and some understanding of others prior to contact" (Inayatullah and Blaney 1996: 73)? This is the issue which permeates, for me, the collective v. self debate regarding identity. My main criticism of a purely outside-in approach for explaining the formation of norms or identities *or* the actions of states is simple: How can states be so willingly influenced by global cultural structures if they disagree with their "nature?" Surely, all international actors can have their arm twisted or be cajoled with material incentives or barriers by other international actors, but when speaking on the level of pure identity formation isn't the push of world culture upon state identities mediated by the perception of *which main actors were behind its origin in the first place*?

An alternative is provided by the Giddensian concept of the "duality of structure," where such structures both constrain and enable behavior (Giddens 1984: 169).⁸ Mlada Bukovansky's account of legitimacy demonstrates that culture need not be separated from the agents it shapes. States use international culture as a discursive resource: "what is distinctive about constructivist and international society views of international relations – their focus on how shared rules and norms shape international politics – necessitates a more explicit focus on rules and norms as *patterned complexes*, or as a culture" (Bukovansky 2002: 17, emphasis added). The environmental emphasis noted above is a limited view; if structures only constrain agents, then there really is no agency.⁹

Conversely, by taking the duality of structure position we not only accommodate agency into our structural models, but see agency as driving that structure in the first place. The word "enable" means "to supply with the means, knowledge or opportunity."¹⁰ Thus, agents are provided with an opportunity, but they are the ones who decide what to do in any given situation. And their actions in one situation increase the knowledge that constitutes structures which can be used for future decisions, that is, what is meant by seeing humans, in general, as knowledgeable agents. As such, agents are both shaped by and (re)generate, structures.

We can say structures exist, but this is only because agents put them there to affirm individual preferences. Giddens argues that seeing social structures (or any structures) as "social objects" "masks the fact that the *normative* of social systems are contingent claims which have to be *sustained* and 'made to count' through the effective mobilization of sanctions in the contexts of actual encounters" (Giddens 1984: 30, emphases added). Agents encounter social structures through the sustained activity of self-identity fulfillment through foreign policy. States consciously reproduce actions that then in turn form a structure through what can be called *agency* because "human societies, or social systems, would plainly not exist without human agency" (Giddens 1984: 171).

The issue of structure mirrors, to some degree, the conceptual distinction between collective and self-identity. In social psychology, individuals take on different sets of identities; identity theory in social psychological literature

“conceives of the self as a collection of identities which reflect the roles a person may enact in a social situation, thus linking the self to the wider social structure.” This research: “considers self-identities (or role-identities) as self-definitions deriving from peoples’ knowledge of the roles they occupy ... thus people might be motivated to make behavioral decisions which are consistent with their self-concepts” (Astrom and Rise 2001: 225). Self-categorization theory, on the other hand, views the self as constituted by group membership:

[T]he process of psychologically belonging to a group involves categorization of oneself as a group member, which in turn causes people to think, behave and define themselves in terms of the group norm rather than unique properties of the self.

(Astrom and Rise 2001: 226)

Another set of scholars distinguishes between self and social identity: “[s]elf-identity as an individual-level identity composed of information on self-understanding of ‘ME’s’ ... social identity as the reflections on the identifications of the self with a social group or category, that is, the self as an interchangeable group member (‘WE’s’)” (Fekadu and Kraft 2001: 672). Yet in International Relations theory, when applying the concept of identity to states, the distinctions between self and collective identity remain somewhat unpacked.

Self v. other

To the extent that the issue of self-identity has been a focus of IR theory, it is through the “self v. other” nexus that theorists have addressed such self-based identity formation. A well-established group of IR scholars has used this analytical referent to explicate how a state’s “sense of self” is a (at times dubious) political project to include certain individuals or collectivities at the expense of foreign or threatening “others.” Identity construction is a political project, where states distinguish the “we” as a basis for social action. Peter Katzenstein asserted in 1996 that

definitions of identity that distinguish between self and other imply definitions of threat and interest and have strong effects on national security policies. ... For most of the major states, identity has become a subject of considerable political controversy. How these controversies are resolved ... will be of great consequence for international security in the years ahead.

(Katzenstein 1996a: 18–19)

David Campbell’s book is a study which used the self/other formation of identity to interpret American security policies during and after the Cold

War by noting that “what we have been discussing here, then, is ‘foreign policy’: all those practices of differentiation implicated in the confrontation between self and other, and their modes of figuration” (Campbell 1992: 88). Campbell delineates how state agents locate “threats” to construct the “sovereign” state, asserting that the development of the state Self is part and parcel of the need for state agents to establish control and order *within* their borders. Because identity in Campbell’s account is fluid, so is the state which has been reified in mainstream IR scholarship: “the fact [is] that the sovereign domain, for all its identification as a well-ordered and rational entity, is as much a site of ambiguity and indeterminacy as the anarchic realm it is distinguished from.” This means that a state’s self-identity is linked to what it perceives as a “threat”:

[T]here are, in principle at least, a *multitude* of ways in which society can be constituted: the possibilities are limited only by the *practices* that focus on certain dangers ... but such dangers are not objective conditions and they do not simply reside in the external realm.

(Campbell 1992: 63, emphasis added)

To sum up, the “ambiguity” of state identity is linked to the “ambiguity” of what “threatens” the state; thus, each “reality” – identity and threats to the state – becomes a negotiated political project with winners and losers:

Although it has been argued that the representation of difference does not functionally necessitate a negative figuration, it has historically more often than not been the case ... that danger has been made available for understanding in terms of defilement.

(Campbell 1992: 88)

Campbell’s is the prime (although not sole) example of the postmodern critique of identity “making.”¹¹ Reality is constituted by *discontinuity* – it is humans who create continuity (or order) for purposes of control and discipline. A researcher’s job is thus to uncover, like an archaeologist during a “dig,” the layers of discontinuity which exist in social life, using, among other methods, discourse analysis.

The self v. other nexus is also the basis for Iver Neumann’s (1999) study on European identity formation.¹² The problematic noted in Chapter 1 regarding the issue of “levels of analysis” or “the state as person” is also relevant regarding the fact that states have “multiple selves.” For Neumann (as I also posited in Chapter 1), it is through narrative that the Self gains (semi)-coherence:

[T]he making of selves is a narrative process of identification whereby a *number* of identities that have been negotiated in specific contexts are

strung together into one overarching story ... the forging of selves, then, is a path-dependent process, since it has to cram in a number of previously negotiated identities in order to be credible.

(Neumann 1999: 218–219)

Yet again, the answer to how Selves become essentialized is that there exists an Other against which the Self might identify although this process never ends, it means that who “We” are depends intricately on what we think of “Them.” The analytical focus in self/other scholarship is on the social (rather than material or solely temporal) “boundaries between human collectives” and how those boundaries are maintained or transformed (Neumann 1999: 36).

I do not disagree with the substance of the work which uses the self/other nexus as its basis for theorizing about state identity. The Self of states and individuals is indeed socially bounded, however, it is also more intrinsically dynamic. The anxiety which engulfs the Self does not necessarily have to originate from the Other. Transformative possibilities arise not just in the dialectic between the self and other, but within the internal dialectic that arises from the ontological security-seeking process, as I discuss in the second section.

Collective and moral action

The issue of environmental constraints importantly develops into an understanding of moral v. selfish action. For instance, Alexander Wendt’s understanding of altruism provides one example of how IR theorists treat “other-help” behavior solely as a function of the *collective interests* of the individual (Wendt 1994, 1996, 1999). Wendt separates the “corporate” individual identity of a state from the social identity of a state. Corporate identities are “the intrinsic, self-organizing qualities that constitute actor individuality.” Corporate identities generate four basic interests: physical security, recognition as an actor by others beyond pure survival issues, the development of a state’s role in meeting the human aspiration for a better life, and, most notably for the current discussion, ontological security (Wendt 1994: 385). While I more fully assess Wendt’s use of the concept of ontological security in Chapter 3, it is important to note here how he distinguishes corporate identities and self-interest from social identities and collective interests. Wendt states:

[both] self and collective interest [are] the effects of the extent to and manner in which social identities involve an *identification* with the fate of the other (whether singular or plural). Identification is a continuum from negative to positive, from conceiving the other as anathema to the self to seeing it as an extension of the self.

(Wendt 1996: 52, original)

Notice here how what determines a social identity is a collective interest (as Wendt emphasizes), an *identification* with others. Wendt also states that:

in the absence of positive identification interests will be defined without regard to the other, who will instead be viewed as an object to be manipulated for the gratification of the self. Such an instrumental attitude toward the other I take to be the core of “self-interest” (note this does not preclude action that benefits others, as long as it is done for instrumental reasons).

(Wendt 1996: 52)

The statement in parenthesis is rather puzzling, since Wendt one paragraph earlier stated that “‘self-interest’ is sometimes defined so as to subsume altruism, which makes explanations of behavior in such terms tautological” (Wendt 1996: 52). Wendt’s rather ambiguous treatment of self-interest and corporate identity still implies that the “tautology” of altruism subsumed in self-interest means that IR scholars must only look to collective interests to explain “other-help” behavior, yet he is by no means the only scholar to view identity and its attendant social actions in such community-determined terms. For Lebow, “our inner selves and associated desires may be almost as *socially determined* as those of Achilles. . . . Identities and interests at the state level depend heavily on international society” (Lebow 2003: 336, emphasis added). Regardless of the reflective capabilities of individuals (states or otherwise), agents thus acquire their social existence from the signals given to them by their environment or community:

Even inner-directed people need to define themselves in opposition or in contrast to the identities and roles being foisted on them by society. Inner selves and individual identities *cannot exist apart from society because membership and participation in society – or its rejection – is essential to the constitution of the self.*

(Lebow 2003: 341, emphasis added)

But is it? What Lebow, Wendt, certain constructivists, and English School perspectives are tacitly proposing is that individual nation-states have *very little agency to exercise*. This runs contrary to the structurationist maxim that “the action of human agents involves the possibility of ‘doing otherwise,’ of being able to make a difference in the world” (Kilminster 1991: 79). If environment told us all we needed to know about ourselves, if indeed our individual actions were so socially determined, why would individuals ever feel anxious about the decisions that they make and institute which guide their actions? The attraction (which could be positive or negative) of self-identity is more pronounced than these environmental perspectives let on. According to Kratochwil “it is easier to ‘forget’ one’s collective identity than the personal one since in the former case life can go on and need not

result in the same *pathological* problems that are frequently associated with the loss of a personal identity” (Kratochwil 2006: 19, emphasis added). Indeed, our inner Selves are an environment of their own – a dialectical community – where the anxiety of agents is simultaneously confronted and ignored. It can be what we make of it – a comforting cocoon or a dire prison – which we cannot escape but which we can – and here is the silver lining – *transform* in the face of environmental change. Further, we actively interrogate our sense of Self regardless of our environment, thus making this transformation at least a possibility.

It is not necessarily that there exist different “types” of states – like collectivist, revisionist, or status quo (Wendt 1999; Schweller 1994). Rather, there are a variety of ways that states seek to satisfy the drive for ontological security. Identities are socially constructed, and as such they vary.¹³ This is true about both self- and collective identity. While the drive for ontological security remains constant, self-identities change in order to properly situate the self by successfully confronting the environment which is in constant transformation. If agents are *dependent* upon their environment, it is only in how that environment impacts their ability to reflexively monitor the project of the Self. It is my view that scholars, instead of “typologizing” state identities, might instead look at the actions and words of *all* states with the assumption that those actions and words are meant to satisfy the drive for ontological security. In essence, scholars should ask why states vary in their ability to satisfy ontological security (and a “healthy” sense of self-identity), as I assert that the self-identity(ies) of a state is implicated in its security interests. Thus Katzenstein’s position that “the identities of states emerge from their interactions with different social *environments*, both domestic and international” (Katzenstein 1996b: 24), may be somewhat incorrect – the identities of states emerge from their *own project of the self*. How this negotiation project unfolds will influence which “interests” states will pursue with their policies.

For example, the way I treat the “other” says something about me;¹⁴ how I treat others influences how I identify myself. Before I can even treat an Other, I must experience the self:

One person investigating the experience of another can be directly aware only of his own experience of the other. He cannot have direct awareness of the other’s experience of their “same” world. He cannot see through the other’s ears. . . . All one “feels,” “senses,” “intuits” etc. of the other entails inference from one’s own experience of the other to the other’s experience of one’s self.

(Laing 1969: 14)

These statements are significant regarding moral or humanitarian action, for they suggest that if such a process obtains at the level of states, identifications with “others” may not signify a “structural change.” Indeed, I

think that those scholars who see the “other-regarding” behavior of certain state foreign policies as not only evidence of a sense of collective identity, but also an indication of a systemic *transformation* (to a post-sovereign or post-materialist realm, for instance), may be waiting quite some time for any transformations to unfold. The “rescue” of an Other depends largely upon how such a rescue will resonate with the project of self-negotiation. These identifications say more about how a state sees *itself* rather than how it sees the “other” in relation to itself. “Other-regarding behavior,” from this viewpoint, is really “self-help” behavior because it serves ontological security needs.

By re-channeling the acumen of inquiry upon Self, we are not in the same time “acontextualizing” the Self of states. It is obvious that we need Others, and an environment, through which our Selves evolve. We need not portray the Self as “excessively ‘internal’ and hermetic” (Wachtel 1996: 46),¹⁵ yet if we consider the Self to be something more than unitary, one possibility for transformation of the Self comes from within – hermetic or not.

Collectively determined social action by no means presupposes moral action. The “tragedy” of neorealism, of course, is that the environment of international politics forces states into actions where morality plays a very limited role. What was gained by constructivist and English School accounts which focused upon the ideational or social basis of this environment was the demonstration that states, because of peer pressure or the need for moral prestige, “act” morally to gain recognition from the group. Thus, to name just a few, the existence of human rights (Sikkink 1993; Klotz 1995; Keck and Sikkink 1998; Risse *et al.* 1999; Burgerman 2001), environmental regimes (Haas 1993), and security communities (Adler and Barnett 1998) make possible “moral” action in International Relations. This is the primary issue to which I now turn.

“Moral” social action and International Relations theory

To understand how and why traditional IR theory has sought to disaggregate “rational” action from other types of action, one must recognize how the issue of social action has been treated by social theory writ large, for the practice of disaggregating “types” of action is almost ubiquitous in social theory. This is itself a function of the separation of internal v. external “spheres” in social theory. As R.D. Laing suggests, we have an inner world of the mind that is often judged to be subjective or imaginary, and an external world that is objective, physical and real (Laing 1969: 11–12). In various forms, a similar binary has been identified by feminist theory – the public/private sphere distinction. The separation of women into the private sphere is a product of “evolutionary history,” where

as soon as man distinguished himself from other objects in the natural and physical world and began to see himself as the agent of his own

destiny, a human imperative emerged to order social existence in more conceptual and intentional ways.

(Elshtain 1981: 10)

The internal–private–imaginary–feminine v. external–public–real–masculine binary sets demonstrate how even before agents interact there is already a bias about which forms of social action truly represent rational and perhaps appropriate behavior and which do not. This becomes important when we move from an assumption about what drives human behavior to how humans use those drives in their interactions with other humans.

Two of the most influential social theorists of the twentieth century – Max Weber and Reinhold Niebuhr – separated moral from rational actions in their work. Weberian social action was a generalization for all levels of agents. For Niebuhr, individuals had the ability to act morally (in fact, most did so), but when those moral individuals were aggregated into groups the content of actions turned radically immoral.

In *Economy and Society*, social action is for Weber an “activity . . . which takes into account the behavior of someone else” (Weber 1968: 22). Weber taxonomizes social action into four types:

- 1 Instrumentally rational action is “determined by expectations of objects and other human beings . . . expectations which are used as conditions over the means for attainment of an actor’s own *rationally* pursued and *calculated ends*.” Action is “instrumentally-rational when the end, the means and the secondary results are all rationally taken into account. This involves rational consideration of alternative means to the end.”
- 2 Value-rational action involves the “conscious belief in the value for its own sake of some ethical, aesthetic, or religious form of behavior, *independently of its own prospects for success*.”
- 3 Affectual actions involve “actors’ specific affects and feeling states.”
- 4 Traditional action is “determined by ingrained habituation” (Weber 1968: 24–25, emphasis added).

We might note that value-rational, affectual, and traditional actions all seem to possess similar purposes and that instrumentally rational action can be distinguished from these three other forms of action. Even though Weber notes that value-rational, affectual, and traditional actions all “shade” into one another,¹⁶ he also states that affectual and traditional actions are “incompatible” with instrumentally rational actions. And value-rational actions are only vaguely similar to instrumentally rational ones because they involve the “actions of persons who, *regardless of possible cost to themselves*, act to put into practice their convictions regarding what seems to them to be required of duty, honor (etc.).” Weber goes so far as to call value-rational actions “irrational” in certain cases:

the *more* the value to which action is oriented is elevated to the status of an absolute value, the more “irrational” in this sense the corresponding action is. For, the more unconditionally the actor devotes himself to this value for its own sake, to pure sentiment or beauty, to absolute goodness or devotion to duty.

(Weber 1968: 24–25, emphasis added)

I will return to how Weber disaggregates these “types” of action and discuss how these types of action really are all actions which serve identity in the *same* manner even if they appear to us to be based on *dissimilar* motives. For now, it is important to note how “value”-oriented or “affectual” or even “traditional” actions are held separate from those “instrumentally rational” actions of the individual, making one conclude that there exists no “value, affect or tradition” in “instrumentally rational” actions.

According to Niebuhr there still exists in humans an ever-present tension between moral and selfish action, what he termed the dialectic between “reason” and “impulse.” Yet individuals can, for a time, overcome the latter because

[t]he force of reason makes for justice, not only by placing inner restraints upon the desires of the self in the interest of social harmony, but by judging the claims and assertions of individuals from the perspective of the intelligence of the total community.

(Niebuhr 1932: 30–31)

The key to constructing moral individuals, it is often thought, is to require them to conform to the ideals ascribed by their constitutive groups. This might work for a period of time for individuals (but it is unlikely to create the basis for moral actions, as discussed on pp. 44–44), but this is even more limited at the group level, for while reason creates a more moral (but never an absolutely moral) individual

the limits of reason make it inevitable that pure moral action, particularly in the intricate, complex and collective relationships, should be an impossible goal. Men will never be wholly reasonable, and the proportion of reason to impulse becomes increasingly negative when we proceed from the life of individuals to that of social groups, among whom a common mind and purpose is always more or less inchoate and transitory, and who depend therefore upon a common impulse to bind them together.

(Niebuhr 1932: 35)

And even if individuals are shaped by community-determined ideals, what guarantee is there that such ideals would be normally acceptable outside that community? Would we always consider a community in harmony with

itself to be a morally acceptable achievement? Niebuhr never missed an opportunity to assert his skepticism of human relations, and on this question he is unapologetic:

[W]hen it wants to make use of the police power of the state to subdue rebellions and discontent in the ranks of its helots, it justifies the use of political coercion and the resulting suppression of liberties by insisting that peace is more precious than freedom and that its only desire is social peace ... the police power of the state is usually used prematurely; before an effort has been made to eliminate the causes of discontent, and ... it therefore tends to perpetuate injustice and the consequent social disaffections.

(Niebuhr 1932: 33–34)

The crowning achievement of the national community is that individuals feel pressured, indeed pressure one another, to conform to national principles/rules/norms. This pressure is not only a constraint upon individual freedom, but means that the police power of the state is needed only on rare occasions. Individuals “internalize” the nation in their daily lives. Niebuhr’s realism thus demonstrates how individual morality does not translate to societal morality. In fact, such individual morality *fuels* the selfishness of nations, which is “proverbial.” The entire fourth chapter of *Moral Man* reveals this ironic connection. It is an individual’s “love and pious attachment ... to his countryside, to familiar scenes, sights and experiences” that create a “sentiment of patriotism ... so unqualified, that the nation is given *carte blanche* to use the power compounded of the devotion of individuals, for any purpose it desires” (Niebuhr 1932: 92).¹⁷ What is important here, however, is that such cohesion does not preclude the possibility of “morality” – it just makes all nations selfish. Niebuhr does not state that such selfishness, in individuals or nation-states, eliminates the possibilities for moral action. The mere awareness by an agent of its limitation, the admission of an agent that pure moral action is an impossibility, is the first step, perhaps the most important and vital step, for an agent to realize the possibilities of self-interest in a constructed sense of morality. This is the position I take, for I think Niebuhr’s philosophy, if it sees morality in collectives as at all possible, makes such morality dependent upon the individual agent recognizing, through internal reflection and conflict, how moral action is in such an agent’s self-interest.

Honor

An interesting way to view the tension in social theory between self- or rational interest and collective or moral interest is by examining the position of “honor”-driven action. In short, honor-driven actions could be either rational and self-regarding or collective and moral. For some, honor

has been viewed as an extension of individual pride. Honor might serve the self-interest of an agent, in that by acting “honorably” that agent gains a certain reputation or credibility which it can then use, as a currency, to ensure its survival-based interests. Yet honor might also be dangerous, as honor-driven states can compromise their survival by pursuing unnecessary and ill-defined actions.¹⁸ Avner Offer (1995) provides some insight here, explaining why honor-driven action might both compromise and ensure survival. First, preserving honor in the short term may deter future would-be attackers, thus honor ensures long-term survival. Second, honor is a short-term motive, survival a long-term one, so states with a lack of firm self-control may not recognize the long-term survival implications of their short-term honor-driven needs.

The most detailed examination in IR theory of the concept of national honor comes from Barry O’Neill’s (2001) seminal game-theoretic book *Honor, Symbols and War*. O’Neill’s purpose is to demonstrate how state agents use symbols to promote and protect national honor. Additionally, O’Neill concludes that honor motivates even modern states in strategic decisions.

While O’Neill links the use of symbols with honor, he does not isolate honor as a concept in and of itself. But he does develop honor in a manner that aids our understanding of it in the decisions of nation-states. First, he asserts that when states stake their national honor on a policy their commitments become *more* credible, which (for the game theorist) creates a different approach for modeling deterrence, “by looking at how deterrence is set up before a crisis, rather than during one” (O’Neill 2001: 245). Second, O’Neill extracts three requirements of national honor: trueness to one’s word, defense of home (or ally), and social grace. Additionally, O’Neill posits that honor accrues to groups as well as individuals and that preserving honor may require physical risk (O’Neill 2001: 87–88). Finally, O’Neill implicitly proposes an internal and external component to honor – that it actually structures state behavior in a community because “honor obliges its possessor to show others that he possesses honor ... the way to show concern for others’ perceptions is to make a sacrifice” (O’Neill 2001: 245).

As it has been conceptualized, and as O’Neill’s comments above suggest, honor produces competition and consensus: “Honor-driven worlds are thus highly competitive, but they also require a high degree of consensus and cooperation. Honor is only meaningful if recognized and praised by others” (Lebow 2004: 347). For this position, honor is a material – states competing for recognition through a “zero-sum game” (Donnelly 2000: 67).

This conceptualization of honor can hardly be so determined. States seeking honor *may* be in competition with one another, and there is indeed some “ranking” that may ensue to assess the honor of certain states over others, but to assume that honor-driven worlds are highly competitive is to

assume, ultimately, that states seek honor the same way they seek material resources, in that there is a finite amount to be captured and/or that the honor of one state can only be ascertained in relation to the honor of others. Yet a state's view of honor is also shaped by how other members of its community – mainly (although not solely) other states – recognize it. There is no reason to assume, *a priori*, that a world of states all pursuing honorable actions will inevitably be a world consumed by conflict, unless one only views honor as finite.¹⁹ Precisely because honor is highly subjective (inter or intra) this suggests that there is no “finite” amount of honor to be procured by states. Furthermore, if honor is connected to identity, and if identity takes on a *social* component (as many IR scholars have asserted already), then honor is a *collective good*, meaning that it can be shared and acknowledged.²⁰

A proper treatment of honor should *also* recognize how it is developed through internal reflection and how it relates to an agent's sense of Self. In other words, *contra* Lebow, honor is not “only meaningful if recognized and praised by others” (Lebow 2004: 347). In ancient Greece, honor was the inverse of shame, yet neither shame nor honor depended solely upon *public* judgment. Shame, as it is developed in an ontological security account (as in Chapter 3), is a decidedly internal sense of lapse (as opposed to guilt, which is a transgression over a recognized principle/law/norm of a community). A state's sense of both self- and collective identity is integral to understanding its sense of honor. I assert in Chapter 5, additionally, how honor-driven action not only is evident in antiquity, as commonly assumed by today's IR theorists, but colors the behavior of modern nation-states, like Belgium in 1914.²¹ This more holistic conception of honor is developed in Chapter 3, where it is explicated as fulfilling the ontological security drive of states.

The danger of morality

The tension between of moral v. selfish interests envelops traditional IR scholarship. This practice quickly developed into a desire by “realist” authors to separate “rationality-informed” from “morality-informed” foreign policies. The nation had no interest in pursuing policies which could be considered “moral,” thus there were no moral national interests, just interests. And these interests are derived from considerations of power, not morality or “humanitarian” considerations. In general, the post-World War II realists made several claims about “morality” in international politics. The first two include:

- 1 Because states are solely concerned with their own interests, morality is not in a state's interests.
- 2 States *should* not pursue policies driven by a sense of “morality.” Morality is dangerous!

George F. Kennan is but one realist who has pursued both of the above arguments in his work. Kennan argued in 1985 that “[g]overnment is an agent, not a principal. Its primary obligation is to the *interests* of the national society it represents, not to the moral impulses that individual elements of that society may experience” (Kennan 1985/86: 206). And what are these “interests” all states pursue? “The interests of the national society for which government has to concern itself are basically those of its military security, the integrity of its political life and the well-being of its people. These needs have no moral quality” (Kennan 1985/86: 206). Set aside for the moment how Kennan uses the term “integrity” to refer to one state “interest” and then in the next sentence claims that these state interests have “no moral quality.” Notice here how Kennan *separates* moral action (or “morality” in general) from the *genuine* “interests” of states; there is no place for “morality” in international politics, only the pursuit of state interests. Kennan also makes the same claims about “the situations that arouse our discontent[, which] are ones existing, as a rule, far from our own shores,” and states that actions meant to fix these situations, interventions, “can be formally defensible only if the practices against which they are directed are seriously injurious to our interests, rather than just our sensibilities” (Kennan 1985/86: 209).²²

It becomes confusing how situations which “injure our interests” don’t also “injure our sensibilities,” but there is, additionally, a larger inconsistency in this realist skepticism of “morality.” Recall the two claims that the above realists make – that states *never* pursue moral policies and that states *should never* pursue moral policies because such policies are “dangerous.” If the first proposition is true, the second would never have to be stated. This inconsistency means that realism is less a set of assumptions about state behavior and more a normative theory about the prudence of states:

A common thread running through all the realist literature is the rejection of traditional morality (in two ways) ... first, it repudiates traditional morality as an adequate guide to political action. Second, realism appeals to “reason of state” rather than to the authority of an inherited body of laws or moral precepts.

(Nardin 1992: 15)

Indeed, as David Campbell writes, Kennan’s, “problematization of the issue thus requires one to overlook the way in which the ‘the national’ is itself a ‘moral’ construction” (Campbell 2001: 106).

How have IR theorists explained “humanitarian” actions which cannot be explained by referring to some power-based national interest? Critics of the realist view of state “interests” maintain that moral or humanitarian action can be explained *by definition* as those which are in direct conflict with self-interest. These critics, while seeking to make intelligible such action,

actually *reinforce* to varying degrees the separation of such actions into moral v. selfish spheres.

As I also discuss further in the context of the British case in Chapter 5, Chaim Kaufmann and Robert Pape (1999) attempt to explain Britain's decision to enforce the banning of the Atlantic slave trade as a type of "costly moral action." The authors' domestic-liberal argument is that British parochial religious organizations advanced the anti-slave trade principle, making it politically prudent for the prime minister to pursue an anti-slave trade policy even though it was economically costly. Most importantly, they define a moral action as one "that advances a moral principle rather than a selfish interest" (as if advancing a moral principle *cannot* be in a state's "self-interest") (Kaufmann and Pape 1999: 633). Robert Jackson (1995) identifies three types of "responsibility" in international relations: national, international, and humanitarian. Noteworthy are his definitions of national and humanitarian forms of responsibility. The former states that the "standard of conduct [that] statesmen must adhere to in their foreign policies is that of national *self-interest* and specifically national security" and the latter that

statesmen [being] first and foremost human beings ... they have a fundamental obligation not only to respect but also to defend human rights around the world ... characteristic of a world society in which responsibility is defined by one's membership in the human race and thus by common *morality*.

(Jackson 1995: 115, 117, emphasis added)

Again, national interests in this case are defined by "self-interest," whereas humanitarian interests are those which reach some affective connection with human beings, regardless of national origin. Jackson uses this typology of responsibility to interpret three cases (Iraq–Kuwait, Somalia, and Bosnia) of intervention and concludes that "in all these cases the 'bottom line' is national responsibility" (Jackson 1995: 123).

Another example comes from Nicholas Wheeler, who distinguishes his "solidarist" English School theory of humanitarian intervention from the more predominant Bullian "pluralist" argument. Wheeler sees such intervention and the enforcement of human rights as in a state's interest:

[T]here is good reason to endorse the solidarist claim that a foreign policy that places the defense of human rights at the centre of its ethical code will make an important contribution both to protecting national interests and to strengthening the pillars of international order.

(Wheeler 2000: 302)

Finally, Martha Finnemore defines "humanitarian" intervention as "deploying military force across borders for the purpose of protecting foreign

nationals from man-made violence” (Finnemore 2003: 53).²³ This is precisely what happened in the Kosovo operation, so according to Finnemore’s definition we should consider Kosovo a humanitarian war. Again, Finnemore’s definition sets up “humanitarian action” as in conflict with a state’s self-interest, although her further *explanation* does get closer to my assertion that “moral” or “humanitarian” actions are really actions meant to confront what (certain states) consider *identity threats*. Finnemore states that “humanitarianism – its influence and definition – is bound up in other normative changes, particularly sovereignty norms and human rights norms.” Yet Finnemore goes on to posit: “the importance of viewing norms not as individual ‘things’ floating atomistically in some international social space but rather as part of a highly structured social context . . . without attending to these relationships, we will miss the larger picture” (Finnemore 2003: 57). Finnemore’s is in some ways a classic conventional, constructivist response to realism (and liberalism), that states pursue “moral” or “humanitarian” interests as a result of changes in some international social context, such as a system of collective identities that they share with other states (Wendt 1994).

The problem with these responses is that they are forced, by the nature of realism’s place in IR theory, to justify when states are pursuing “normal” self-interest and when they are pursuing “other”-regarding behavior. Indeed, Wendt’s development of “collectivist” states is presented as just one of many “types” of state identities. For Wendt (1999), what defines a collectivist state is its other-regarding behavior.²⁴ These states are *pulled* in a direction of other-help because of intersubjectively held understandings with other states. So while I share many ontological assumptions with these examples of realist critics, I do not agree that “moral” or “humanitarian” action needs to be defined as that which compromises the self-interest of states.

In order to clarify this assertion, I’ll return to both Weber’s design for disaggregating “types” of social actions and also Niebuhr’s social theory.²⁵ Weber defines “instrumentally rational” forms of action when “the end, the means, and the secondary results are all rationally taken into account and weighed” (Weber 1968: 26). It is my argument that individuals do precisely this prior to performing any of the four types of actions. As I argue in Chapter 3, “affectual” or “traditional” or “value-rational” actions *serve self-identity interests*, so it is likely that even those “types” of actions involve cost/benefit analysis.

For instance, a “traditional” form of action will be difficult to break because it serves some of our basic interests, as many “habits” do. Yet in a condition of modernity (as Giddens argues), traditions, routines, or habits (all forms of traditional action) are under constant attack from forces outside of our control (Giddens 1994), and these external situations challenge the rationality behind our habits. Smoking is a habitual action, and for long periods of time it may serve our interests (relieving stress etc.), yet we are told that smoking is bad for our health. Over time, the costs and benefits of smoking may change as we re-evaluate what it is doing to us and those

around us (financially and physically), and so people change these habits for perfectly “rational” reasons which may, or may not, have something to do with how “socially” acceptable these habits are.

All actions involve analysis, so it is more proper to say that actors “rationalize” actions before, during, and after (through reinterpretations of history, for example) they are committed. Weber even states this about the “irrational” affectual form of action: “it is a case of sublimation when affectually determined action occurs in the form of conscious release of emotional tension. When this happens it is usually well on the road to rationalization” (Weber 1968: 25). A logical conclusion is that since all actors can “rationalize” any action, any *one form of rationality is itself a normative construct*. When IR scholars refer to an actor who acted “rationally” they are really making a normative judgment about the prudence behind his or her actions according to reified criteria. When scholars talk about “rational action” they are really, in a sense, making a *moral* claim about what actions states *should* pursue.

The moral possibilities of the Self

Michael Williams (and others) has noted that post-World War II realists were really normative theorists who constructed a form of rational state behavior in order to steer American policy makers away from what they (Morgenthau, Wolfers, Kennan, and others) recognized as a dangerous form of idealism driving foreign policy decisions. This was the true purpose behind the realists’ scientific pursuits: “for Morgenthau, conceptual clarity is essential since it makes possible the *political judgment* that (an oppositional logic of identity) is not necessary” (Williams 2005a: 155).

Williams clarifies why realists since Morgenthau have so opposed “idealist” assumptions about states – their reading of what drives states is a normative position – and he generalizes about the fact there is an inconsistency in “neorealist” theory on this point:

[O]ne simply cannot say that it is dangerous to believe in the practical power of theory (‘idealism’) on the one hand, and then say that a particular theory (neorealism) guides practice and that it is practically dangerous to change it, on the other. If neorealism is a (positivist) *theory of the objective dynamics of international security*, then changing the theory will make no difference to the reality.

(Williams 2005a: 151)

To sum up, while Morgenthau, Kennan, and Rice (see note 22), insist that they are referring to an “objective reality” about state interests when they argue against “moralism” or “humanitarianism” as being “dangerous,” they are really referring to their own moral vision of (1) what drives state behavior and (2) what should constitute the “national interests” of states to satisfy those drives.

Furthermore, Morgenthau, like Niebuhr, noted how the assumption made by citizens that the ideals for which they were fighting were not only national, but international and absolute, led to a *decrease* in moral action:

[T]he citizen of the modern warring nation ... "crusades" for an "ideal," a set of "principles," a "way of life" for which he claims a monopoly of truth and virtue ... since it is this "ideal" and "way of life" that he fights in whatever persons they manifest themselves, the distinctions between fighting and disabled soldiers, combatants and civilians – if they are not eliminated altogether – are subordinated to the one distinction that really matters: the distinction between the representatives of the right and the wrong philosophy and way of life.
(Morgenthau 2006: 249)

It was not, for Morgenthau, that states could not act morally, but that the danger lay in the idea that national moral interest paralleled international morality. Like the realists, I propose that states create their own morality for self-interested purposes, but that, on the other hand, this "morality" is not fixed or connected to objective "laws" of international politics. It is because states create their own morality that such morality is so effective in developing state interests; because state actions are constituted by self-identity needs, "morally created interests" are self-interests, and policies which serve these interests are thus "self-help" policies. And if these are "self-help" policies, states are pursuing a form of "rational" interest.

Of course, states might share similar senses of "moral obligation" (which may look to us like a form of collective interest) and they may use argument to form such a coalescence of interests. But because *states themselves* are the primary (although not sole) source of authority regarding the deployment of military forces, they must create their *own individual* interests, even in situations where their forces are part of a coalition or collective security contingent. State agents are forced to articulate a particular set of self-interests, if for no other reason than to justify to their citizens that such policy actions serve their needs as citizens of that state.

In sum, my ontological security argument and the IR realist views of states share similar outlooks on state behavior: (1) states are self-interested; (2) self-interest supersedes international morality or international law;²⁶ (3) states form security interests on the basis of their own self-interest. States are "rational egoists," but they base their "egoism" not upon (independent and exogenous) material structures but upon self-identity needs, *which themselves vary* from state to state and within the same state over time. Thus what appears to scholars as the "other-regarding" behavior of "collectivist" states should really be referred to as self-help behavior for ontological security-seeking states.

Additionally, this ontological security interpretation assumes, in contrast to mainstream IR realists, that states are driven by needs other than survival.

The pursuit of these self-identity needs includes a menu of choices for action, from the deployment of military forces to the articulation of a narrative of the self in the face of identity threats. Identity is a negotiation. Thus states do not simply *react* (as they do in realist accounts) to external events, but position their interests according to which version of state identity prevails in the face of these threats.

The primary intersection between political realism, writ large, and my ontological security account can be captured by returning to Reinhold Niebuhr. I think that, while Niebuhr remains a skeptic regarding issues of societal morality, there is enough room in his social theory to accommodate the reflexive possibilities of identity making (what appears to normative theorists to be) “moral” action possible. Indeed, it is this deeper reading of Niebuhr which unlocks the possibility of conflating moral with self-interest, *regardless* of the level at which such social action operates.

We might begin with Niebuhr’s *Nature and Destiny of Man*, which acknowledges the fact of human freedom:

Man’s freedom to transcend the natural flux gives him the possibility of grasping a span of time in his consciousness and thereby of knowing history. It also enables him to change, reorder and transmute the causal sequences of nature and thereby to *make* history.

(Niebuhr 1943: 1)

Because we have agency, we have no guarantee that what we do will be the right thing. But the fact that we have freedom to do the right thing means that social actions are not predetermined: “[w]e know that we cannot purge ourselves of the sin and guilt in which we are involved by the moral ambiguities of politics without also disavowing responsibility for the creative possibilities of justice” (Niebuhr 1943: 284). This relates to Niebuhr’s theology; if moral choice were absent, humans would never experience “sin and guilt.” Indeed, the experience of sin or guilt is a celebration of our humanity and our freedom.

Niebuhr’s assertion is that we have a “Self of our Making”²⁷ and the possibility for moral action rests upon the individual reflecting upon his or her position as a moral agent.²⁸ Thus there may be occasions when this individual disregards the principles of the community, yet such defiance should not always be interpreted as a form of disloyalty, as evidenced by his criticism of idealists and “sociological naturalists,” who

maintain that the voice of conscience which supports the more inclusive objectives of reason is really the fear of the groups, and that the sense of moral obligation is either the overt or covert pressure of society upon the individual. Such a theory does not do justice to those types of human behavior in which the individual defies his group. It is sometimes maintained that such defiance must be interpreted as resulting from a

sense of loyalty to some community other than the one to which the non-conformist individual belongs most immediately and most obviously. (Niebuhr 1943: 36)

In this passage, we see that Niebuhr recognizes how social disapproval of the non-conformist in a society results from a suspicion that such an individual must be attracted to another community. Thus that individual is not only a heretic but a threat to the social cohesion of his community, if not necessarily a threat to the physical integrity of that community:

For defiance of a community, which is in control not only of the police power but of the *potent force of public approval and disapproval*, in the name of a community, which exists only in the moral imagination of the individual ... and has no means of exerting pressure upon him, obviously points to a force of conscience, more individual than social. ... The social character of most moral *judgments* and the pressure of society upon an individual are both facts to be reckoned with; but neither explains the peculiar phenomenon of the moral life, usually called conscience.

(Niebuhr 1943: 36–37, emphasis added)

This conscience exists *in the individual* ²⁹, and Niebuhr goes to great pains to state that the obligation toward the good for an individual is an obligation as that individual's "mind conceives it"; such an obligation cannot "be equated" with the Kantian sense of moral imperative. This is important, for it suggests two things about Niebuhr's social theory: (1) that humans are capable of feeling a moral obligation; (2) that this morality is constructed by the individual as a basis for his or her actions and thus should not be equated with a universalist sense of the good. That does not mean that humans do not attempt to universalize their sense of good to a higher societal order. When Niebuhr states that "the root of imperialism is therefore in all self-consciousness" he means that agents (individuals or nation-states) are attempting to construct a society that reflects their sense of selves. The reverse – that individual agents conform to the principles of the community for the same reason – is less likely to "give life a significance" (Niebuhr 1943: 42) beyond that of the individual.

Yet therein lies the quandary: if agents are only self-regarding, if we take Augustinian "self-love" as a given, then how will agents ever transcend their Selves to impact those around them for the express purpose of recreating themSelves through those actions? Niebuhr recognizes this tension: "For the kind of self-giving which has self-realization as its result must not have self-realization as its conscious end; otherwise the self by calculating its enlargement will not escape from itself completely enough to be enlarged" (Niebuhr 1953: 141). The answer, therefore, is that self-giving for the purpose of self-realization is a process, not an end, toward re-making a Self

that is never, will never be, fully formed. This does not mean that an agent's Self cannot be rigid and resistant to change. Agents seek out continuity, but eventually in seeking out that continuity they constantly undermine it. Anxiety surrounds our sense of Self; agents are never ontologically secure. But they try and they constantly attempt to get to a more anchored position from which their decisive actions have meaning. Man's "mystery of his transcendence over every process . . . points to another mystery beyond himself without which man is not only a mystery to himself but a misunderstood being" (Niebuhr 1953: 143). Niebuhr's words provide an appropriate transition to Chapter 3, where the anxiety of the Self is engaged by focusing upon the ontological security need of agents:

We refuse to admit the more general problem arising from the fact that all human life is insecure and that the power of modern man has aggravated and not mitigated this general insecurity. Faith does not of itself solve any particular political issue. But a genuine faith which transcends all vicissitudes of nature and history enables men to live with the kind of courage which must enter into all particular solutions. (Niebuhr, in Brown 1992: 45)

This process is multiplied, exponentially, at the level of states, where policy decisions become actions, and where the outcomes of actions not only become part of the national history books but also live within the memories and discourses of their citizens.

Transformation does not mean transcendence – the ontological security-seeking process of the Self must not necessarily depend upon the relationship we have with others. As social psychologists assert, the Self is many-sided, whether it is divided, as R.D. Laing (1969) posited, or "protean," as it was termed by Robert Jay Lifton. The latter

emerges from confusion, from the widespread feeling that we are losing our psychological moorings. We feel ourselves buffeted about by unmanageable historical forces and social uncertainties . . . but rather than collapse under these threats and pulls, the self turns out to be surprisingly resilient. It makes use of bits and pieces here and there and somehow keeps going.

(Lifton 1993: 1)

Niebuhr and Weber's theories suggest that it is possible to reconcile moral, humanitarian, or even honor-driven actions with a self-regarding, self-interest perspective, an account that unleashes the internal contradictions nation-states (like Lifton's protean Selves) possess as not only beneficial but vital toward a transformation of action that might benefit the welfare of large populations of people. It is *precisely* the fact that such a transformation is never guaranteed that makes this benefit possible in the first place.

3 The possibilities of the Self

It is hard to have a southern overseer; it is worse to have a northern one; but worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself. Talk of a divinity of man! . . . See how he cowers and sneaks, how vaguely all the day he fears, not being immortal nor divine, but the slave and prisoner of his own opinion of himself, a fame won by his own deeds. Public opinion is a weak tyrant compared with our own private opinion. What a man thinks of himself, that it is which determines, or rather indicates, his fate.

(Henry David Thoreau, *Walden*, 1854)

That's easy for Thoreau to say, writing the above passage as he did during his peaceful time living in solitude on the shores of Walden Pond. And we know that Thoreau's method for handling his own private tyranny set him on a collision course with the laws of New England's society – landing him in jail for not paying his taxes. But assuming that the problematic Thoreau speaks of here exists – that we are imprisoned by our own insecurities – what insights can we draw from such a possible interpretation of the human Self? Can the individual transcend this “tyranny”? If states possess self-identities, and those identities carry with them similar forms of internal emotional baggage, how does this influence the constructions of security interests? Can such insecurities in states be transcended?

I concluded the last chapter by suggesting (via Weber and Niebuhr) that the complex Selves of agents contain transformational processes. The process of the construction of the Self for any individual is so complex that it might defy understanding, yet by investigating particular components of that construction – namely, how history, narrative, and memory relate to this realization of the Self – this chapter argues that agents, including states, are challenged by certain situations in their environment because those situations threaten their self-identities. While these situations materially exist “outside” of nation-states they must be experienced through those states' sense of Self in order to be confronted. Further, while state agents have the ability to transform their actions so that they can confront self-identity threats, they also can construct self-delusional narratives that become quite harmful to their ontological security, and their ability to act, in the long term.

This chapter includes five sections. I first develop my ontological security argument *vis-à-vis* what I term the “traditional security” account found in much International Relations scholarship (see pp. 50–57). In the brief second section (pp. 57–60) I review some other IR treatments of ontological security in order to further clarify and distinguish my approach. Then, in section 3 (pp. 60–63) I draw upon the insights of various social theories to investigate the transformational possibilities that exist within agents, what I term “the dialectics of the self.” Section 4 (pp. 63–68) discusses how ontological security relates to the insights provided by certain bodies of critical IR theory. In section 5 (pp. 68–75) I present four “components” of the ontological security process at the level of nation-states:

- 1 material and reflexive capabilities (i.e. that a state’s material capabilities influences its conception of its own *self*-identity);
- 2 crisis assessment (when confronted with “threats to identity”);
- 3 the biographical narrative a state employs to justify and describe its actions, where we can see how state agents “work out” their understandings of their state’s self-identity;
- 4 co-actor discourse strategies (used to generate ontological *insecurity* in a state or states to “compel” a state to act according to its articulated sense of “self-identity”).

These components are illustrated in the case studies which are presented in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

Ontological security v. traditional security

Anthony Giddens defines ontological security as “a sense of continuity and order in events” (Giddens 1991: 243). In most International Relations theories, the concept of security has a basic meaning – that which ensures the survival of states so that they can pursue rational ends: “survival is a prerequisite to achieving any goals that states may have ... the survival motive is taken as the ground of action in a world where the security of states is not assured” (Waltz 1979: 92).¹ We know that survival is important for ensuring traditional security, because “in anarchy, security is the highest end. Only if survival is assured can states safely seek such other goals ... the goal the system encourages them to seek is security” (Waltz 1979: 126). This culminates in a translation of the “national interest”:

To say that a country acts according to its national interest means that, having examined its security requirements, it tries to meet them. That is simple, it is also important. Entailed in the concept of national interest is the notion that diplomatic and military moves must at times be carefully planned lest the survival of the state be in jeopardy.

(Waltz 1979: 134)²

While Kenneth Waltz's defensive realist statement is perhaps the most famous on the "survival motive" of states, many IR scholars share his emphasis on the survival motive. John Mearsheimer's fourth assumption of "offensive realism" is "that survival is the primary goal of great powers ... states can and do pursue other goals, of course, but security is their most important objective" (Mearsheimer 2001: 31). Mainstream constructivist scholar Alexander Wendt (1999), following Alexander George and Robert Keohane (1980), places "physical survival" as one of four national interests. Hedley Bull (1977) acknowledges that principles and rules govern an "anarchical society," but it should also be noted that he too shares this "survival" notion of security. For Bull, "unless men enjoy some measure of security against the threat of death or injury at the hands of others, they are not able to devote energy or attention enough to other objects to be able to accomplish them" (Bull 1977: 5). Order defines international security, even if that order is constituted by a perceived respect by states of the principle of sovereignty.

When we say that an individual is "insecure," however, we do not mean that his or her survival is at stake, unless that individual is so unsure of him- or herself that he or she is suicidal. Rather, "insecurity" in this sense means individuals are uncomfortable with who they are. Ontological security, as opposed to security as survival, is security as being.³ For Giddens, "to be ontologically secure is to possess ... answers to fundamental existential questions which all human life in some way addresses" (Giddens 1991: 47). Individual agents "reflexively monitor" their actions on a regular basis. Secure agents reproduce these actions in the form of routines which contribute to the sense of "continuity and order" that is so important to their sense of self.

Critical situations threaten this continuity; such situations are "circumstances of a radical disjuncture of an unpredictable kind which affect substantial numbers of individuals, situations that threaten or destroy the certitudes of institutionalized routines." Thus these situations, by their mere presence, represent identity threats. They produce *anxiety*, which is "a generalized state of the emotions of the given individual." Fear is different, since it is "a response to a specific threat and therefore has a definite object" (Giddens 1984: 61). Thus anxiety comes about when someone's identity is challenged; fear arises when someone's survival is threatened.⁴

Certain IR scholars also address how routines contribute to a nation-state's primary goals. According to Bull, states value order (even *more than* survival) because it leads to "predictability," in the same way that individuals, as noted above, establish routines to cope with everyday life. This sense of order establishes trust in the individual agent. Furthermore, "survival"-based security structures represent reproduced action that is meant to engender trust; "fear of loss generates effort" (Giddens 1991: 41). According to Bill McSweeney, a state's sense of security is highly contingent upon its environment:

Table 3.1 Two conceptions of security

	<i>Traditional security</i>	<i>Ontological security</i>
<i>Security as...</i>	Survival	Being
<i>Agent "structured" by...</i>	Distribution of power	Routines and self-identity
<i>Challenge/source of insecurity</i>	Fear (in the face of threat)	Anxiety (uncomfortable disconnect with Self)
<i>Outcome of incorrect decision in the face of challenge</i>	Physical harm	Shame
<i>Measurement of outcome</i>	Change in material capabilities; deaths; damage	Difference between biographical narrative and actual behavior; discursive remorse
<i>Structural change...</i>	Change in distribution of power	Routinized critical situations; change in self-identity; change in agent routine

If we allow that physical survival has a *logical* priority over other needs, this makes it "primary" only in the uninteresting sense: it is a logical pre-condition of doing anything that we remain physically alive and capable of doing it ... if we *assume*, with Robert Gilpin, that wherever we live we live in a jungle, then it is reasonable to conclude that it is complacency rather than rational assessment not to elevate physical survival to the highest rank in the hierarchy of human needs. Conversely, it is paranoia to organize our lives on that assumption without compelling evidence to support it.

(McSweeney 1999: 153)

Agents are driven by other forms of trust beyond the ability to survive are motivated by this sense of being. Actions which serve these multivariate motives must be produced (and reproduced) in order to maintain this sense of trust. Ontological security comes about when agents continue to choose actions which they feel reflect their sense of self-identity.

In a similar fashion, Huysmans titles physical security daily security, which "consists of trying to postpone death by countering objectified threats," and defines ontological security as "a strategy of managing the limits of reflexivity – death as undetermined" (Huysmans 1998: 242). Thus ontological security, because it rests upon the fear of chaos and an unidentifiable sense of threat, represents anxiety in the face of strangers. Armed in part with the insights of Huysmans, I have detailed the differences between traditional and ontological security in Table 3.1.

Shame

We can observe struggles with "self"-identity through the biographical narrative set up by agents (or at least a portion of that process). What is

considered “shameful” varies not only between actors, but also amongst the same actors during different periods: “much of what is considered shameful in the contemporary world is the result of an historical process” (Tucker 1998: 75). Thus, individuals are “disciplined” into recognizing certain critical situations which threaten their sense of self-identity, although this ability will be, as self-identity is, updated as the world around an agent changes.

For Giddens, shame “bites at the roots of self-esteem” (Giddens 1984: 55).⁵ *Guilt* is “produced by the fear of transgression . . . in respect of problems of self-identity, *shame* is more important” (Giddens 1991: 64–65). Individuals who break laws feel “guilty,” whereas no formalized rule needs to be compromised for shame to be produced. Thus, *shame* is a much more private sense of transgression and produces a deeper feeling of insecurity because it means that someone behaved in a way he or she felt was incongruent with their sense of self-identity.

Shame is a concept widely analyzed in the literature of social psychology. Merle Fossum and Marilyn Mason distinguish shame from guilt in the following manner:

Shame is an inner sense of being completely diminished or insufficient as a person. It is the self judging the self. . . . Guilt is a painful feeling of regret and responsibility for one’s actions, shame is a painful feeling about oneself as a person.

(Fossum and Mason 1986: 5)⁶

Allan Young, in his work on traumatic memory, posits that individual shame includes three components:

an *act* performed (or not performed) by the person who feels the shame; a self-directed adverse *judgment*, tied to the idea that this individual now feels he is not the kind of person he assumed himself to be, hoped to be, or ought to be; and an *audience* before which he now feels degraded.

(Young 1995: 220)

The audience is a “moral community” through which shame is experienced. While this component seems to imply that shame requires an audience in order for it to be present in the Self of individuals, such a community need not play that vital of a role in this process. The first two components – performing an act and a self-directed adverse judgment – remain primary in the process of shame.⁷

One can, albeit briefly, distinguish these metaphors of “shame” and “guilt” at the level of international politics using humanitarian intervention for the purposes of illustration. Leaders from an external agency (states or otherwise) do nothing illegal if they fail to rescue individuals suffering in a state of genocide at the hands of their government, but they may feel shame.

A “humanitarian intervention,” on the other hand, may break the international “norm” of sovereignty, thus making the intervening entity “guilty,” but such action may also be necessary to avoid shame because allowing an event to unfold challenges the self-identity of the mediating party.⁸ Thus acts which appear “humanitarian” are entirely rational for certain actors because they fulfill a sense of self-identity and ensure a state’s ontological security. “Humanitarian” action reflects “self-help” impulses as much as it does some affect or “other-help” emotion.

I have used the term “shame” as a metaphor for the radical disconnect produced when national ontological security is disrupted. It is observed in international politics when agents of states express discursive remorse for something in their nation’s past. Such historical occasions are most relevant when they are used to create meanings for the present actions of states. Yet the recent and brief work on “vicarious shame” has demonstrated that there exist occasions where individuals feel ashamed of the actions of their in-group *even when they personally were not responsible for those actions*. This suggests that individuals take both the good and the bad with “being part of a group” – a nation-state being one form of group identity – and that the emotional processes of individuals exist at the level of groups.

Work on vicarious shame provides two insights relevant to the process of shame in groups. First, it further distinguishes shame from guilt (or a transgression of a publicly constructed principle), in that “people tend to feel ashamed when they attribute the cause of a negative event to something about *who they are*, rather than just *something that they did*” (Johns *et al.* 2005: 332). Individuals feel ashamed about both their actions and how those actions relate to their sense of Selves. Second, vicarious shame demonstrates that “distanciation” (discussed on pp. 61–62) is a natural, and necessary, reaction to a self-identity threat, and “shame is the emotion that most commonly motivates a desire to distance oneself from a shame-inducing event.” As vicarious shame is produced by the actions of a deviant in-group member, individuals can choose to “distance themselves from the wrongdoer” (Johns *et al.* 2005: 335). In the ontological security process, this distancing can be a productive step as well, in that only by an agent’s distancing him- or herself either temporally or spatially (from the deviant act) does the agent make the divided Self an object and thus enable him- or herself more “objectively” to assess that Self.

This work on vicarious shame cannot yet tell us whether higher levels of in-group identification (more salient group identities) stimulate or inhibit shame and also which actions might follow an event of vicarious shame. Additionally, whereas the work in social psychology differentiates shame from other emotions (such as anxiety), putting them into discrete categories, ontological security sees shame, anxiety, memory, and narrative as connected components of the process for securing self-identity through time.

In reflexively monitoring their behavior, state agents produce a (discursive) biographical narrative to explain their actions. Shame occurs when

actors feel anxiety about the ability of their narrative to reflect how they see themselves; or, put another way, when there exists too much distance between this biographical narrative and self-identity. We recognize shame as a discursive expression of remorse or regret, and it is not something “real” so much as a shared “experience.”⁹ Shame strips away the ontological security that agents develop in their attachments to routines. It is therefore a radical disruption of the Self.

Shame exists in two (non-exclusive) forms – retrospective shame (those moments when we look back upon our history with horror at what our behavior represents in relation to how we see ourselves) and prospective shame (an “at the time” counterfactual that agents perform to address which outcomes might follow, in self-identity terms, if a certain action is chosen over others). Both processes can be observed in the discourse of agents. In the case of nation-states, this does not mean that a state agent issuing such regret is taking *personal* blame for such an identity disconnect, but it does imply that the speaker, as a member of the nation-state, experiences that disconnect and in turn seeks to see such self-identity “disruptions” repaired in current and future foreign policy actions.

This is what constructivists mean when they say that identities and interests are “co-constituted.” In this case, the biographical narrative is a constitutive device of comparison that can be utilized by external actors to identify the discrepancies which arise from a narrative that cannot adequately link, in a plausible way, an agent’s actions with the content and meaning of that justificatory self-narrative.

Memory, history, and shame

Because history both is used in and consumes a biographical narrative, the struggle for ontological security is intertwined with the ability of agents to fixate on collective memories: “The self is not some kind of mini-agency within the agent. It is the sum of those forms of recall whereby the agent reflexively characterizes ‘what’ is at the origin of his or her action” (Giddens 1984: 51). This view of history can be distinguished first from a structural (including Marxist or Hegelian) or liberal-progressive view, on the one hand, which takes continuity through time for granted, or explains such continuity through a linear connection with the Classical world.¹⁰ In other words, ontological security is not an account of history as “progress.” While the state Self can be manipulated, changed, reflexively reformed, there is no linearity to the development of a state’s self-identity. It is also to a lesser degree set apart from post-structural views of history, which seek to reveal *discontinuity and social ruptures*. For the post-structuralist, any structural logic or consistency that we recognize is imposed by those in power (including those “doing history”) to discipline the social order in their favor, thus reproducing the conditions that perpetuate their dominance. As I mention on p. 65, ontological security still acknowledges the important role

“deconstructive” practices can play in the self-identity process – such practices are necessary for “healthy” states to secure ontological security through time. Nevertheless, for ontological security scholars, the project of self-identity is neither progressive nor continuously ruptured, but reflexively, *inter-subjectively constructed* over time.¹¹

In recalling past events, and in organizing those self-relevant events into a narrative, social agents not only provide particular interpretations of history, but are enlivening history by using it to create the basis for action. Having a history is what makes us recognize our agency, as Kratochwil recently reminded us:

The problem is even more serious since those who cannot recall the past from the ever-changing problems of the present and connect it meaningfully to a future are *impaired* in their agency and therefore prone to misunderstand the issues and choices that *have* to be made. While history cannot be the “teacher” of all things practical, the critical reflection on our historicity is an indispensable precondition for grasping our predicament as agents.

(Kratochwil 2006: 20–21, emphasis added)

Note that there is nothing “natural” about history; history, as Collingwood (1946) informed us more than half a century ago, is an idea. It is awakened in our memory as a collection of experiences.¹² Freeman eloquently summarizes this process:

Most of us, therefore, have faith in the existence of our selves, and we carry this faith along with us wherever we go. Concomitant with this abiding faith in our selves, moreover, is the faith we also place in our own histories, seeing them, once more, as perhaps the most suitable means of accounting for these selves: when asked who and what we are and how we might have gotten that way, we ordinarily turn to our personal past for possible answers. Far from being a merely arbitrary choice, this is precisely how it must be, at least for now. The idea of the self, as we have come to know it, and the idea of history are in fact mutually constitutive.

(Freeman 1993: 28)

The construction of our self-relevant history is a double-edged sword, however. Because it organizes the past for the context of the present, this construction gives a priori meaning to our actions – it motivates and stimulates agents.¹³ Yet such constructions also shackle our future actions if these narratives become so dominant that they inhibit counter-interpretations from forming.

History is a collection of experiences and memory is the conduit through which we recall those experiences, but traumatic experiences disrupt the ability to channel certain events into a coherent narrative. Jenny Edkins

(2003) notes how traumatic experiences “destabilize” linear time, thus requiring the latter to be “reinstalled” through narration – which is itself a political act. These traumatic experiences are also “openings” where political contestations ensue over the meaning of the linear narrative itself.¹⁴ A historical narrative “provid[es] comforting stories in times of increased ontological insecurity and existential anxiety.” Traumas are useful here as well, while they disrupt this linear narrative, they can also be “chosen” resources used by agents to synthesize that narrative, providing “the linking objects for later generations to be rediscovered, reinterpreted, and reused” (Kinnvall 2004: 755; see also Volkan 1997). One locus for the “social” in ontological security processes exists here, in an agent’s sense of history. Our connection to our past and the past of our fellow group members, our ancestors, our national treasures, etc. provides us with the kinship that is important for our state of being as social agents.¹⁵ At the level of groups and nation-states, this is even more comforting because it organizes group behavior, a narrative anthropomorphizing “the group” into a coherent whole (as mentioned in Chapter 1).¹⁶

Ontological security in International Relations theory

Several theorists have explored, to differing degrees, the concept of ontological security at the level of nation-states. Alexander Wendt lists ontological security as one of his “five material needs” that all individuals seek, in his formulation “toward a rump materialism (II).” Yet while material factors are important to the construction of self-identity, I am not clear how “stable expectations about the natural and *especially* the social world” combine into a *material* need (Wendt 1999: 131, emphasis added). Nevertheless, Wendt’s *Social Theory* suggests one way in which ontological security “matters” to nation-state identity.

As mentioned previously in the second section of the chapter (see p. 52), Jeffrey Huysmans’ (1998) seminal article was the first to introduce ontological security. Huysmans posited at the time that “much of IR has neglected the question of ontological security.” Several insights could be developed from Huysmans’ perspective – one of which was noted above, namely that his distinction between “daily” security and “ontological” security was not only analytically useful but theoretically provocative in that the problem of security, as it were, had to be considered from both perspectives. A second important insight that will be noted in more detail in section four of this chapter (see pp. 63–68) is that Huysmans demonstrates the will of states to “homogenize” national identity, thus marginalizing certain “strangers” requires a concerted effort because strangers do not so much challenge the physical security of nation-states as they threaten their order and legitimacy. Thus Huysmans’ brief but compelling introduction of ontological security begins to resolve some inherent tensions that exist between it and critical theory.

Jennifer Mitzen (2006a, 2006b) has most directly confronted ontological security in International Relations. Her recent article has a similar purpose to that of this book – to demonstrate that ontological security motivates state behavior. Like Huysmans (1998), McSweeney (1999), and Manners (2001) before her, Mitzen posits that states are motivated by more than just physical security. Like myself (see also Steele 2005), she sees ontological security as a constant need of states. The variance in security-seeking behavior of states arises from the different levels of attachment states have to routinized relationships with “significant others.” Most impressively, Mitzen demonstrates how states can be “routinized” into harmful, self-defeating relationships, namely security dilemmas, because of rigid routines.

Mitzen’s is an important comprehensive development of ontological security in IR theory, but it differs in several respects from the ontological security view laid out in this book. As I mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, Mitzen’s omission of narrative is a critical one considering the importance narrative has for self-identity. Other scholars working on ontological security centralize the role of narrative in the self-identity process, suggesting that by organizing history in a particular fashion narrative constructs a salient group self-identity (Kinnvall 2004). Thus, it begins to disentangle the “aggregation problem,” discussed in Chapter 1, of ascribing human qualities to nation-states (or any group, for that matter). Emphasizing narrative in an ontological security account, furthermore, allows theorists to utilize the well-established body of scholarship that already exists in IR theory regarding narrative and discourse. In my view, the ability of the narrative to organize the Self is integral to any understanding of ontological security. In short, it is both an ontological and methodological referent that Mitzen seems to overlook.

A second difference between Mitzen’s account and mine is that hers is somewhat dependent upon the social context. An ontological security approach that sees self-identity as socially dependent upon others is not without its merits, of course, and Mitzen defends this emphasis throughout her article – focusing at one point on the difference between “intrinsic” and “role” identities: “socializing type [or state identities] is important for my argument because if types did not *depend* on social relationships, then states could not become attached to those relationships and ontological security would not give purchase on the security dilemma” (Mitzen 2006b: 354, emphasis added). According to Mitzen, “realists assume that type is self-organized ... rather than constituted by relationships. This means that type does not depend on other states but is internally generated and upheld” (Mitzen 2006b: 355). Indeed, as she elaborates, the “realist” view of type sounds much like the view of ontological security that I develop in this book: “For realists type is an *aspiration*, a cognitive conception of what the state would like to be if conditions were right, in short, a ‘possible self.’” The problem with this view, according to Mitzen, is that “conditions might not be

right, and then the state might have to act *as if* it is aggressive, even though it really wants nothing more than security” (Mitzen 2006b: 355).

This is, indeed, a rather compelling position in that Mitzen demonstrates how even the most atomistic versions of realism are still consumed by a social component, thus rendering the self-interest of “survival” dependent upon “defining the need as a goal in terms of the meanings and practices of that system” (Mitzen 2006b: 356). This may partially assist us in understanding why agents engage in self-negating or hypocritical actions.¹⁷ Yet in emphasizing this level of social dependence, Mitzen seems to overstate the role of others in the ontological security process: “a state cannot ‘be’ or sustain its type without its strategic partner acting in a certain way (recognizing it)” (Mitzen 2006b: 358).

This is not to deny the importance that the intersubjective web of meanings which constitute international society has upon nation-state behavior and ostensibly state identities. Neither does it deny how important a role is to a state’s sense of Self. Indeed, that is the conclusion drawn in the Belgian case, where Belgium’s sense of external honor was secured by its decision to reinforce its sovereign identity as an “independent” member of Europe. I would agree with Mitzen that an agent must make sense of the social world to ensure ontological security. But this does not mean that this agent is “dependent” upon the social world, in that (1) the screening of “relevant” elements of that social world is in part constituted by an agent’s sense of Self and (2) what those elements are, what produces them, what “causes” them – in short, how an agent “makes sense” of those elements – is in part also dependent upon an agent’s updating of information. Regarding “others,” how do states develop a “strategic partner” in the first place? When and why do they become “attached” to the other? What else can develop that understanding of the Them or They if it is not the Us or We? Second, Mitzen’s account profoundly obscures the varying actions which follow in turn from the different possible Selves of agents and it thus ignores the transformational possibilities that exist within the Self of states, and the fact that when agents are swamped by social dependencies they are actually sacrificing their agency. To the extent that there is “causality” in the ontological security process (a position I do not take in this book), Mitzen has the direction of such causality backwards.

Furthermore, depending upon which version of “realism” one uses, it is hardly the case that realists view the Self as an intrinsic identity. As demonstrated in Chapter 2, realists like Niebuhr acknowledge the multi-faceted possibilities of the agents’ Selves. Additionally – and this is important for my ontological security argument – if agents are “self-interested” and value their freedom they are radically sacrificing both by becoming “dependent” upon social relationships. Wendt acknowledges this problem as well:

Notwithstanding its potential benefits, identifying with other actors poses a threat to this effort, since it means giving others’ needs standing

alongside one's own, and the two will often be at least partly in conflict. What is best for the group is not always best for the individual. In order to get past this threat, which is the source of egoism and "Realism," actors must trust that their needs will be respected, that their individuality will not be wholly submerged by or sacrificed to the group. Creating this trust is the fundamental problem of collective identity formation, and is particularly difficult in anarchy, where being engulfed can be fatal.

(Wendt 1999: 357–358)

It is my view that the desire for independence, the salience of the nation-state form of organization, and the power of memory and organizing that memory through a historical narrative all serve to motivate nation-states to organize their Selves first and foremost, getting that Self in order in order to interact with the "others" of international politics. Nation-states recognize how much agency they sacrifice by becoming attached to "significant others," and if that was to be the case the anxiety which consumes them as social agents would be radically reduced. Indeed, nation-states attempt to shift the "moral" blame upon interconnected others in order to absolve themselves of responsibilities for past (and future) actions. Yet that is a political strategy to cover the deeper dramas of the anxiety of the self. The need for self-identity is largely consumed by these internal dramas and so in this respect I suppose I am a realist. Other scholars working on ontological security also recognize that "too strong an emphasis on social context tends to ignore the emotional dimension of subjectivity" (Kinnvall 2004: 752). As I have mentioned previously, ontological security does require sociation, whereby agents can realize their self-identities through the interaction of others. But self-identity is not always consumed by that interaction, at least at the level of nation-states.

Dialectics of the Self: the benefits of the anxious agent

I agree with Mitzen that rigid routines constrain states in their ability to "learn" (Mitzen 2006b: 364). And I agree that there exists the need for what she terms "flexible" routines that "permit reflection" and increase "learning." I do not think, however, that these routines must only be constructed intersubjectively. I would conjecture that the production of "flexible routines" depends upon the varying success agents have in the process of transforming their Selves. Furthermore, I do not think that the overwhelming "fear of chaos" that drives agents in their social construction of routines necessarily needs to be overcome. Admittedly, an individual's capacity for agency is somewhat dependent upon routines that shield him or her from the constant barrage of "dangers" which constitute his or her environment (Mitzen 2006b: 346). Yet what keeps these routines going, what motivates agents, what *reminds* them that they are human, is the anxiety of

daily life.¹⁸ While agents seek to overcome this anxiety through reflexive routines, it is never completely resolved. The anxiety is precisely what motivates the agent to perform those actions. Without reflection an agent has less motivation to act. The anxiety, the angst which consumes individuals, is necessary for them to “go forward” – it is a “question of being” that refers to “not just what should be done for human beings to survive in nature, but how existence itself should be grasped and ‘lived’” (Giddens 1991: 224).

We feel anxiety not about those things that are outside of our control, but about those we perceive to be in the realm of our possible agency. One could look at this condition of freedom in two respects, as Kierkegaard does. On the one hand, “dread” or anxiety results from the “dizziness” of freedom (Kierkegaard 1966: 55). We thus construct routines to protect ourselves from this dizziness – routines establish order and predictability. Thus a deeper issue to consider with “rigid” routines is that they not only prevent us from reforming our actions, they inhibit our humanity. They turn us from subjects to objects. It is precisely because routines *reduce* our freedom that we find them comforting. They reduce the number of things about which we can feel anxious. Here, anxiety (or dread) can be distinguished from fear we experience the former *because* we are human, and thus its presence is a celebration of our humanity:

Dread ... is quite different from fear and similar concepts which refer to something definite, whereas dread is *freedom's reality as possibility for possibility*. One does not therefore find dread in the beast, precisely for the reason that by nature the beast is not qualified by spirit.

(Kierkegaard 1966: 38, emphasis added)¹⁹

According to Heidegger, the urgency behind our creation of being comes from the recognition of death. But can this be the case with nation-states? If nation-states are indeed consumed by survival, as the traditional security literature assumes, then the urgency is not for being but for simply existing. That is the beginning and the end of what motivates states – physical security. There is no acceptance of mortality in nation-states, as opposed to individuals. So does this mean that for nation-states because mortality is not accepted “authentic life” is never possible? Perhaps, but there exists an urgency for the agents of states – all of which are mortal and recognize this. The urgency is the “mark on history” they wish to make *as* agents of states.

Routines maintain the semblance of order, yet when such routines are mere performances agents have two avenues they can pursue. They can recognize a disconnect (between the performance and their “true” sense of Self), thus repairing their ontological security system. This can be accomplished through distanciation, a term Freeman borrows from Ricoeur and defines as “the need for *divesting* oneself of those modes of experience that, by virtue of their inadequacy, have prevented one from moving forward as readily as one might” (Freeman 1993: 38, emphasis added).²⁰ In order to

jettison the damaging aspects of the Self, actors must evaluate those aspects from a distanciated place. As actions produce shame,²¹ so they constitute the distanciation that helps repair ontological security.

Thus, we are left trying to understand, to “corral” those actions and their consequences back into our narrative and how that fits into the story of our Self. There is a tension here, of course, regarding this space that is created through distanciation. Actors cannot become *too* distanced from their Selves for the simple reason that they would be unable to generate the necessary affective attachment. In its most extreme form, these actors would face a lacerated, decapitated, sense of being – what Laing refers to as the “disembodied self.”²² Even if they preserve that affective connection, they also cannot become so reflective that they endanger the “body” through “paralysis by analysis,”²³ or an over-excitation of and thus dwelling upon the self-negating action.²⁴ This form of subjective flexibility (as opposed to “flexible routines”) refers to the ability of agents to resolve this tension.²⁵

A second possibility is that agents could continue to pathologically ignore such a disconnect. These are ontological security “problem agents” that are ignorant of their sense of Selves by trying to perform for others. It is appropriate here to note sociologist Erving Goffman’s position that agents separate their sense of Selves into “front” and “back” regions, much like a theatrical performance gathers its resources from a backstage that the audience never sees and thus never knows (Goffman 1973: esp. ch. 3). This “performance of an individual in a front region may be seen as an effort to give the appearance that his activity in the region maintains and embodies certain standards” (Goffman 1973: 107).

A back region or backstage may be defined as a place, relative to a given performance, where the impression fostered by the performance is *knowingly contradicted* as a matter of course. ... In general, of course, the back region will be the place where the performer can reliably expect that no member of the audience will intrude.

(Goffman 1973: 112–113)

The backstage, in other words, is a “part” of the individual that is not public. Giddens (1987: 162) agrees with some of this – backstage areas are places where agents can repair their self-conceptions. Yet Giddens asserts (contra Goffman) that the carefully crafted “performance” is itself important to an agent’s self-identity:

[W]hy, in fact, should they bother to devote the attention they do to such performances at all? ... The sustaining of ontological security could not be achieved if front regions were no more than facades. ... It is *precisely* because there is generally a deep, although generalized, affective involvement in the routines of daily life that actors (agents)

do not ordinarily feel themselves to be actors (players), whatever the terminological similarity between these terms.

(Giddens 1984: 125, emphasis added)

What social theorists have named this second condition varies. As Giddens notes, Laing calls the “radical . . . discrepancy between accepted routines and the individual’s biographical narrative” a false self (Giddens 1991: 59). Betty Jean Lifton prefers the term “artificial self,” one that is not “completely true or completely false,” but sounds much like the same delusional version of Laing’s false self:

The Artificial Self becomes almost selfless in its desire to please. Wanting to fit in at any cost, it will not deny its own needs for the sake of others. It is afraid to express its real feelings of sadness or anger, for fear of losing the only family it has. . . . The Artificial Self may behave like the perfect child but knows itself to be an imposter. Having cut off a vital part of the self, it may experience an inner deadness.

(Lifton 1996: 21)

This is the more pronounced, and depressing, possibility in the ontological security process – that agents become so consumed with social dependence that they lose their self-identity. This does not mean that all agents, by socializing with others, will inevitably become “artificial,” since there are several intersubjective media through which agents seek ontological security – such as language and a “thin” lifeworld from which to communicate to others ways in which the agent’s interactive responses might fulfill their self-identity needs. The promising (and daunting) possibility here is that the dialectic of the Self provides agents with the ability to abandon those intrinsic elements which contaminate the realization of a healthy sense of ontological security. The fact that “healthy” ontological security can never be realized, the constant angst which agents carry with them all of their days, is the precise condition which makes this cathartic abandonment possible.²⁶ As I discussed in depth in Chapter 2, such an individualistic ethos does not preclude moral action. It may even be the necessary condition for it.

Ontological “critical security” theory

Several bodies of critical IR theory assist the ontological security perspective. These insights derive from the tension which exists from the possibility that ontological security drives in nation-states can imprison and/or marginalize internal and “external” others. The post-structuralist takes Charles Tilly’s observation that “war made the state and the state made war”²⁷ a step further, arguing that this use of violence was more than just an exercise

in the securing of an area, but was, and still is, an exercise of power through exclusion, a “civilizing process” whereby the State establishes order (Campbell 1998; Weber 1995; Rae 2002: esp. 32–38).²⁸ The nation-state wields this violence apparently to ensure the physical security of its members, although which members’ security is ensured is itself extremely selective. Zygmunt Bauman notes how the nation-state, as *the* artifact of modernity, has used this violence to homogenize populations (as during the Third Reich), thus making “othered” groups more imperiled than they had been at any other time in history. One dark side of a nation-state’s “self-identity” realization is that its agents can use such violence as a “vehicle of social integration,” in order to “defuse the danger that a ‘foreigner inside’ cannot but present to the self-identity and self-production of the host group” (Bauman 1990: 34).

Ontological security, as an approach, because it ascribes self-identity to nation-states, an individual “social reality” of the nation-state as a person, might be said to reify the state itself, thereby cementing (if not endorsing) all of its inadequacies to address, in varying ways, the suffering of humans. I do indeed acknowledge that nation-states, in seeking to homogenize a “corporate” self-identity, might satisfy the drive for ontological security in marginalizing and internally violent ways. It is thus for this reason that we cannot “solve” the aggregation problem (in the manner that Mitzen attempts) by assuming that “states seek ontological security” because doing so ensures the ontological security of individual citizens or subjects (Mitzen 2006b: 352). Huysmans’s (1998) position is quite useful here, in that states view internal others as threats to self-identity precisely because they are *strangers*, disturbing the “predictability and continuity” of a state’s self-identity through time, and thus a form of “chaos” that *precludes* their realization of ontological security. Thus, instead of reifying nation-states, ontological security can be used to understand how ontological, rather than or in addition to physical, insecurity drives states to pursue such “civilizing” projects that endanger swaths of their own populations. This can be clarified by returning to the distinction between identifiable “objects” that threaten the physical security of the state (external enemies) and internal *strangers* who cause anxiety rather than fear, but threaten the legitimacy of that nation-state’s internal *order*. Since ontological security, according to Huysmans, is concerned with “how to order social relations while simultaneously guaranteeing the very activity of ordering itself,” states concerned with ontological security will “identify” “potentially disturbing strangers who, by being both inside and outside, can render problematic the viability of clear boundary drawing, [and] of providing order” as enemies. Thus, we recognize how the need for ontological security is satisfied by “securitizing” the unknown into an identifiable threat (Huysmans 1998: 242) by turning *anxiety* into *fear*. Such a possibility modifies the notion that “state security and survival are the ultimate proof of state sovereignty” (Jackson 2000: 207).

Additionally, the status of the nation-state in providing elements of “human security” varies. Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and other non-state actors, including “terrorist” organizations, to the extent that one assumes they are separate from state structures, at times take over some of these welfare functions of states.²⁹ And some “states” aren’t even states, at least enough to develop a sense of self-identity that can be manipulated into assisting those in need. In essence, certain states are fractured or exist in “quasi”-form (see Jackson 1990).

What ontological security does propose is that transnational actors like NGOs and terrorist organizations can increase the reflexive capabilities of states by constructing a critical “counter-narrative” to the vision a state has of itSelf. This counter-narrative can stimulate a more reflective distancing by revealing the manner in which a targeted state’s practices exclude or subjugate certain populations. What is reified in ontological security research is not the “state” per se but the idea of the state or, more importantly, the self-identity of the state that takes on a “reality” for its citizens. It is the placement of the “self” of the state in international society that matters for the security interests of states, and this Self can be problematized.

A *critical* ontological security account might focus on both the social construction of self-identity and also how that self-identity can be problematized, and even deconstructed, as it “is the very deconstructability of the state that provides some possible avenues for alternative action” (Lang 2002: 28). As agents we wish to avoid that which might produce shame; we cover it up, we obfuscate, we rewrite texts, we discipline with talking points. But adept actors can uncover those processes as if they are artifacts.³⁰ This is the benefit of a post-structural archaeology for ontological security. We need to uncover the processes to experience shame – we need to know who ordered which policy and why, who willfully ignored what and why, for whom and for what purposes. This will not always be possible, again, because that which makes routines so vital – their ability to defend us from external identity threats – also makes them the key obstacle to recognizing the dire consequences our past and current actions have had for our eventual Selves.³¹ In short, routines discipline and punish the self, obscuring alternative paths for action.

By drawing a connection between the practices of a targeted state and its professed self-identity, by focusing on the inconsistencies between the actions of a state and the “biographical narrative” that state uses to justify those actions, critical actors can “lay bare” the Self of a state. This deconstructive element of ontological security is the chief affinity with post-structural approaches through which the particularly negative view taken by critical theory of the nation-state might be ameliorated.³²

Another distinction between post-structuralism and ontological security originates from the earlier discussion of anxiety, freedom, and agency. Most post-structuralists would posit that individuals are consumed by relations of power:

Ironically, post-modern analyses which have primarily directed their efforts at criticizing the realist approach to international relations may, themselves, justifiably be called super realist. Although they reject the realist commitment to the *state*, they remain firmly committed to the realist canon that the primary focus in all social relations must be on *power* ... the aim is on bringing to light *structures of power* which were previously hidden.

(Frost: 1996: 69)

If and when these power relations were exposed, they would probably be met with more resistance. Yet precisely the fact that such resistance is so rare implies that individuals/groups lack a sense of agency, or, even worse, had a sense of agency that for whatever reasons was surrendered. If this is so, then whatever actors we speak of – individuals, groups, or states – will never face the anxiety (“dread”) or, ostensibly, the shame that comes as a part of the package of self-identity. Even if we could do more through our actions than we realize, because we *perceive* that we have no ability to influence our world we would then never face a disruption in ontological security. Our self-identity would be imprisoned by social forces that we would never be able to control. But this observation should not obscure the more important associations that can be drawn between critical and ontological security perspectives.

Most notably, ontological security shares some promising connections with feminist perspectives on IR. The latter have also “questioned realism’s claim to universality and objectivity; they suggest that its epistemology is gendered masculine and is constructed out of experiences more typical of men than women” (Tickner 1996: 151).³³ Feminist IR suggests that our conception of what states desire (or admire) is simply a reflection of the dominant role men have played in international politics *and the field of international relations theory*. While Tickner’s claim that “favorable attributes of states, such as independence, strength, autonomy, and self-help resemble the characteristics of sovereign man” is not totally free from criticism,³⁴ she is correct to note that (inscribed) feminine attributes have been associated with idealism and “branded as naïve, unrealistic and even irrational by realist critics” (Tickner 1996: 151). Most traditional security assumptions (as noted in Table 3.1) and the issue areas they have engendered (foreign policy, security, and structural analysis) are informed by a masculine ethos. Thus the practice of unpacking security by employing an ontological security alternative mutually shares some of the challenge feminist perspectives have faced for a decade or longer of being branded “naïve and subjective,” but confronts those challenges from within the site of the nation-state.

Therefore ontological security might provide some theoretical insight for the “public man–private woman” binary that feminist social theory has revealed in dominant approaches to “rationality.” Spike Peterson elaborates

how feminists have uncovered this public v. private separation as manifested in politics:

showing that the “givenness” of male–female biological difference was used simultaneously to explain and to justify the figurative and literal separation of men and women, masculine and feminine, into separate and unequal spheres. The binary association of masculinity with public power, agency, culture, reason, freedom, etc., and the association of femininity with privacy, passivity, nature, irrationality, necessity, justified multiple expressions of gender inequality.

(Peterson 1992: 193)

The public–private and man–woman binaries have also influenced the construction of the IR state and its attendant security interests, dominated by androcentric properties of power, culture, and rationality. Furthermore, expressions of caring, emotion, rescue, empathy are private interests – important but better left out of diplomacy and security dialogue.³⁵

This irrationalizes moral action, as noted by Tickner:

[For traditional security theorists:] Moral behavior has no place in international politics. Just as moral sentiments have been contained in women’s space, the private sphere of the household, so too the possibility of moral behavior has been banished from the international sphere. Realists counsel that statesmen who act morally are behaving “irrationally” given the “realities” of an anarchic and dangerous world.

(Tickner 1996: 152)

But international politics is a more diverse public sphere than the portrait painted by mainstream assumptions suggests. There is nothing more private than how we see ourselves, and therefore if self-identity obtains in nation-states the “private” is constantly in our purview. That is, states “talk” about who they are. And because the construction of self-identity is an incredibly inward, reflective process, “successful” ontological security-seeking *necessitates* the publicization of the private.

When discussing how we distinguish the public from the private (and how this is manifested in gendered terms) we can return to the issue of shame previously introduced in this chapter (see pp. 65–66). That of which we are ashamed remains private, and yet if we can recognize what “shames” individuals, or nation-states, then we are witnessing a process of making the private public. When we state that shame is a private sense of transgression, again, it means that an agent has a radically disrupted sense of Self.³⁶ Furthermore, shame is of high importance for individuals, even more important than “getting caught” breaking a rule. Rules are established by society, by a community; shame, on the other hand, contradicts our sense of who we are – of who we thought we were becoming. For Elshtain, we try to hide this sense of shame:

Shame or its felt experience as it surrounds our body, its functions, passions, and desires requires appearances and symbolic forms, veils of civility that conceal some activities and aspects of ourselves even as we boldly or routinely display and reveal other sides of ourselves as we take part in public activities in the light of day for all to see.

(Elshtain 1981: 9)

Elshtain refers to individuals, who can hide (to a certain extent) their insecurities from their community and even their families. In this sense, shame might be *more* observable in states – for the Self of a state is *shared* by a group of individuals through narrative and experience. As such, discursive remorse, while rare in world politics, is evident. In this sense, that which is private for individuals, or what those individuals find shameful which remains hidden, *is revealed* in the ontological security-seeking process in states.

Admittedly, nation-states are abstractions – yet they are also important pieces of convenient fiction. Since there exist “appropriate” and “inappropriate” expressions of security interests – for instance “national interest” in terms of power versus “caring talk” – it is quite obvious that such a private–public discipline obtains at the state level, and that shame, as a metaphor (or more) provides us with a window onto how the rational drive for healthy self-concepts makes public an otherwise private sense of remorse. The normative corollary to this is that shame is perhaps a *good* thing; it is, like anxiety, a necessary condition for the realizations of a new self, it is “central to safeguarding the freedom of the body, hence, to keeping alive our freedom to act responsibly” (Elshtain 1996: 285).

Ontological security components and the struggle for a state identity

All actors seek ontological security, but not all actors are equally capable of experiencing shame (or insecurity) because not all have the same ability to revise their routines through self-interrogative reflexivity. We might assume that certain states, like democracies, are most adept at such self-reflection, yet even democracies face challenges to re-forming their routines in ways which can accommodate the critical situations that so disrupt their ontological security. And at times democracies may even be less reflective than other states because of a “Tyrannical” majority³⁷ or a despotic form of Rousseau’s General Will.³⁸ No states are immune to all the barriers which exist toward realizing their ontological security.

I therefore posit four sets of interrelated factors important in ontological security-seeking behavior: (1) reflexive and material capabilities; (2) crisis assessment; (3) biographical narrative; and (4) discursive framing by co-actors. While the context of these factors will vary across states, all states face these issues in ontological security-seeking.

Material and reflexive capabilities

Because of their physical capabilities, “great power” states are the most likely candidates in an international system to determine outcomes. They can therefore be selective with their action. One would then expect these actors to select deployment situations where their material interests are at stake and then judge whether the costs of the intervention outweigh the benefits entailed by a successful outcome. This would explain why the United States allows Russia to commit human rights abuses in Chechnya, or China in Tibet, and thus why the behavior of hegemonic units resembles “organized hypocrisy.”

When we say that capabilities constitute identity, we are making an important assertion. In general, more capably “powerful” states are somewhat imprisoned by their ability to influence more outcomes in international politics, and in this sense these capabilities, rather than allowing these states more freedom to act (as their acquisition is intended to accomplish), compromise their sense of “freedom.” At the level of individuals, according to Sartre, “anguish” derives from our realization of our freedom, which comes directly from the idea that at any moment we can take our life (for example by throwing ourselves off a cliff).³⁹ Even in the most imprisoned form of existence, individuals could, with some effort, realize this freedom. This might mean that prison suicides, while the result of complex processes, in some cases are the result of prisoners actuating their only avenue of freedom.⁴⁰ Therefore the realization of freedom comes in many forms, even physically costly forms. But it might also imply that actors who have fewer physical capabilities – freedom of movement, strength of resources, etc. – feel even more empowered by the fact that this limited physical capacity radically reduces the possible sets of circumstances where they *could* have “chosen differently.” As Weldes’s study suggests, powerful states, as in the case of the assertion of American “leadership” during the Cold War, by constituting the Self as “strong,” ironically produce

a pervasive and inescapable credibility problem To be of any use these commitments had to be believed. But their very nature and extensiveness rendered suspect the claims that the United States could and would live up to them. Each of these aspects of the U.S. identity, then, simultaneously generated both a need for the United States to be credible and grave doubts about its credibility.

(Weldes 1999: 46–47)

Conversely, “smaller powers” would have in this meaning a more emancipated existence, in the sense that their levels of anxiety are reduced due to, ironically, their state of constrained agency. As the Belgian case demonstrates, the European admiration the Belgians acquired (ensuring their “external honor”) was partially a function of *their lack of material capabilities*

and the overwhelming odds that they ignored (to a certain degree) in fighting the Germans.

As evidenced in Chapter 6, ontological insecurity is heightened for more powerful states when not intervening in humanitarian crises, especially *because* those crises are so preventable. We feel less anxiety for situations we think we cannot change. This makes intelligible the remorse observed in the discourse of powerful states – certain genocides (like Rwanda) produce “shame” *precisely because* they could have been more easily averted and powerful states were the ones *most capable* of confronting those situations. Both the powerful state and, somewhat less importantly, the international community share this obvious interpretation. An ontological security interpretation sees the act of ignoring such crises, when they are easily preventable, as seriously imperiling a sense of self-identity formulated by (certain) powerful states’ biographical narratives. There are *higher costs* with non-intervention because such inaction produces shame and “strips away an agent’s sense of continuity in the world.” Humanitarian crises are critical situations that shock agents’ sense of ontological security because such crises challenge their understanding of what they should tolerate in international politics.

Some agents are more capable than others, and those who are most capable, we could surmise, have the greatest freedom in choosing one course of action over others. But more powerful states also have a greater share of responsibility for their actions precisely because of this freedom of choice. This implies that when speaking of self-identity, while material capabilities are important, they are contingent upon the additional *reflexive* capabilities nation-states possess which make them aware of their own abilities to produce outcomes that other less capable actors cannot.

In short, more powerful states are faced with the knowledge that even unintended consequences may have been altered had they acted differently. And because they *can act differently* without imperiling their existence they are more greatly exposed to different emotional processes (like shame). The politics of international relations then becomes about either shifting this responsibility to other international actors, or reconstituting the actions of the self.⁴¹

Crisis assessment

When speaking of self-identity “crises,” I take here Jutta Weldes’s conceptualization that crises are not “objective facts” but

social constructions that are forged by state officials in the course of producing and reproducing state identity. If crises are constructed in relation to particular state identities, events that are ostensibly the same will in fact be constituted as different crises, or not as a crisis at all, by and for states with different identities.

(Weldes 1999: 37)

This also relates to material capabilities. Yet here again we must recognize how the mutually constitutive process of crisis and self-identity construction makes a nation-state dependent upon three related abilities: (1) discursive abilities, in the sense of constructing a situation as a crisis; (2) plausibly linking that crisis to the national Self; and (3) identifying which policy might effectively terminate the crisis. Actors must also successfully calculate the identity costs of pursuing or abstaining from a certain policy. Many sub-factors then determine a state's ability to successfully assess a crisis.⁴² In modern times, nation-states are dependent upon the information provided by agents outside of their control – such as the media or NGOs which provide “on the ground” transparency and information. This allows global media outlets or NGOs to “shape” information to compel states to intervene.⁴³ For instance, Susan Woodward posits that humanitarian NGOs witnessed first hand the problems of a purely non-military approach in Kosovo, eventually supporting the use of force and succeeding in persuading nation-state policy makers to intervene militarily (Woodward 2001). Information is power in this case because states depend upon this information to approximate the “social reality” of international politics that is important for ontological security-seeking.

From within, nation-states are also dependent upon military intelligence to assess the material costs of any intervention considered. Because these material costs can translate into political costs, such estimates can constrain the ability of state leaders to implement a policy. In some cases, military leaders may be reluctant to intervene because of their philosophical disagreement with the motives behind and the benefits of an intervention, or, put another way, they might disagree with what a proposed action would mean for their perceived sense of national Self. Thus they may frame an intervention according to a disastrous scenario, one requiring an enormous deployment of troops and needing copious financial resources. Such agencies are the ones responsible for transmogrifying these “crises” from subjective sources of anxiety to objective sources of threat.⁴⁴ Other analysts have noted the effects military “doctrines” may have upon the propensity to use force.⁴⁵ This possibility is well established by theorists uncovering how these doctrines make the use of force more (or less) likely. Jack Snyder argues that a “cult of the offensive” prior to World War I motivated the military leaders of European states to advocate a war in which their countries ultimately incurred enormous human and financial losses.⁴⁶ Noam Chomsky identified the influence a “mandarin class” had upon American involvement in Vietnam (Chomsky 1969).

Biographical narrative (illocutionary discourse)

The biographical narrative is important to self-identity because it is the locus through which agents “work out” their understandings of social settings and the placement of their Selves in those settings. Actors, with

varying degrees of success, are using narrative as *the* form of “discursive consciousness” through which agents create meanings for their actions (Giddens 1984: 374). That is the ontological importance of narrative, and for our purposes a narrative used by state agents “breathes life” into the nation-state (a position I defended in Chapter 1). Indeed, narration is the most political of acts a state agent can execute, in that it organizes what is “the state.” While it by no means homogenizes a state’s self-identity – indeed, the securing of self-identity is complex – the biographical narrative scales down the relevant roles a state occupies for particular sets of situations and creates the context through which action can take place. Again, the above-noted assessment of “crisis” unfolds in relation to this narrative. In Jutta Weldes’s words, “*in order for the state to act*, state officials must produce representations” of a crisis, a crisis which itself “depends on the discursively constituted identity of the state” (Weldes 1999: 57–58, emphasis added).

A state’s biographical narrative is a form of “performative language.”⁴⁷ Albert Yee notes that “language operates to define the range of possible utterances and hence the range of possible actions.” A biographical narrative is an “illocutionary” speech act where the “the speaker performs an action in saying something” (Habermas 1984: 288; see also Yee 1996: 95). It is thus a “commitment” to self-identity. As Onuf notes (when developing his argument from speech act theory), making promises public transforms intentions into commitments:

Is [a] private commitment a rule unless it is followed by a public statement, the latter being the proximate source of normativity[?] ... Wishing to keep the commitment private suggests insincerity about being committed and withholds normative consequences. If one accepts promises to one’s self, then it is indeed [indeed] a rule for that person because it is constitutive and regulative at one and the same time.

(Onuf 1989: 88)⁴⁸

A *biographical* narrative implicates the self within the understandings of those events. One should notice four interconnected processes within a biographical narrative: actor’s *understanding* of (1) what “causes” or “drives” events; (2) what that event means about an actor’s self-identity; (3) how those events are important to an actor’s *interests*, or how interests are derived from the self-identity of an actor in relation to the event; and (4) what *policies* (if any, although even “no policy” is a policy in relation to an event) a state should use to pursue those interests.

The methodological relevance of the narrative is that *we as observers* recognize a “stable sense of self-identity” in an agent when there exists “a feeling of biographical continuity which [an agent] is able to grasp reflexively ... The existential question of self-identity is bound up with the fragile nature of the biography which the individual ‘supplies’ about herself” (Giddens

1991: 54). The ability of agents to transcend this anxiety is thus largely dependent upon their abilities to coherently organize this narrative. This is the key to understanding how we can interpret the self-identity of agents – individuals, groups, or states.

In short, since narratives can change, this means we can *observe* how a state's understandings of what "drives" critical situations can change (through new incoming information or education about an "event"). Return to the definition of "critical situations" which disrupt an agent's sense of self – they are "unpredictable." If agents could plan for these events which threaten their self-identity, they would no longer be "critical situations." Once confronted, nation-states must explicate some causal understanding of what produces those situations in order to predict their recurrence and then reformulate actions to eliminate them. If, on the other hand, they then determine that as nation-states they are incapable of preventing these from happening, such situations are no longer "critical," in the sense that nation-states do not perceive them to be within the purview of the agency. This process demonstrates how security *interests* change (see Figure 3.1).

This does not imply that all agents are equally capable of articulating accurate and successful narratives to describe their actions or the events which challenge self-identity. Some actors are more capable than others and some actions can more easily be articulated or justified than others. As I discuss within the context of the case study chapters (Chapters 4, 5, and 6), and then in my concluding chapter (Chapter 7), a biographical narrative is but one parameter of the larger issue of "reflexive capabilities" that states use to demonstrate their own sense of ontological security. This does show that a biographical narrative reflects the need of all states in pursuing consistent actions as a way of defining the national "self."

Just like all other narratives in International Relations, the biographical narrative constructs a reality as perceived by an actor. State agents relate their identity to their actions and place the self in the context of a(n) (international) community. Narratives create meanings of an event and make sense of how events are *connected*: "narratives bind temporal events together such that meaning can be ascribed to a pattern. The organization of time itself endows meaning to events" (Bach 1999: 46). The language a state uses to describe its actions influences future decisions: "to invoke some property of language called illocutionary force is indeed to leave behind the longstanding view, on which positivism depends, that the (only) function of language is to represent reality" (Onuf 1989: 82).

Δ understandings of what "drives" critical situations → Δ what those situations mean about self-identity → Δ state's security interests → Δ policy choices → Δ narratives about the actions of the state "self"

Figure 3.1

Co-actor discourse strategies (perlocutionary discourse)

Ontological security can be increasingly disrupted when members of the international community construct language meant to recall another member's past failure. The success of such strategies to "insecuritize" targeted agents is dependent upon the previously discussed components of ontological security. The assumption states make is that other states will "learn" from their past mistakes and will adjust their future decisions to avoid these same outcomes and the corresponding levels of anxiety produced by those outcomes.⁴⁹ Like illocutionary force, perlocutionary language is a "performative" act through which "the speaker produces an effect upon the hearing. By carrying out a speech he [the speaker] brings about something in the world" (Habermas 1984: 289).

Neta Crawford argues that one of the conditions necessary for actors to change their beliefs relates to their "receptivity" to an ethical argument, and this receptivity "depends on the fit between the self-conceptualization of actors' identity and the proposed normative belief" (Crawford 2002: 114). Crawford posits that there are "at least" three components to political identity: (1) a sense of self in relation to or distinct from others, or "social identity"; (2) a historical narrative about the self (which can be mythical or religious); and (3) an ideology (Crawford 2002: 114). The process of actor "receptivity" to certain arguments over others is an almost identical one to that which produces "shame." Both are based upon the same assumptions and thus we can see discursive opportunities both to "lobby" an actor to endorse a policy (Crawford's thesis) or to "shame" an actor towards a certain action. While an actor's political identity will determine which arguments they are receptive to, I posit that, in a similar fashion, there are certain arguments which can be framed in an inverse manner that cause actors to develop anxiety over an existing crisis because of their sense of self and the historical narrative they base their actions upon. In other words, actors – states or otherwise – can frame an event in a way that may compel *others* to change their policies in order to manipulate their sense of ontological security. This process is evident in the Kosovo case, where international actors like NGOs or the leaders of fellow states used language to play upon the varying sources of shame of other Western states.

I say these are "co-actors" rather than "fellow states" because there are a variety of international entities capable of "shaming" states into action. Thomas Risse and Stephen C. Ropp note that "[t]he moral arguing here is mainly about identity politics, that is, Western governments and their societies are reminded of their own values as liberal democracies and of the need to act upon them in their foreign policies" (Risse *et al.* 1999: 251).

Discourse constitutes the situation, "framing" it in a strategic way to threaten the identity (through the production of anxiety) of a fellow state in order to compel it to act.⁵⁰ In my other work (Steele 2005, 2007b) I have termed this "reflexive discourse," in that

discursive representations can be just as powerful as physical presentations of force – because they can compel other international actors to “do what they otherwise would not do.” The possibility is that states not only know what actions will make other states *physically* insecure, but also *ontologically* insecure as well.

(Steele 2005: 539)

This is in no way inconsistent with the traditional security literature of “queuing” or “signaling” between two actors in a game-theoretic model, although the “credible” threat posed by framing is to a state’s identity, not to its physical existence.⁵¹

Much of this chapter has focused upon a specific account of the Self. The concluding section begins to provide the reader with an idea of how the ontological security process obtains in nation-states and to introduce which impending potholes are likely to prevent states effectively implementing policies to assure their ontological security. In essence, the fluid nature of the domestic and international factors that play a role in forming state identities means that states constantly struggle to “structure” their foreign policies in a consistent manner. But to acquire a more comprehensive understanding it is necessary to explore how ontological security operates in specific cases. Using the theoretical account provided in these first three chapters, we can uncover processes that we never before recognized, thus packaging a new story about the social actions of nation-states. I therefore turn to these empirical cases to demonstrate how the drama of the Self develops in nation-states, beginning with the British decision to remain neutral during the American Civil War.

4 The power of self-identity

British neutrality and the American Civil War

This chapter assesses whether the Emancipation Proclamation (EP) prevented British involvement in the American Civil War. I show how the EP changed the meaning of the American Civil War for the British, thus clarifying why nineteenth-century Britain remained neutral in a conflict whose increased duration had dire economic consequences for its citizens and whose outcome would have important consequences for its future relative power trajectory. By focusing on British opinion leader debates occurring both before and after the issuance of the Proclamation, I assess the EP's impact upon Britain's decision to not recognize the Confederacy. The EP increased British anxiety over the meaning of the American Civil War – eventually altering British perceptions of what was “driving” it as a critical situation relevant to British self-identity. This anxiety stemmed a strong interventionist tide that had been building since the beginning of the American conflict and thus resulted in Britain remaining neutral until the war ended in 1865.

This case study is used to understand two important issues about social action in general and self-identity in particular. First, British contemplation of the meaning of the American Civil War, and an intervention to stop it, represents reflexive behavior. It is in some ways an ontological security “success story” in that British opinion leaders artfully avoided adopting a policy which would have seriously threatened British self-identity. Second, by using an ontological security interpretation this case is an example of how what we might interpret as a “moral” action (neutrality) actually represents self-help behavior because it is a form of identity reinforcement.

I begin the chapter by providing an introduction to the case along with a summary of contending explanations (see pp. 77–83). The second section (see pp. 83–91) uses an ontological security account to interpret the British decision regarding involvement in the American Civil War. I reconstruct the context of the crisis, focusing on the crucial period leading up to the issuance of the EP and the months that followed. Reviewing historical accounts, British parliamentary debates, and diplomatic and private dispatches, I then assess the impact the EP had on the British decision-making process.

Rival explanations for British neutrality

Great Britain's history with slavery is too extensive to outline in detail in this chapter, but British experiences with the slave trade in the century prior to the American Civil War fostered an antislavery "culture" in Britain. It was not always this way – Britain had generally been favorable to the slave trade on economic and, ironically, humanitarian grounds. Since several other countries engaged in the trade, the British reasoned that slaves would be best treated under British control. By the late eighteenth century, however, various abolitionist groups had succeeded in challenging the legitimacy of the Atlantic slave trade. While the British abolitionist movement was riddled with internal tensions (see Turley 1991), it was powerful enough that by 1807 Britain had formally banned the Atlantic slave trade, and in similar fashion in 1833 passed the Slavery Abolition Act, which abolished slavery throughout imperial Britain. Over the course of the next sixty years Britain would engage in "costly moral action" by making the enforcement of this ban a component of its foreign policy (Kaufman and Pape 1999). Precisely because the abolition movement included such disparate groups which cut across many of Britain's classes, the banning of the slave trade and Britain's 1833 abolition of slavery became a powerful and resilient source of British pride.¹

The commencement of hostilities in the United States between the Union North and the Confederate South "took most British people by surprise." While Britain was largely aware of the increasing tensions between the two warring parties, such tensions had been "going on so long that the notion that something out of the ordinary might now be happening was hard to accept" (Temperley 1972: 248). Britain immediately declared her neutrality in the contest, although the British foreign secretary, Lord John Russell, stated that the British would "*if possible* stay out of it" (Adams 1925: 90, emphasis added). Due to the fact that the British had not predicted the timing of the war, following initial neutrality the British engaged in "a prolonged debate as to what the struggle was, or might conceivably be, about and what attitudes it was appropriate for them [Brits] to adopt towards it" (Adams 1925: 90).

This ambiguity meant that during several junctures of the War of American States Great Britain contemplated some form of involvement to end the hostilities. The most notable reasons for British intervention were: (1) the shortage of Southern cotton caused by the Union blockade hurt the British economy, most notably the textile and manufacturing sectors; (2) a divided America was advantageous to hegemonic Britain;² and (3) the British wanted to see an end to what they called a "fratricidal war." By 1862 it was thought that intervention by an outside power would be the only way to end the bloodshed. The scale of possible actions which could service these three motives ranged from recognition of the Confederacy, through British-led mediation between the two warring parties, to outright military

intervention.³ Nineteenth-century Britain was the most likely country which could succeed in such an undertaking, as it would be Britain's lead which other countries, such as France, Russia and Austria, would follow.

For the British, the diplomatic move to recognize the Confederacy meant just that: recognizing a sovereign state and establishing formal ties. That is not what it would have meant to the American North. Such a move would have led, at the least, to diplomatic severance between the two countries and at the most to war: "Recognition of the Confederacy would provide a tremendous boost to its morale by opening military and commercial avenues throughout Europe. Southern secession would achieve legitimacy, necessarily meaning that the Union had lost its permanency" (Jones 1999: 137).

A second form of action – mediation – would have been tantamount to an intervention using force because the intention to separate the two warring parties rested upon some peace agreement that would have given the South formal status as a sovereign country. By 1862 the British did not see spontaneous reconciliation between the two parties as possible. Although various interventionist actions were proposed by British policy makers, in the end the outcome of them all would be the same: formal recognition of the South and a semi-permanent division of antebellum America.

According to a traditional security account, the British should have intervened in the American Civil War. Strategically, a divided America would have been less of an immediate danger because of the preoccupation of the warring sides, and in the future a divided America undoubtedly would have been less powerful than a united one. British opinion leaders knew that the United States was a rising power and these power considerations weighed heavily upon them. In addition to his prolific career as a novelist, Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton was a member of the British Parliament, and on September 25, 1861, he observed:

If it could have been possible that, as population and wealth increased, all the vast continent of America, with her mighty seaboard and fleets which her increasing ambition as well as her extending commerce would have formed and armed, could have remained under one form of government why, then, America would have hung over Europe like a gathering and destructive cloud. No single kingdom in Europe could have been strong enough to maintain itself against a nation that had once consolidated the gigantic resources of a quarter of the globe.

(Bulwer-Lytton, quoted in Sideman 1962: 84–85)

It was also likely that the British prime minister, Lord Palmerston, would have supported such an intervention, considering that he has (by many accounts) been identified as a champion of realist ideology. The man who once stated that "nations have no permanent friends or allies, they only have permanent interests," has been represented as a nineteenth-century Kissinger who made geopolitical calculations during foreign policy decisions

as both foreign secretary and prime minister.⁴ One would assume he would also see intervention as ensuring competitor division, British hegemony, and British survival.

There were also economic motives for intervention, or what Frank Owsley identified as “King Cotton” diplomacy, meaning:

Europe must have southern cotton or perish. This King Cotton philosophy, as we have seen, was a fairly reasonable one, for about a fourth or fifth of England’s population gained its bread from the cotton industry [based principally on the southern supply] and one-tenth of England’s wealth was invested in this industry and nearly half of her export trade was made up of manufactured cotton goods.

(Owsley 1959: 542)

The British incurred economic costs that resulted from the Union blockade of Southern ports, constricting the supply of cotton that fueled Britain’s textile industry. Keeping in mind the quotation from Owsley, we can see that there existed a strong British motivation to end the war.

So why didn’t the British intervene? Owsley identifies the “principle laid down by the economic interpretation group of historians, namely, that in order to counteract one economic impulse another stronger economic motive is necessary” (Owsley 1959: 542). One counter-argument is that Union wheat kept the British at bay. Suffering a short grain crop from 1860 through 1862, the British were vulnerable to a wheat famine and thus more dependent upon the wheat and grain of the American North than they were upon the cotton of the South. Owsley dismisses this argument quickly, noting that there is little correspondence within the Palmerston Cabinet or amongst Members of Parliament that indicates this was a factor in the British decision. American Secretary of State William Seward did try to exploit the wheat connection in order to prevent the British from intervening, but Owsley dismisses this as “federal propaganda.” In my review of the discourse and historical records of the decision I could not find much discussion about wheat shortages influencing the Palmerston Cabinet; I concur with Owsley (1959: 549) on this point.

Yet another economic counter-argument is that Britain actually profited from the American Civil War because the war drove up world cotton prices making existing British stockpiles quite valuable. In addition, the British were developing India as a colony largely for its (rival) cotton potential. In this account, by the time intervention would have been most prudent the British no longer needed to intervene. In fact, intervention would have jeopardized their growing profits from the war.

This is Owsley’s position, that the revitalization of the woollen and linen industries in England further fueled this process. He adds that industries linked to war, like those producing munitions or ships, also profited. Finally, Owsley makes the compelling point that Confederate attacks on Union

ships ostensibly destroyed the American merchant marine “without England’s lifting her hand.” The war would effectively eliminate the main seafaring rival to British hegemony, increasing Britain’s economic leverage. This leads Owsley to conclude that “England, far from being hag-ridden by poverty during the American Civil War, made enormous material profits” (Owsley 1959: 556).

While there were traditional security reasons for intervening, a separate traditional security explanation could be put forward for neutrality as well. Intervention would have been too costly even if it had been successful: “no one could argue convincingly that foreign intervention – whether mediation or an armistice – offered a harmless means for ending the war ... further, history demonstrates that once an intervention process begins, it takes on a life of its own” (Jones 1999: 121). Stephen Rock accepts this line of reasoning: “as a matter of principle, most [Palmerston] cabinet members favored intervention; they refrained from it only because of doubts regarding its feasibility” (Rock 1997: 123).

It is evident then that these strategic and economic arguments are both theoretically and temporally indeterminate in explaining this case. For realists, intervention would have been prudent because it would have split a rising competitor into two, ensuring British hegemony for years to come. On the other hand, and using the same assumptions, the British avoided such an action because it would have been too costly and would have jeopardized British hegemony and, perhaps, survival.

Besides theoretical indeterminacy, these traditional security accounts are also temporally indeterminate. We can assume that at *some time* during the four and a half years of conflict British Britain began to profit from the American Civil War. The British knew that the conflict would not come to a quick close. Not intervening therefore meant Britain needed to find alternative sources of textiles such as linen and wool, as well as its precious cotton. Most historians agree with what I note in the case study section on pp. 89–90 – that by early 1863 Britain no longer *seriously* contemplated intervening in the American Civil War. Even though Britain benefited in the long term from a long American Civil War, in 1862 and early 1863 it could not yet foresee the golden rewards it would reap *if* it reoriented its economy through all the means outlined above. Yet during this period of time there was still much doubt about the events surrounding the American Civil War. There were many crucial battles, and devastating Union defeats in those battles, yet to transpire. Additionally, by the end of 1862 and through much of 1863 the large surpluses of cotton were depleted, with no immediate alternative source available, so interventionist incentives should have *increased* during that period.

At the time Britain also experienced a large number of domestic problems: “nearly 300,000 persons were receiving poor relief. Twelve months later [by the end of 1863] 40 percent of workers who had been employed in the mills at the beginning of the war were still out of work” (Rock 1997:

120). Britain recognized this problem and by 1864 had recovered on many fronts. But by mid-1863 intervention had already been discarded as a viable option even though economic recovery was still in doubt. The British decision to remain neutral occurred *first*, followed by an economic reorientation and recovery, and not the other way around.

The challenge in this case is to demonstrate why something *did not* happen. How are we to know what conditions needed to be present for Britain to complete an intervention? The problem with the above approaches is that they make a “positivist fallacy” of only studying overt behavior in the form of outcomes.⁵ Since the above approaches are indeterminate, and would “predict” contradictory outcomes, process tracing is a better approach for studying the impact of normative changes upon the *continuity* of British action. We can address the impact of the Emancipation Proclamation by looking at the arguments British policy makers used for or against intervention prior to the issuance of the EP (t_1) and then after (t_2). If there is a distinct shift in the justifications made by British policy makers for remaining neutral, and there is a difference in the power of interventionist arguments prior to the EP and after, then an explanation is needed.

There also exists what we might term a liberal-idealist approach to this case, exemplified by John Owen’s (1994) study. He argues that the British action rested upon domestic factors such as the constraining effects of liberalism, and in order to measure this he (briefly) looks at the debates surrounding intervention following the issuance of the Proclamation. He concludes that liberalism affected the British decision in two respects: (1) British Liberals trusted the Union; and (2) Liberals agitated against intervention after the Proclamation.⁶

While I agree with, and in some ways replicate here, the approach taken by Owen, I disagree with his interpretation of the evidence. Owen argues that the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation shifted liberal sympathies to the Union cause. This is true, but Liberals did not carry the day when it came to foreign policy decisions.⁷ It was not just British Liberals and Radicals like John Bright, Richard Cobden, and Peter Taylor who Abraham Lincoln had to please when he issued the Proclamation. It was the majority of the Palmerston Cabinet. Owen rightfully points out that the interventionist debate shifted in Britain sometime after the Emancipation Proclamation was issued in late September of 1862; even conservatives like Foreign Secretary Russell and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Gladstone, all proponents of intervention during the early fall of 1862, became opposed to it a few months into 1863.⁸ But these individuals were quite skeptical of the American “experiment” with democracy, so it was not an affinity with liberalism that the EP engendered in Britain but rather a more basic anxiety with slavery, a more congruent stance taken by a country that had banned the slave trade (and enforced the ban throughout the nineteenth century). Cobden, Bright, and other Radicals became fervently

pro-Union following the EP because it assured them that the struggle was now largely about slavery; other members of the British Parliament, regardless of their differences with the Radicals, became uneasy with the idea of an intervention for the same reason.

Therefore Owen's case for the constraining effects of liberalism draws the wrong conclusion from an overall correct observation. The EP *did* influence British policy makers' decisions. There was never a more crucial period for the Lincoln administration in its attempts to dissuade Britain from intervening than during the summer and fall of 1862. All historical accounts generally confirm this.

Recognition seemed to be a natural next step for Britain that fall. On October 7, 1862, Gladstone made a speech in front of a large crowd in the Newcastle Town Hall insinuating that the Palmerston government would extend recognition. In the speech, Gladstone identifies British anxiety over slavery while at the same time acknowledging the Confederacy as a nation worthy of notice:

We know quite well that the people of the Northern States have not yet drunk of the cup and they are still trying to hold it far from their lips – which all the rest of the world see they nevertheless must drink of. *We may have our own opinions about slavery*; but there is no doubt that Jefferson Davis and other leaders of the South have made an army . . . we may anticipate with certainty the success of the Southern States so far as regards their separation from the North.

(Jenkins 1995: 237, emphasis added)⁹

The British public received this speech in a manner that was “uniformly conclusive and favorable” (Jones 1999: 122).¹⁰

Lincoln was fully aware of this situation when he decided to issue the EP. But the EP projected a different purpose for the war that appealed to a majority of British citizens whether they agreed with “mob rule democracy” or not. In essence, an aristocracy like that in nineteenth-century Britain could still have been influenced by “liberal” ideals – freedom or antislavery – without embracing an ethos of democratic reform. I return to Owen's argument in the following section of this chapter (pp. 83–91), where historical evidence shows that the fragile alliance between Liberals and Radicals in Britain was maintained only with reference to antislavery sentiments.

This case, and the British decision-making process, represents something more basic to state interests than a “liberal affinity” with a common principle. For that matter, we can attribute Britain's decision not to “moral action,” but to identity reinforcement. In ontological security terms, British neutrality was maintained as a policy in the face of mounting interventionist pressure specifically because of Britain's anxiety over slavery. The fact that it was the most materially powerful country in the world at that time fueled British angst over this issue because Britain's policy was not determined by

external or systemic forces but by its own internal struggles to attain ontological security. I show in the rest of this chapter (using the concepts of ontological security and self-identity) that actions like this can be better understood as something which attends to *identity threats*, that the British debates represent “reflexive monitoring,” and, most importantly, that this process *served* British self-interest.

An ontological security interpretation of British neutrality

I argue in the rest of this chapter that the changed meaning of the American Civil War following the issuing of the EP changed the relevant costs an intervention would entail to British self-identity. The crux of my argument is that *a British intervention prior to the EP could still have been consistent with British self-identity, but (after a bit of debate) an intervention following the EP would most certainly not have been.* Thus the changed meaning of the Civil War from “Northern Aggression” to “liberation” meant that any intervention would threaten British identity and ostensibly Britain’s ontological security. What drove Britain’s considerations was not a liberal affinity with abolition, or changing coalitions which engendered “moral” action, but a reflexively oriented policy that would serve Britain’s ontological security needs.

How did the Emancipation Proclamation help bring about British neutrality in the American Civil War? I reviewed the debates in Britain to ascertain whether the timing of the Emancipation Proclamation influenced the timing of the British decision. My temporal parameter (the timeframe in which the discourse was created) included the summer of 1862 (around July 1) through the summer of 1863. My spatial parameter (the persons who created the discourse) included members of Palmerston’s Cabinet, the debates among Parliament representatives, and correspondence among the members of Palmerston’s Cabinet. In addition, I also reviewed historical accounts for interpretive agreement.

British contemplations of intervention gradually increased following the commencement of hostilities in America through late 1862, when such contemplations seem to have leveled off and then decreased. By the fall of 1862 the American North had suffered a series of embarrassing defeats, defeats which signaled to foreign states that a long struggle was inevitable. Prior to the Proclamation, American President Abraham Lincoln consistently maintained that his purpose in fighting the war was to save the Union. Slavery was peripheral. In a published letter to writer Horace Greeley on August 22, 1862, Lincoln argued:

If I could save the Union without freeing *any* slave I would do it, and if I could save it by freeing *all* the slaves I would do it; and if I could save it by freeing some and leaving others alone I would also do that. What I do about slavery, and the colored race, I do because I believe it helps to

save the Union; and what I forbear, I forbear because I do *not* believe it would help to save the Union.¹¹

By projecting these goals, Lincoln reinforced the idea in Britain that the American conflict was not about slavery, lending the appearance that ending slavery, for the North, only offered military benefit.¹² But by the following month Lincoln realized that emancipation had strategic benefits that extended across the Atlantic.

The Proclamation would, in Lincoln's view, change "the character of the war. . . . The old South is to be destroyed and replaced by new propositions and ideas" (McPherson 1988: 558). It is incorrect to assume that Lincoln's sole or even primary purpose in issuing the Proclamation was a strategic move to stem British intervention, for he was also influenced by the opinions of his military leaders, for example Ulysses S. Grant, who stated around this time (late 1862) that "[t]he policy is to be terrible on the enemy. I am using Negroes all the time for my work as teamsters" (McPherson 1988: 502). The "military necessity" of emancipation allowed Lincoln to use the constitutionally sanctioned war powers of the Executive to "override" the "constitutional protection of slavery," but only in those areas that were at war with the Union, thus the reason the Proclamation did not apply to the border states that still practiced slavery but remained in the Union (Goodwin 2005: 463). That said, it is noteworthy that when his administration considered the Proclamation's potential, Lincoln found persuasive those arguments which noted its potential effect in thwarting "foreign intervention" (Jones 1999: 86), although such opinions were by no means uniform in his Cabinet. Secretary of State Seward was one of the most apprehensive regarding foreign reaction to the Proclamation. In a July 22, 1862, meeting where Lincoln announced to his Cabinet his intention to issue the EP, Seward "expressed his worry that the proclamation might provoke a racial war in the South so disruptive to cotton that the ruling classes in England and France would intervene to protect their economic interests" (Goodwin 2005: 467). To thwart the foreign perception that Lincoln's issuing of the EP was a solely political act, or even a desperate act, Seward suggested "that you [Lincoln] postpone its issue until you can give it to the country supported by military success" (Case and Spencer 1970: 324).¹³ Thus Lincoln waited to go public with the Proclamation until after the Union victory at Antietam in late September of that same year.

As Seward had feared, the Proclamation almost backfired because it was perceived by many Brits as having the cruel intention of starting a slave revolt. Immediately following the EP, largely because there was confusion over its true meaning and impact, some British policy makers called for intervention against the North on humanitarian principles and through a brotherly sense of duty. Such an action would end the bloody, "fratricidal" conflict once and for all, saving fellow Anglos from further destruction.

Because of its limited nature, many British citizens saw it as a strategic weapon rather than a form of liberation and some worried that it would start a slave revolt, or “servile insurrection.” But by the time Parliament reconvened the following spring, no such events had materialized.

The EP therefore produced two outcomes integral to British neutrality. First, *it unified Liberals with Radicals in Britain’s domestic political landscape*. In this sense, the EP synthesized two political blocs that agreed about the immorality of slavery but disagreed about most everything else. As one historian notes, “the standard of emancipation . . . was one to which most Radicals and many Liberals were prepared to rally. Their earlier divisions on the American war were put aside” Jenkins (1980: 214). Chief among these divisions was the proper place of “freedom” within British political reform. When separated from democratization, emancipation maintained a fragile, but formidable, alliance in Britain that was hard for Palmerston’s Cabinet to ignore. Demonstrations throughout Britain, while referencing political reform, focused on the liberation of slaves as morally justifying support for the American North: “the demonstrations in support of the Union continued to take place under the umbrella of antislavery. It alone protected the Liberals’ fragile unity on the American War” (Jenkins 1980: 214–215).

This observation makes John Owen’s claim that democratic liberalism produced the peace between the Union and Britain tenuous. Certain British leaders, and even many British Liberals, distrusted democracy for its “mob rule” mentality. The British attraction to the EP was not about democracy. An aristocracy can still be influenced by liberal ideals such as universal freedom without in turn reforming its own political system. Therefore the EP influenced British *identity*, not British *political structures*.

Second, *it shifted British perceptions of the American Civil War*. In this case, the EP reframed the Civil War, creating an ontological distinction between the two warring parties. The Union went from an army of preservation to an army of liberation. The Confederacy went from an oppressed society to one constituted by the enslavement of four million people. A Union victory meant a return to an antebellum South was no longer possible. In short, once the American Civil War became, in British eyes, about slavery, policy makers’ justifications for policy shifted.¹⁴

For instance, there was much debate during the late summer of 1862 in Parliament about the American Civil War. Most of the debate centered on first determining the nature of the war itself: for example why it was being fought and what “causes” motivated the warring parties. Before the EP, the British discussed what role slavery truly had played in the Union’s fight against the South. An exchange took place in Parliament on July 18, 1862, between William Lindsay and Lord Vane Tempest, Southern sympathizers, on the one hand, and Peter Taylor, a British Radical, on the other. Lindsay put forward a motion to recognize the Confederate government and defended it by claiming that antislavery sentiment was a political tool:

Though there had been an outcry on the part of a small section of the people in the North against slavery in the in the South, the suppression of slavery had very little, if anything, to do with the civil war. *If it had, the North would have received more sympathy from the people of England . . . [and, therefore antislavery sentiment] had no reality.*¹⁵

Taylor responded that slavery had made the “war in itself inevitable.” Tempest rebutted in turn that the South was the true side of independence and thus worthy of British support:

The cause of the South was that of six or seven million people struggling manfully for their independence . . . was it surprising that under those circumstances they should think they had a claim to the sympathy and good offices of the nations of Europe?¹⁶

The entire debate is evidence that the British were trying to sort out the true meaning of the war, experiencing it through the lens of British self-identity.¹⁷ Initially, and bolstered by Lincoln’s statements like the August 22 letter to Horace Greeley, many Brits decided that it was not about slavery:

One notable feature of this debate [regarding the American Civil War] was that virtually no one was prepared to defend slavery. Everyone – at least everyone who mattered – agreed that slavery was wrong. But even a deeply felt abhorrence of slavery did not *necessarily* predispose people to side with the Union. For the first seventeen months of the war it was a demonstrable fact that abolition was not one of the North’s war aims.
(Temperley 1972: 249)

Two of the strongest proponents of British intervention prior to the issuing of the EP were Lord John Russell, the British foreign secretary, and William Gladstone, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whose Newcastle speech (mentioned on p. 000) in October of 1862 came dangerously close to recognizing the Confederacy for the first time since the war began. Russell had always favored intervention on the premise that intervening was the quickest way to end the bloodbath.¹⁸ While it was poor form for a Chancellor of the Exchequer to make independent statements regarding Britain’s foreign policy and while it was itself an “incursion” into Russell’s “own province,” Gladstone’s speech had inspired Russell “to go on with the proposal of an armistice” (Adams 1925: 49) that could be pursued in conjunction with other foreign powers, most notably France. In short, Russell, like Gladstone, saw America’s permanent separation as inevitable, and saw it as Britain’s responsibility to bring about a peaceful end to the hostilities.

Almost all British policy makers, Liberal and Conservative, were skeptical of the Proclamation: “the first British response was widespread indignation, though admittedly tempered by the grudging realization that the

president had finally drawn the line between opponents and supporters of slavery” (Jones 1999: 110). They detested its limited nature, even if it was unconstitutional for Lincoln to emancipate slaves within existing Union border states. But it did briefly give a jolt to British policy makers who were contemplating an intervention. The prime minister himself asked whether Britain could “without offence to many People here recommend to the North to sanction Slavery and to undertake to give back Runaways,” and asked “would not the South insist upon some Conditions after Lincoln’s Emancipation Decree” (Jenkins 1980: 176).¹⁹

Even after the EP was issued, Russell was nervous about the effects it would have upon America. In correspondence with Earl Cowley dated November 13, 1862, he argued that Englishmen should be nervous: “to these accompaniments is to be added the apprehension of a servile war.”²⁰ In an exchange with Lord Lyons dated January 17, 1863, Russell also expressed bewilderment over the limited nature of the Proclamation:

The Proclamation makes slavery at once legal [in border states] and illegal [everywhere else]. . . . There seems to be no declaration of principle adverse to slavery in this Proclamation. It is a measure of war, and a measure of war of a very questionable kind.

(Jones 1999: 111)

But once the Proclamation became law on January 1, 1863, and the months followed with no “servile” war, British opinion moved away from intervention. Why was this so? While we cannot entirely conclude that the EP was *solely* responsible for this shift, we can see a distinct change in the justifications Gladstone, Russell, and others made for *not* intervening during 1863. Because these two men were so adamant about intervention in the fall of 1862, and because they had the ability to affect policy within the Palmerston Cabinet, their justifications are perhaps the most noteworthy in the context of this study.

On June 30, 1863, Gladstone conceded in a Parliament debate that “a war with the United States ought to be unpopular on far higher grounds . . . because it would be a war with our own kinsmen for slavery.” Gladstone, who had once debated the true meaning of the war, knew by 1863 that it was more concretely about slavery: “I do not think there is any real or serious ground for doubt as to the true issue of this contest.”²¹

Russell reversed his views, both in public and in private, on the issue of British intervention when slave revolts failed to materialize. We can see this best in two separate exchanges with Lord Campbell, one in August 1862 and the other in March 1863. In the first, Campbell made what amounts to a strategic argument for intervention, because failing to intervene jeopardized Britain’s possession of Canada: “if Canada was unable to support a numerous militia, if Britain was unable to send large armies to her successor, what defense could they rely on except a firm ally on that continent?”

Russell's response was tempered, but still kept open the option of intervention in conjunction with other European "maritime Powers."²²

By March 1863 both the tone of Russell's response and the Palmerston Cabinet's policy had changed. Campbell again proposed intervention in Parliament, but this time he was well aware that the slavery issue clouded British judgment:

These grand considerations would lead the people of the country to require an acknowledgement of Southern independence were it not for the delusions as to slavery [which] . . . have deceived the working classes of the country by confounding questions about slavery.²³

Russell responded by first citing past occasions of British intervention in civil conflicts in foreign states. He then argued the reason for each intervention. In Holland the British had rescued the people from religious and political tyranny in the face of Phillip II. In Portugal they had relieved the people of Spanish tyranny and helped establish an independent state. They had also helped Greece establish independence and helped found a free and independent monarchy. Finally, they had helped ensure Belgian freedom from Holland. He used these cases to generalize about British foreign policy in general:

In all of these instances, whether the intervention was carried on by our ancestors or in our own times, *there is nothing of which an Englishmen need be ashamed*. If we have taken part in interventions, it has been in behalf of the independence, freedom and welfare of a great portion of mankind. I should be *sorry* indeed if there should be any intervention on the part of this country which could bear another character.²⁴

Here we see the ability of a state agent to "breathe life" into history, organizing it into a coherent whole so that it becomes the basis for policy. Russell engaged in what Giddens calls "historicity," or "the use of history to make history" (Giddens 1991: 243). But what did this mean for British interests within the United States? Russell stated:

No interests, deeply as they may affect us – *interests which may imply the well-being of a great portion of our people*, but interests which may affect also the freedom and happiness of other parts of the globe – will induce us to set an example different from that of our ancestors. But [if] we feel ourselves bound to interfere, it will be an interference in the cause of liberty, and to promote the freedom of mankind, as we have hitherto done in these cases.²⁵

Russell failed to use *any* of this language during his response to Campbell nine months prior. It is also noteworthy that Russell feels justified in pursuing

a policy that compromises the “well-being” of British citizens if it means securing freedom and happiness around the globe *and* keeping in tune with the “examples of our ancestors.” While we cannot link this language specifically to the Emancipation Proclamation, we can assume that Russell’s, as well as Gladstone’s and many others’, opinions on the Civil War shifted because the meaning of the war, in the minds of most British people, had also shifted (see Table 4.1 for a summary).

It is also important to note the context of both Russell’s and Gladstone’s post-EP justifications – they came *before* the crucial Union victories at Gettysburg and Vicksburg during the first week of July 1863 and *after* the Union defeat at Fredericksburg (in late December 1862). The British were close to intervention prior to the EP because (1) they did not recognize the American Civil War as being fought over the issue of slavery and (2) Abraham Lincoln reinforced this view with his own words. The focus for the Palmerston Cabinet became the battlefield itself – where Palmerston wanted to see sustained Confederate victories to demonstrate that the Confederacy was a nation worth recognizing.²⁶ Gladstone’s Newcastle comments, in fact, came close to proposing just such a recognition in October 1862. However, after the EP (and, importantly, the Union victory at Antietam, which prevented its issuance from being seen as a “desperate” act), while Confederate victories *continued*, the tone of the interventionist debate changed.²⁷ While the *outcome* of the war remained uncertain, the *meaning* of it did not.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, in seeking ontological security social agents engage in at-the-time counterfactuals, a calculation of “prospective shame” which speaks to whether a proposed policy might contradict a healthy sense

Table 4.1 The Emancipation Proclamation and discursive change

<i>Palmerston Cabinet official</i>	<i>t₁ (summer and fall, 1862)</i>	<i>Emancipation Proclamation (September 22, 1862)</i>	<i>t₂ (mid-1863)</i>
William Gladstone, Chancellor of the Exchequer	Newcastle speech: “Certainty of Separation”		June 30, 1863: “A war with the United States. . . ought to be unpopular on far higher grounds, because it would be a war with our own kinsmen for slavery”
Lord John Russell, Foreign Secretary	“I think unless some miracle takes place, this will be the very time for offering mediation”	Worries of “servile insurrection” (November 1862)	March 23, 1863: “no interests, deeply as they may affect us. . . which may affect also the freedom and happiness of other parts of the globe will induce us to set an example different from that of our ancestors”

of ontological security. Only a few members of Palmerston's Cabinet, such as Secretary of War George Cornwall Lewis, had seen the American Civil War largely through the primary lens of slavery from the beginning, and all along they had engaged in similar "prospective shame" accounting prior to the Proclamation. Lewis, in a memorandum circulated on October 17, 1862, stated that, regarding any British action, "looking at the probable consequences . . . we may doubt whether the chances of evil do not preponderate over the chances of good, and whether it is not 'Better to endure the ills we have, than fly to others which we know not of.'" In short, Lewis was concerned that an armistice at that time would lead to, in one historian's paraphrase, "an independent slave-holding South for the establishment of which Great Britain would have become intermediary and sponsor" (Adams 1925: 52–53). Furthermore, Russell's pre-EP proposal of mediation in conjunction with other "maritime powers" was also viewed skeptically by members of the Cabinet, as it would "practically place our honor in the hands of our copartners in the intervention. We might find ourselves placed in a position in which it would be equally difficult to advance with credit or retire with safety."²⁸ The EP brought Russell around to these views, as his March 1863 statements reveal not only the shifting effects of the Emancipation Proclamation, but also the determination to maintain a "routine" which had provided answers for a British identity. This self-identity thus affected Britain's decision to abstain from intervening in America.

This does not mean that British identity "clicked in" and prevented intervention. In many ways during the months that followed the Proclamation, identity was contested during street debates, town hall meetings, and demonstrations throughout Britain between Confederate agents and Southern supporters, on the one hand, and freed slaves, Northern abolitionists, and British abolitionists, on the other, all swaying public opinion in favor of the Union.²⁹ In short, the EP mobilized British pro-Union groups. E.P. Adams observes that:

beginning with the last week of December 1862 and increasing in volume in each succeeding month, there took place meeting after meeting at which strong resolutions were passed enthusiastically endorsing the issue of the emancipation proclamation and pledging sympathy to the cause of the North.

(Adams 1925: 107)

It had not always been this way, as Britain's antislavery groups were largely docile for the first "eighteen months of the war" (Temperley 1972: 251). The Proclamation changed this landscape:

What finally provoked [the pro-Northern movement] to action was the preliminary emancipation and, more important, the growing realization of Union sympathizers in Britain that they needed an organization to

oppose the pro-Confederate groups which by 1862 were beginning to spring up around the country.

(Temperley 1972: 254)

Thus, British self-identity had to be enacted by opinion leaders and British citizens, who debated which course of action was most proper in light of the British sense of national Self. Identity is not, nor was it really ever in most constructivist theories, “culturally determined.”³⁰ Giddens notes: “self-identity is not something that is just given, as a result of the continuities of the individual’s action-system, *but something that has to be routinely created and sustained in the reflexive activities of the individual*” (Giddens 1991: 52). Therefore Britain was provided with an opportunity during this time to affirm a “healthy” sense of self-identity, but it first had to argue over how best to accomplish this. Part of this contestation rested on the meaning of the American Civil War. Once that was determined, the British had to decide upon a policy that reflected their sense of self-identity. That is what makes “critical situations” for states so intriguing, as they are disruptions which open spaces and provide reformational opportunities. It is then that state agents contest and interrogate what their state is, and also address whether their proposed course of action fits that self-vision.

While historians of the topic have disparate views on what truly prevented British intervention in the American Civil War, most agree on the “mood” evident in Britain in mid-1863. Calls for intervention based on the fear of servile insurrection “no longer carried quite the same conviction or excited the same public response. Months had passed since Lincoln’s preliminary proclamation and there had been no hint of a slave uprising” (Jenkins 1980: 218). A second historian concludes: “had the Whig administration shown any inclination to recognize the Confederacy at any time during the latter part of the war such a cry would have gone up that it would have been lucky to remain in office” (Temperley 1972: 255). Another writes:

once the Emancipation Proclamation went into effect on January 1, 1863, the momentum began to build for supporting black freedom as an essential part of the struggle for a more perfect Union, making it extremely difficult for either England or France to consider any form of intervention that might prolong the life of slavery. . . . [and as such] by early 1863 the British government finally realized that the Lincoln administration had taken a move against slavery, and it dropped all official talk of intervention.

(Jones 1999: 146–147)

The result? “Its [EP] enactment led to a change in British attitude toward the Proclamation which suggested that the Lincoln administration had finally achieved its central objective in foreign affairs of keeping England out of war” (Jones 1999: 154).³¹

Conclusion: the power of self-identity

Political scientists oftentimes fail to give credit where credit is due – to humans themselves. While it was not wholly responsible for preventing foreign intervention, and while the primary motives for its being issued lay elsewhere, Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation did shift foreign perception of the conflict, making it much more difficult for Britain to intervene (ostensibly) on behalf of the Confederacy without subjecting itself to ridicule over the issue of slavery.

Let me be clear – the need for ontological security did not “cause” the British to remain neutral in this conflict. Given Britain's hegemonic status in 1863, it very well could have chosen to intervene in the American conflict and probably, although by no means determinedly, succeeded in terminating that conflict. It is specifically *because* Britain had this freedom of choice that the American Civil War generated such anxiety in British policy circles. This anxiety fueled debates and sharpened Palmerston's Cabinet members' acumen regarding the Cabinet's American Civil War policy. British policy makers performed an at-the-time counterfactual when they asked what the result would have been had they merely recognized the South (which would have been tantamount to a hostile act against the North).³² They may have been more physically secure had separation occurred, but they surely would have been less ontologically secure because the result would have been shame(ful). Russell's shifting references to the American Civil War, for instance, and his final justifications for not intervening, suggest that shame would have resulted from recognizing the Confederacy. At the heart of this would-be shame was British anxiety with slavery, whereby supporting a slavery state was inconsistent with the integrity of the British “Self.” British recognition of that state would have markedly increased the Confederacy's legitimacy. Instead, the shift created by the EP was largely uniform in the Palmerston Cabinet. Even Palmerston himself, a champion of *Realpolitik* and realists alike, was apprehensive about a post-EP intervention.

Two implications follow from the British case. First, it shows that *non-forceful* actions have consequences. Events such as the issuing of the Emancipation Proclamation reconstituted the meaning of the American Civil War not only for the Union and Confederate armies and American citizens and leaders, but also for an international audience. The larger issue here is that discursive representations can be just as powerful as physical presentations of force – because they can compel other international actors to “do what they otherwise would not do.” The possibility is that states know not only which actions will make other states *physically* insecure, but also which will make them *ontologically* insecure as well. Thus, just as arms buildups are a “strategic signal” to adversaries in order to produce an intended outcome, discursive representations can “shame” states into certain processes which benefit the signaler, and, perhaps, the international community. Second, the more promising possibilities which could follow

will be rare if states are impaired in reflexively monitoring their actions, since this is the only way ontological insecurity can be consistently avoided. Since some actors may be less capable of doing this, the drive for ontological security may lead states to “structure” their behavior in problematically violent ways. While no actors can adequately predict when and where “critical situations” will occur,³³ it becomes important to develop an understanding of reflexive processes to know how actors can increase their “reflexive capabilities.” I return to these issues in Chapter 7.

As discussed in Chapter 3, material capabilities play a role in how much freedom, and thus anxiety, a nation-state is exposed to in the ontological security process. It was thus not solely Britain’s history of slavery but also its self-identity as a great power which ensured that the American Civil War would be a “critical situation” needing to be confronted by British policy makers. This was the “paradox” of Britain’s power – its material power begot freedom, which, in turn, stimulated anxiety. Belgium in 1914, on the other hand, felt somewhat emancipated exactly because its status as a small power provided it with an opportunity to perform an honorable and even “heroic” act in choosing to fight Germany. In Chapter 5, I discuss how Belgium’s inception as an independent state manifested two self-identity drives, or two senses of “honor” and obligation, which made this seemingly suicidal decision to fight Germany in August of 1914 a rational, if physically costly, decision.

5 “Death before dishonor”

Belgian self-identity, honor, and World War I

In an oft-quoted section of the Melian Dialogue, the envoys of powerful Athens attempt to persuade the commissioners of the tiny island of Melos that an alliance is in the latter’s best interest. Facing inevitable Athenian subjugation, the Melians state:

Then surely, if such hazards are taken by you to keep your empire and by your subjects to escape from it, we who are still free would show ourselves great cowards and weaklings if we failed to face everything that comes rather than submit to slavery.

The Athenians reply:

No, not if you are sensible. This is no fair fight, with honour on one side and shame on the other. It is rather a question of saving your lives and not resisting those who are far too strong for you.

The rest of the story is familiar, the Melians refusing to join the Athenians and instead choosing neutrality. Neutrality quickly became tantamount to a hostile position against Athens. Thucydides tells us how this part of the Peloponnesian War ended, shortly after the hostilities between the two parties began:

Another force came out afterwards from Athens under the command of Philocrates, the son of Demeas. Siege operations were now carried on vigorously and, as there was also some treachery from inside, the Melians surrendered unconditionally to the Athenians, who put to death all the men of military age whom they took, and sold the women and children as slaves. Melos itself they took over for themselves, sending out later a colony of 500 men.

This chapter is not another IR interpretation of the Melian Dialogue, or of Thucydides, or of ancient Greece.¹ But it’s important to note that historically the dialogue has been used to demonstrate the “danger” of (the Melian)

pursuit of honor and justice at the expense of prudence and survival, and thus that International Politics is an arena removed from ethics. The Melian Dialogue, we are told, demonstrates that in a condition of anarchy fear of extinction is perpetual, and therefore the need to survive drives agent behavior.²

Even Just War theory, a moral philosophy that realists would hardly endorse, prescribes a condition of “reasonable chance for success.” Yet the Melian decision, to fight the Athenians in the face of overwhelming odds and almost certain destruction,³ contradicts both the survival assumption of mainstream IR theory and the Just War tradition’s reasonable chance for success condition. How can we explain such instances of “irrational” behavior? If states are motivated by survival, or if they do seek to fight “just wars” but do not heed one condition of that ethos, how are we to explain the actions of the Melians?

Somewhat obscured in the dialogue is the role of honor and shame in motivating the Melians to fight: “When we look carefully we even find honor and shame at least as prominent as justice in the Melian Dialogue” (Donnelly 2000: 179). The Melians may well have been imprudent in fighting the Athenians, but that does not adequately understand what drove their response:

Honor ... demands that one die fighting rather than submit. ... The Athenians forcefully and effectively lay out the Melian interest in capitulations. The Melians, however, are willing to die rather than live with the *shame* of submission. ... The Melians begin with an appeal to justice. They understand their interest and come to grips with their fear. But in the end, the Melians die for their honor.

(Donnelly 2000: 180)

This chapter addresses how ontological security informs a nation-state’s conception of honor and how in pursuing self-identity needs a state can completely jeopardize its own physical existence. Germany issued an ultimatum in July 1914 that requested unfettered access through Belgian territory.⁴ Yet even though the Belgians, like the Melians against Athens, knew that if they chose to fight the Germans they would face disastrous consequences, they fought anyway – and would suffer a catastrophic defeat and control of their country until the end of the war. The “Rape of Belgium,” as it has been termed, included an estimated 30,000 civilian deaths throughout the war, 5,500 in the month of 1914 August alone.⁵ Over a million Belgians were displaced to the Netherlands, France, and Britain, and 115,000 Belgians were deported to German or occupied French labor camps.⁶ Of the mobilized Belgian army 13,716 were listed dead, 44,686 wounded, and 34,659 were prisoners of war or declared missing in action.⁷ An estimated 20,000 Belgian structures were destroyed, along with such Belgian treasures as the historic library at the University of Louvain.⁸ Thus, one important insight for IR theory provided by the Belgian decision is that it is the starkest

contradiction of IR's mainstream "survival" assumption regarding the behavior of states, *and* it challenges the prevailing (but underdeveloped) understanding of a "just war" in light of the reasonable chance for success condition. Because of this, the case provides an opportunity to interpret the Belgians' decision to fight, thereby explicitly ignoring their own physical security.

A second important insight of this case is that it provides a modern example of honor-driven behavior. Most, but not all, treatments of honor derive their empirical illustrations from antiquity.⁹ A more nuanced and pluralist view of honor arises from the seminal Peristiany (1966) volume, where honor is assessed in contexts both cultural (Cypriot village, Kabyle society, Egyptian Bedouins) and analytical (individuals and social groups). The Belgian case demonstrates how honor operates in nation-states.

Furthermore, the Belgian case demonstrates that small powers possess the ability to influence the social structures of their community, or that, in short, the actions of such small states also have important societal consequences. This runs somewhat counter to the prevailing view in Bull's seminal book that it is great powers to which all other states must look for "a degree of central direction to the affairs of international society as a whole" (Bull 1977: 200).¹⁰ This view still largely obtains in recent scholarship; for example, it prevails in the innovative work of Oded Lowenheim, who writes that "Great Powers in international politics function as the authoritative gatekeepers in a cartel of sovereign states" (Lowenheim 2007: 22). The Belgian case, and especially the European recognition of Belgium's actions in 1914, thus contains important insights for this position.

In this case, an ontological security approach serves two important purposes. First, it provides another theoretical understanding of honor as a concept in IR theory. Second, ontological security is used to demonstrate how Belgian honor was based on the internal need to confront threats to self-identity and the external need to reinforce a social (or collective) identity to the greater European community. By fulfilling these identity commitments, Belgium received widespread recognition and admiration from fellow European states. I use historical evidence and the discourse of Belgian and European leaders to demonstrate how an ontological security approach helps make intelligible the seemingly irrational Belgian decision to fight the German army at the beginning of World War I. I conclude the chapter by addressing the normative judgment of whether the Belgian decision to fight the Germans can be considered "just" considering that no "reasonable chance for success" existed for a Belgian victory.

The duality of honor

As noted by Richard Ned Lebow, honor has two components, although what these are termed varies according to which conceptualization one consults.¹¹ Lebow argues that "it may be more useful to think of external and internal honor, and to recognize that they are related" (Lebow 2003:

272). Douglas Cairns similarly identifies what he titles the relationship between “honour of self and honour of others” (Cairns 1993: 14). I assert that *internal honor* as applied to states or individuals exists in a constitutive relationship with self-identity. That is, what we find to be “honorable” at the individual level is shaped and promoted by our sense of who we are, and the honorable is enacted when we perform an action which fulfills a commitment about what “we” have been, who we are now, and who or what we wish to be in the future. Lebow observes that internal honor “appears to be a near-universal attribute of warrior classes” and that it was “critically import[ant]” in the twentieth century for European nation-states (Lebow 2003: 273). Such honor exists in the conscience of a social agent, in the form of “internal sanctions against inappropriate conduct” (Cairns 1993: 143). If its self-identity shapes what it honors, the converse is also true: performing “honorable” actions helps reinforce (or adjust) an agent’s sense of who he or she is and what he or she stands for.

At the level of external commitments, likewise, we get a sense of what will be deemed “honorable” by our community based upon common principles, what I term the relationship between *external honor* and collective or social identity. Identity and honor are thus somewhat mutually constitutive – both self-identity and collective identity are reinforced by, and in turn shape, our sense of “honor.”

Two qualifications are appropriate about my use of honor as it relates to ontological security. First, as should be evident from the brief discussion on pp. 96–97, internal and external honor as they relate to ontological security are in contrast with the view that honor is a material or strategic acquisition where agents pursue it as “an entitlement to a certain treatment in return” whereby “honor felt becomes honor claimed and honor claimed becomes honor paid” (Pitt-Rivers 1966: 22). Honor as it motivated Belgium in 1914 did not have this material meaning – Belgian agents in fact acknowledged that the physical existence of Belgium might end and therefore it cannot be concluded that they were intending to fight Germany in the hope that one day they might “cash in” on the admiration their actions might engender from the powerful countries of Europe. Second, when I distinguish external honor, and while that sense of external honor is influenced by social membership in a society, I am not at the same time asserting that social agents are dependent upon context, upon their societal standards, for their conceptualization of honor. Both internal and external honor must be *channeled* through the Self. The case may to some degree be the reverse, where external standards, or that which envelops external honor, are in turn dependent upon being *reproduced* through the actions of individual agents (including states). Such actions “objectify” the principles of a community because they illustrate what those principles look like when they are “in use” through the actions of states.

My purpose here in using honor is more limited, as I am largely in agreement with more nuanced, sophisticated, and comprehensive analyses

noted previously. Honor is used in this chapter to show that the concerns of ontological security that drive nation-states echo to a large degree the concerns social agents face when servicing their honor drives.

Independence, neutrality, and Belgian honor

According to Hedley Bull, a “European International Society” existed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and theorists of the time could recognize several features of that society (Bull 1977: 31–36). Two of these features, sovereignty and the expression of European society in the form of institutions, were paramount to the establishment of Belgium as both a sovereign and neutral state throughout the nineteenth century. Consequently, European recognition and enforcement of Belgian sovereignty and Belgian faith in the legality of its sovereignty represented constitutive factors that would prove integral to the Belgian decision to fight against a superior German force in August 1914.

Following the Napoleonic Wars, the great powers of Europe (mainly Britain, Prussia, Russia, and Austria) established the Concert of Europe to enforce the conditions set at the 1815 Vienna conference. The powers agreed to maintain, within Europe, a balance among members by reinforcing a territorial status quo, establishing the United Kingdom of Netherlands as a buffer state to France in 1814.¹² Yet following the 1830 Belgian revolution, the Dutch invasion, and the French “counter”-intervention of the following year, English pressure on the French led to the London conference in 1831.¹³ It was here that the great powers agreed to de facto recognition of Belgium as an independent state. Belgium declared itself “perpetually neutral” on June 26, 1831. England, France, Prussia, Austria, and Russia recognized the “inviolability of her territory” through the Treaty of Twenty-Four Articles, which, once signed on April 19, 1839, made the enforcement of Belgian neutrality the responsibility of the signatories.¹⁴ And throughout the nineteenth century Belgium’s neutrality was, however tenuous at times, upheld by these powers.

Combined with this general faith in European respect for its sovereignty was a specific Belgian conviction about Germany. Following the wars of German unification, one historian writes:

The defeat and decline of France, the creation and growing power of the German Empire, had, after 1870, created among the Belgians a mood of distrust and disparagement of France and trust and liking for Germany. Especially was this the case with the Catholic Conservative party which from 1884 governed the country.

(Albertini 1957: 416)

This is perhaps why, even when told of the Schlieffen Plan in 1904 by Kaiser Wilhelm, Belgium’s King Leopold II (and the Belgian Parliament when

exposed to the information) reached no dire conclusion about Germany's intentions.¹⁵

Belgium gained further reassurances at the 1907 Hague Peace Conference when European states upheld by a unanimous vote the inviolability of neutral state territories. Because of this and previous developments, and despite the fact that Belgians recognized the inevitability of war amongst the European states, Belgium was woefully unprepared for conflict on the eve of World War I. One wonders, then, how it was possible for a nation not even a century old, and one bedeviled by ethno-linguistic and political divisions,¹⁶ to quickly unify behind such a strong sense of national pride in August 1914. Three conditions give an insight here: (1) Belgium's impressive economic development in the second half of the century, which to a great extent improved the working class's standard of living and "reconciled them with the wealthier classes";¹⁷ (2) the "cross-cutting cleavages" of Belgian society, which served to ameliorate the individual differences which prevailed at the local level;¹⁸ (3) King Albert's ascension to the throne in December of 1909, which led to a reorganization of the military. The reforms instituted at this time made the prime minister the war minister. The garrisons at Antwerp, Liege, and Namur were also to be reinforced. While the Belgians instituted these military reforms much too late for them to be of consequence by August 1914, they did signal to France and Britain that Belgium at least intended to defend its territory against an invading force, thereby reassuring these two powers that upon being invaded Belgium would not be *required* to side with the "invading force" out of necessity. This signal, even though it had no support in material reality and would do nothing to save the Belgians from being destroyed in 1914, would prove important to both the Belgian decision to fight Germany and to French and British fidelity to the Belgian cause.

Prelude to war: the German ultimatum

The weeks of mobilizations and war declarations that followed the assassination of the Austrian prince on June 28, 1914, had little influence on the Belgian government.¹⁹ And for the Germans the assumption was still that upon invasion the Belgians would bandwagon with the invading force. Thus Germany took advantage of what it rightly perceived to be Belgian passivity, and it was in this setting that Germany issued an ultimatum to Belgium for free passage through its territory. To summarize, the ultimatum stated the following:

- 1 Germany had received "reliable information that French forces had been intended to be deployed," leaving no doubt of the "French intention to advance against Germany across Belgian territory."
- 2 Belgium would be unable to repel the French "invasion"; Germany was thus compelled out of her own "self-preservation" to forestall the hostile French attack.

- 3 Germany “purpos[ed] no acts of hostility against Belgium” and would maintain Belgium’s independence, evacuate territory until hostilities were concluded, and even provide just compensation for any damages that Belgium incurred from German forces.
- 4 Belgian opposition would require Germany to regard the Belgian “Kingdom as an enemy,” leaving “the latter settlement of the relations between the two States to the arbitrament of the sword.”²⁰

The Germans, of course, knew that the basis for the ultimatum (and subsequent actions) – “the French intention of deployment” – was baldly false.²¹ But did the Belgians know this as well?

Belgian deliberations and the response to the ultimatum

Belgium’s cautious approach to what seems to any observer to be a most hostile ultimatum can be attributed both to the Belgian agents’ hard-dying trust of the Germans and (perhaps just as importantly) to Belgium’s identity as a neutral state.²² The Belgians who would decide their country’s fate had two meetings, a Cabinet meeting and a Crown Council shortly thereafter. In the first they uniformly decided to reject the German demands and in the second individual Cabinet members expressed their opinions on what course of action would be appropriate and how to legitimate that action accordingly.²³

The Belgian reply, dated August 3, 1914 (7 a.m.), concluded by declaring that they

refuse to believe that the independence of Belgium can only be preserved at the price of the violation of her neutrality. If this hope is disappointed the Belgian Government are firmly resolved to repel, by all means in their power, every attack upon their rights.

(Gibson 1917: 19)

King Albert addressed the Belgian Parliament the following day, at 9 a.m. One hour prior, the German army had entered Belgian proper. The Germans had initiated the Western Front of World War I.

Discussion and statements, both public and private, made August 2–4 provide a window onto how the Belgians rationalized the decision to resist the Germans. These deliberations and the public pronouncements which followed them demonstrate the purpose behind Belgium’s decision to fight; they are evidence of how Belgian state agents created meanings for Belgium action, and how the duality of honor created the conditions which made this seemingly suicidal decision to fight the only rational choice. Two generalizations can be made about Belgian motives in fighting Germany following the German ultimatum. I will now outline these.

Belgian honor was implicated in Belgian self-identity

The Belgians perceived the German ultimatum not only as threatening Belgian territory, but as a threat to Belgium's identity as a neutral state. Belgium felt compelled to protect not only *what* it was but *who* it was as a state within European society.

Again, in seeking ontological security, routinized action ties the self to the reflexively monitored character of social life; habits are integral to self-identity. While survival-based security logic might interpret the faith of 1914 Belgium in its independence as naïve, such faith becomes intelligible when we interpret how that independence, cultivated since her recognition as a sovereign and neutral state in 1839, defined Belgian self-identity as a state and its conception of internal honor. Belgian independence is more intelligible when we recognize how that neutrality, throughout the nineteenth century and including the Franco-Prussian conflict, was granted, respected, and discursively recognized by European powers.

This case illustrates the duality of self-identity, where agents' sense of Self constrains and enables action. Being a "perpetually neutral state" constrained Belgium's set of responses, but Belgian agents also used neutrality as a channel for self-defense actions, implicating Belgium's self-identity and honor in these actions (see Table 5.1). The German ultimatum engendered a critical situation because it was largely unforeseen by Belgian agents and because it challenged the essence of Belgium self-identity – its neutrality and independence as a nation-state. But while this critical situation threatened the Belgian sense of Self, it also provided Belgian agents with an opportunity to reflexively engage and re-enact that Self. During the Crown Council deliberation, several participants noted that resistance would not violate Belgium's legal status as a neutral state. General Antonin de Selliers de Moranville, the chief of the General Staff, noted that "a neutral that defended itself did not put itself in a state of war" (Zuckerman 2004: 17).²⁴ Others went a step further, asserting that neutrality *required* Belgium to resist the Germans. Jules van den Heuvel, Belgium's "most respected international lawyer," noted that "we cannot content ourselves with protest ... to retreat would violate our neutrality" (Zuckerman 2004: 17). De Moranville and van den Heuvel were probably referencing at that time the recent (1907) Articles of the Hague convention. Article 10 recognizes that "the fact of a neutral Power resisting, even by force, attempts to violate its neutrality [is not] a hostile act," and Article 5 requires a neutral country, in the case that its territory has been violated, to resist such a violation with force.

Belgian agents even courted (at least the possibility of) "death" as the only option. The prime minister, Baron Charles de Broqueville, added:

[I]f die we must, better death with honor. We have no other choice. Our submission would serve no end. ... Let us make no mistake about it, if

Table 5.1 Belgian references to honor

<i>State agent</i>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Statement</i>	<i>Setting</i>
Belgian reply to German ultimatum		"Were it to accept the proposals laid before it, the Belgian Government would sacrifice the nation's honor while being false to its duties towards Europe"	Response to ultimatum
Broqueville	Prime minister	"If die we must, better death with honor. We have no other choice" (Albertini 1957: 458)	Crown Council
Charles Woeste	Catholic Party leader	"We can fight for the honor of the flag. . .doing nothing is not possible" (Zuckerman 2004: 16)	Crown Council
Schollaert	Minister of state; former prime minister	Paying Germans "violence for violence" to "avenge Belgian honor" (Zuckerman 2004: 17)	Crown Council
King Albert I	Monarchical head of state	"the cordial relations of our two governments. . .did not allow me for one moment to suppose that Your Majesty would place us before the cruel alternative of choosing, in the face of the whole of Europe, between war and the loss of honor, between the respect of treaties and the denial of our international obligations" (Cammaerts 1935: 31)	Note to Kaiser Wilhelm (August 4, 1914)

Germany is victorious, Belgium, whatever her attitude will be annexed to the Reich.

(Albertini 1957: 458)

Yet while Broqueville saw "no other choice," at least one member of the Council disagreed. Jules Griendl, the former minister to Germany, argued that he trusted Wilhelm and that, furthermore, the chief concern for him was France: "The emperor always told me we must have confidence in him . . . if we are allied with France, we risk annexation. Victorious, they will annex us" (Zuckerman 2004: 16). Here was the other option for Belgium – allying with Germany. This option would, presumably, still ensure Belgian independence. During his term as Belgian minister to Germany, Griendl had in a dispatch of December 23, 1911, made the "survival-based" argument for Belgian foreign policy, a sense of prudence over ideals, stating that Belgium should not

[s]acrifice itself for abstract principles. . . . The 1839 treaty is a contract binding on us only so long as it is honored by all parties. Contrary to an idea too widespread in Belgium, we should not be obliged to fight on

the side of the foreign army whose entry into Belgium was anterior by a few hours to that of the adversary. . . . The preservation of the country's existence, our primordial duty, cannot be at the mercy of a fortuitous case.
(Albertini 1957: 426)

Nevertheless, Griendl's was the minority view, as the meeting generally demonstrates. For instance, Catholic Party leader and Minister of State Charles Woeste stated: "we can fight for the honor of the flag . . . doing nothing is not possible" (Zuckerman 2004: 16).

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3, a nation-state's history influences its sense of self-identity.²⁵ State agents use that history to construct identity commitments, and this strategy was used by Belgian agents like King Albert. In his address to Parliament Albert stated:

One single vision fills all minds: that of our independence endangered . . . all the hearts beat in this moment in unison, my memories refer to the Congress of 1830, and I ask you, Messrs: Are you determined at any cost to maintain the sacred heritage of our ancestors?
(Gibson 1917: 15)

Hugh Gibson, the secretary of the American legation in Belgium at the time, observed the scene and wrote that "the whole Chamber burst into a roar, and from the Socialists' side came cries of: 'At any cost, by death if need be!'"²⁶

Belgian external honor was implicated in Belgium's place as a sovereign member of Europe

In every instance – at the Crown Council meeting (August 2–3), their reply to Germany (August 3), and during the Parliamentary session on August 4 – the Belgians affirmed not only their commitment to internal honor, but also their duty towards their position as a member of a European society which was responsible for its independence. During the Crown Council meeting, Liberal Party leader Paul Hymans argued that to ally with the advancing Germans, instead of fighting, "[would mean] tearing up with our hands the treaty and would be a betrayal of our duty to Europe." And in a tone of martyrdom that echoed the position of the prime minister (see p. 000), Hymans declared: "Small nations may be mutilated but live. The army may be beaten, but we must resist an action that will revolt the world. We must say no and do our duty."²⁷

The Belgian reply asserted that resistance would fulfill its "international obligations." Further, in one important passage Belgium referenced its responsibilities to both itself and Europe:

Were it to accept the proposals laid before it, the Belgian Government would sacrifice the *nation's honor* while being false to its duties *towards*

Europe. Conscious of the part which has been played by Belgium in the civilization of the world for more than eighty years, the Government refuses to believe that Belgian independence can only be preserved at the price of the violation of her neutrality.

(Albertini 1957: 465, added)

In his speech to Parliament, King Albert first summarized the Belgian place in Europe: along with “the sympathy” that Belgium “always received from other nations,” there existed a “necessity of [Belgium’s] autonomous existence in respect of the equilibrium of Europe.” That necessity made Albert “hopeful that the dreaded emergency will not be realized.” But the threat was clear, and the purpose of the action, besides keeping in the faith of the “Belgian ancestors” (noted on p. 000), would also gain the respect of fellow states. Albert concluded his speech thus: “I have faith in our destinies; a country which is defending itself conquers the respect of all; such a country does not perish!”²⁸

Albert’s speech, as a primary example of the Belgian narrative, is especially noteworthy because it appears from this account that in resisting Germany Belgians were not fighting for a material acquisition but rather to “maintain” the “sacred heritage” of their “ancestors.” Such “heritage” nevertheless was something which uniformly resonated with all elements of a pluralist country. What is furthermore fascinating about these Belgian deliberations and then declarations, in the context of the “state-as-person” issue discussed in Chapter 1 of this book, is that Belgian agents anthropomorphized the Belgian nation-state in their reaction to the German ultimatum. De Broqueville and Griendl (while advocating different policy tactics), for instance, were concerned first and foremost not necessarily with the physical well-being of Belgian people but with avoiding annexation. De Broqueville and Hymans in the Crown Council meeting referenced “death” and “life” when referring to the Belgian state. In short, the Belgian agents saw the state as *more* than their individual selves, or the “whole” of a series of individual parts,²⁹ and, furthermore, they created Belgium as a person, one whose honor needed to be protected for future generations, even if this meant jeopardizing Belgium’s physical existence.³⁰

In light of, and perhaps because of, the fact that Germany did not expect the Belgians to fight,³¹ it is important to note how the Belgians secured European recognition not only for these actions, but for the words they used to legitimate their decision to fight. Albertini, an Italian, states:

[the] reply which it [Belgium] returned to the German ultimatum is the noblest document produced by the whole crisis and redounds to the honor both of those responsible for its substance and those who gave it its form.

(Albertini 1957: 465)

Cammaerts discusses a cartoon appearing in the British periodical *Punch*

a few months [after the German invasion] in which the Kaiser was shown, confronting the Belgian King among the ruins of his devastated country. The insult and the reply are still familiar: “You see, you have lost everything!” – [Albert’s reply] “Not my soul!”

(Cammaerts 1935: 31)

Cammaerts adds: “this cartoon expressed adequately the admiration of the British public for the Belgian national hero, and for the splendid fight he was making against tremendous odds” (Cammaerts 1935: 31).

Selected excerpts of European recognition for the Belgians are listed in Table 5.2.

A few inductive comments can be made regarding *what in particular* it was about the Belgian actions that provoked European admiration. As the Ferrero and Christenssen quotations suggest, some Europeans admired the “David and Goliath” nature of the Belgian situation.³² The Amette passage references a related admiration for the Belgian willingness to endure pain and suffering (an aspect which, I posit on pp. 109–112, provides grounds for modifying the “success condition” of Just War which the Belgian action otherwise compromised). Finally, the stated positions of the two British statesmen Churchill and Balfour indicate that the Belgian actions secured something more long term – that its willingness to fight the Germans procured for Belgium a special place in the future European community. According to the then British prime minister, Herbert Henry Asquith, “the Belgian people had won the immortal glory which belongs to a people who prefer freedom to ease, to security, even to life itself.”³³

Let me end this section by stating that I am not arguing that the Belgians fought the Germans solely, or even partially, to secure this European recognition. It may well have been the case that the Belgians were driven by a Hegelian “need for recognition,” and that such a need was satisfied here.³⁴ But in reviewing the discussion in the Crown Council and the public statements of Belgian state agents, a clear picture emerges that the Belgians were more concerned with upholding European principles (independence and sovereignty) as they were relevant to Belgium’s self-identity, experienced through the Belgian Self, than with acquiring recognition from European countries. The *duty* Belgian agents felt toward Europe was additionally motivated by a need to be *recognized* by that European society, yet such recognition was also based on the fact that Belgium’s independence, its sense of Self, as a nation was a product of that European society. Furthermore, as I mentioned briefly earlier in the chapter (p. 000), the principles of a community depend upon their re-enactment by individual members – lending these principles a visual or perceptual frame in the form of an act that fellow members could observe. The fact that Belgium was so over-matched by the Germans, the fact that it was so materially incapable of

Table 5.2 European recognition for Belgian actions

<i>European agent/position</i>	<i>Statement</i>
Winston S. Churchill, British statesman	"At this moment when their cities are captive, their country under yoke, their government and army forced into exile, the Belgian nation is exerting an influence upon the destinies of Europe and of mankind beyond that of great States in fullness of prosperity and power; and from the abyss of present grief and suffering Belgium looks out with certainty to a future more brilliant than any which she could ever have planned" (Caine 1914: 15)
Arthur J. Balfour, British statesman and former prime minister	"Wrongs have indeed been done which nothing can right. . .yet the time will surely come, and come soon, when Belgium's wounds will heal, when morally and materially greater than before, she will pursue in peace her high destiny, strong in the memories of an heroic past, and in the affectionate esteem of all who love liberty" (Caine 1914: 15)
Gulielmo Ferrero, Italian historian	"Belgium, an intrepid martyr, offering herself to the fury of the Teuton, has awakened the moral conscience of the world. . .When the world saw a Great Power drunk with pride, thus torturing a small, inoffensive nation, it understood that work and wealth and knowledge and courage and power are not all-sufficient; peoples as well as individuals need to know the worth of honor" (Caine 1914: 131)
Leon Amette, the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris	"Faced with the alternative of spurning their pledged word or submitting to a bloody and ruinous invasion, the King of the Belgians and his people replied: 'Death before dishonor!' . . .They endure the worst calamities without flinching. All honor to them!" (Caine 1914: 29)
J.C. Christenssen, former Danish prime minister	"The fate of Belgium awakes in our nation the greatest sympathy. . . .Our feelings are roused so much more as we ourselves are a small nation, who must always appeal to the righteousness and highmindedness of others" (Caine 1914: 102)

defending territory but its agents chose to do so anyway, strengthened the *principles* of sovereignty and independence even more than if such principles had been ensured by one of Europe's "great power" states.³⁵

Misperception, survival, and Belgian honor

My interpretation is that Belgium enacted the decision based upon its need to satisfy internal and external honor, and that this interpretation can account for what seems to us to be a rather irrational action. Yet there exists one plausible alternative interpretation – that Belgium decided to fight because she misperceived German intentions and/or her own ability to repel the Germans.³⁶ It is the main assertion posited by cognitive IR scholars

that in the state agent “discongruities between the perceived and the real operational environments can occur, leading to less than satisfactory choices in foreign policy” (Hudson 2005: 7). The seminal works by both Robert Jervis (1968, 1976) and Richard Cottam (1977) demonstrated how misperceptions could lead to disastrous outcomes no different than what the Belgians faced in 1914.

This alternative interpretation has some merit in this case. Two of Jervis’s hypotheses of misperception – (1) “that decision-makers tend to fit incoming information into their existing theories” and (2) that “decision-makers are apt to err by being too wedded to the established view and too closed to new information” – are evidenced by the Belgian faith in the respect for their neutrality and in their historically constructed trust of the Germans. Using this interpretation allows us to understand the Belgians’ friendly view of Germany as an “image” which prevented them from concluding that Germany intended to breach Belgian territory on its way to attacking France. Albertini notes that this epistemic barrier was probably cross-national:

[F]rom 1870 onwards admiration for Germany and belief in her invincibility had become ingrained in the educated classes everywhere on the continent. We Italians also, in the months preceding our entry into the war, were to find out how widespread and deeply rooted the feeling was.
(Albertini 1957: 457)

Yet Albertini continues:

These considerations do not detract from the high credit due to Belgium. Given such a mentality it was all the more admirable that her leaders rid themselves of it at one stroke and resolved on stubborn resistance to an invasion which many observers had credited them with a willingness to tolerate, if not even to turn to profitable account.
(Albertini 1957: 457)

So the misperception thesis can explain why the Belgians waited so long to *respond* to the gathering German threat, but it cannot account for the Belgian decision to *fight*, as the Belgians were fully aware of German intentions and capabilities following the ultimatum. If the “friendly German” frame was so salient that it prevented Belgium from recognizing the German threat, there is no reason to believe that it would have been eliminated so easily, in Albertini’s terms, “at one stroke.”

Additionally, the same identity of neutrality that prevented the Belgians from seeing the German threat for what it was *also* prevented them from approaching France or Britain for assistance until after German forces had breached Belgian territory. On August 3, for instance, the King would only “appeal to the diplomatic intervention of Your Majesty’s Government

[Britain's King George V] to safeguard the integrity of Belgium" (Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1915: 25). Furthermore, as Albertini notes,

the Belgian Government also sought to guard against possible French advances into its territory even after the German ultimatum gave the guaranteeing Powers the right to intervene in defense of Belgian neutrality as being a direct interest of their own.

(Albertini 1957: 467)

The Belgian government learned at 11 a.m. on August 4 that the Germans had entered Belgium at Gemmenich some three hours prior, and it was only after acquiring this information that they issued the following statement to the British, French, and Russian ministers:

Belgium appeals to England, France and Russia to co-operate as guaranteeing Powers in the defense of her territory. There should be concerted and joint action to oppose the forcible measures employed by Germany against Belgium, and, at the same time, to guarantee the future maintenance of the independence and integrity of Belgium.

(Belgium Ministry of Foreign Affairs 1915: 40)

Thus, the ontological security interpretation understands the Belgian actions more comprehensively than a misperception thesis, as it explains Belgium's posture toward what would become its allies (France and Britain) and its enemy (Germany).

Finally, the "survival" assumption of traditional security is wholly disconfirmed in accounting for the motives behind the Belgian actions. While the "survival" position, represented by Griendl, was offered during the Crown Council, it was an overwhelmingly minority view. Of course, Waltz and other neorealists could perhaps explain the outcome of the Belgian decision, since states that do not observe "structures" are eliminated: "to say that 'the structure selects' means simply that those who conform to accepted and successful practices more often rise to the top and are likelier to stay there" (Waltz 1979: 92). Both defensive and offensive realists could argue that the Belgians placed a naïve faith in the inviolability of their territory – that the assurances they received throughout the nineteenth century culminating in the 1907 Hague Conference were utterly meaningless. Waiting until the Germans had crossed their border further demonstrates the Belgian naïveté. According to the survival-based interpretation, Belgium in 1914 was an "unsuccessful" state eliminated from an evolutionary world.

While not technically wrong, this "prediction" by mainstream IR is hardly insightful or enlightening. While it predicts that certain states will either not see or not choose to see systemic "structures," there is no discursive evidence that the Belgians were motivated by the survival motive. A traditional

realist may argue that Belgian imprudence was unjust (a normative position relating to the Just War discussion in the section on pp. 109–110), but it was hardly naïve, as Belgian military advisers and decision makers were fully aware of which consequences would likely follow their decision.

Furthermore, the security-as-survival account denies that states must create meanings for their actions, no matter what the potential outcome of such actions will be. Perhaps the most interesting aspect of the Belgian discourse is how agents felt compelled to create meaning for an action that they ultimately knew would fail. Even though it would probably require us to jettison the search for one “universal rationality” of nation-states, this case exemplifies how the more interesting research questions explored in IR are those which posit not what “rational action” looks like, but rather how states can “rationalize” their decisions so that the social actions which follow are possible. In this case, at least, it appears that the desire for Belgium to secure both internal and external honor did just that.

The normative judgment: circumventing “success”

The Belgian case also illustrates how an ontological security interpretation can be used to modify a condition of Just War theory, or *jus ad bellum*. As some observers might find this act of national suicide to be normatively problematic, I would like to conclude this chapter by defending the assertion that Belgium’s satisfaction of ontological security can be defended on the grounds of just war theory, because in doing so we might recognize how small powers like Belgium have the ability to transform the ideational landscape of international society.

There have generally been five conditions of this “law to war”: (1) The would-be actor must have a just cause; (2) the action must be declared by a proper authority (usually this has meant the modern sovereign state, although dynastical sovereigns and international organizations may qualify); (3) the action must possess the right intention, addressing some wrong suffered, and the actions must solely reflect that intention; (4) there must be proportionality of means for the ends (the destruction of the action must be outweighed by the expected utility or “goodness” of that action); and (5) the action must have a *reasonable chance of success*.

Using the literal reading of this last condition, the Belgian actions fail to meet the reasonable success condition, as they knowingly engaged in an act of self-defense that they knew had no reasonable chance for success. The Belgian Chief of Staff Selliers, during the second Crown Council meeting of August 2, was asked the following questions and gave the following replies:

Can our army fight a defensive battle alone with a chance of halting the enemy? Is our army completely ready to meet the attack of the enemy?
Reply – No, the war has caught us in the very act of reorganizing the army; our officer cadres, especially those in the reserve, *are still inadequate*;

our field artillery *is still below establishment*; we have absolutely no heavy guns.³⁷

Yet how would we ever fault the Belgians in this case? One Just War theorist cites the Belgian action in 1914 with reference to the success condition, but comes to no real conclusion other than to say:

Though Belgian resistance was gallant and surprisingly stiff at Liege, the German armies were delayed just two days by Belgian military opposition, and the losses to Belgium were immense. Though the Belgian cause was just, considerations of proportionality indicate *that a decision not to fight would not have been immoral*.

(Lackey 1989: 41, emphasis added)

I posit two corollaries which allow us to recognize Belgian actions, in this case, as “just.” But while I am using these to qualify the Belgian case, I would suggest that these corollaries may prove useful for other situations where a literal reading of the success condition fails.

First, we must recognize that sacrifice is hardly unjust if it serves to strengthen certain community-based principles. Suffering can be a useful method for demonstrating adherence to principles, especially when it acquires moral significance in the eyes of a community of observers. An apt (but limited) parallel is derived from the pacifist and nonviolent-resistance traditions of Christianity.³⁸ According to this tradition, power “resides in example and persuasion” (Miller 1996: 278), or in the process of the demonstration rather than the outcomes of such an action. Furthermore, suffering may engender sympathy both for the pacifist individuals/groups and, perhaps more importantly, for the cause, grievance, and/or principle that justifies the suffering.³⁹

Of course, in a case where Belgium chose to fight, qualifications are needed when applying the sacrifice principle from the *pacifist* tradition. Pacifists, of course, do not fight, and the suffering they are willing to endure extends even to situations where nonviolence courts extinction (or “martyrdom”) in the face of aggression. So how can we apply a pacifist principle (sacrifice) to a non-pacifist act? In each case, an obvious aggressor is evident. And while the principle (pacifism v. sovereign independence) behind each (in)action differs, both provoke sympathy for those who suffer and admiration for such endurance. In sum, “success” can be understood here not as whether the fight ensures the physical existence of the state, but rather as *whether it strengthens community support for the principle that is the basis for the resistance*. While it is hard to ascertain what long-term impact the Belgian actions had, if any, upon collective European recognition for the sovereignty of neutral countries, it should be noted that at least one member of the Crown Council argued for resistance in just these terms: “the army must defend not only our rights but those of the guarantor

states.”⁴⁰ It is additionally significant that an Italian journalist expressed admiration for Belgium in such terms:

Defending her liberty to the death, Belgium has defended the sacred patrimony of all civilized peoples; she has fought for a principle which is the basis of life in every modern nation; she has given her blood, not for her individual interests, but for an ideal which is also ours. Defeat ennobles and glorifies her, as martyrdom sanctifies and exalts the victim and his faith. Belgium has set Independence above Existence.⁴¹

Such sacrifice, again, while ensuring a community principle of sovereignty, also ensured, in one historian’s view, Belgium’s future sovereignty (and the core of the Belgian Self) as well. Discussing the atrocities that Belgium’s population endured, Adrian Meeus writes:

[T]he victims of these atrocities did not die in vain, and their sacrifice was more important for their country. . . . They helped to make the violation of Belgian neutrality a symbol of outraged justice, forcing every country in the world to treat the conflict as a moral problem. There can be no doubt that this saved Belgian independence, which would have disappeared if the country had given free passage to the German armies.

(Meeus 1962: 351)

As the quotations in Table 5.2 suggest, the Belgians thus acquired broad recognition and appreciation for their decision to fight. The former British prime minister Arthur Balfour stated in 1914:

The weakness of the victim, the justice of her cause, the greatness of her sufferings, and her unconquerable soul, have moved the wonder and pity of the world. And when we turn from the victim to the oppressor, the tragic horror deepens. We see wrong heaped on wrong, and treachery on treachery.

(Balfour, quoted in Caine 1914: 15)⁴²

Balfour’s comments bring us to a second modification of the success condition – that resistance may be justified if the target, or aggressor, “represents a certain evil or malevolence . . . such that life under them would be nightmarish, a fate worse than death.”⁴³ Yet how are we to judge the “evilness” of such a target? There are, in my view, two parameters on which scholars might make such judgment. First, we might look to what a priori knowledge of a target regime the resisting parties possessed. That is, did the defending state’s agents, as it were, provide a proper counterfactual to what “life under” the aggressor state would be like? We could term this the *subjective* a priori measure of “evil,” as it would allow us to find out whether

those who decided to embark on a “futile” course of action and subject their citizenry to inevitable destruction, at least made an effort in good faith to predict what a “no resistance” decision would mean to their fellow citizens. In the case of the Belgians, though, it proves hard to ascertain such information. While many Belgians feared the Germans once the invasion began, other Belgians viewed Wilhelmitic Germany as the home of the Enlightenment and quasi-democracy. What’s more, there is no evidence of such value-judgments during the Crown Council discussion.

An *intersubjective* ad hoc parameter for evaluating the “evilness” of a target, on the other hand, is able to measure the conduct of the targeted state or non-state entity after resistance has commenced, even using such a state’s actions as a whole to generalize about what life would have been like under such a regime. Using this measurement, it is quite easy to absolve the Belgians, since from the point of invasion German atrocities against the civilian population of Belgium were rather pervasive. Additionally, the ad hoc parameter allows us to acknowledge whether the target for the resistance was naturally evil, or morally evil.⁴⁴ More generally, in today’s age of “collateral damage” and interrogation techniques that break established international codes, this parameter allows one to consider whether immoral *outcomes* committed by agents were intentional or unintentional. And this would allow the just war theorist to utilize established *jus en bello* concepts such as double effect and supreme emergency for this *jus ad bellum* evaluation.⁴⁵

Conclusions: honor and International Relations

Three important lessons follow from this particular chapter. First, we should note how, through time, the two “conventional wisdom” foci targeted here, survival and a reasonable chance for success, are linked. Prudence is the normative by-product of the “survival” assumption. This link, reinforced through scholarship and state practice, has not only narrowed our normative judgments about prudent foreign policy; it has limited scholarly interpretive frames for what constitutes “rational” behavior. The obvious conclusion is that future research should reinvestigate “irrational” cases like that of the Belgians where states or unit-like entities (sub-state organizations, city-states, etc.) decided to fight when success was elusive or knowingly impossible. At minimum, it would allow us to better define “success” – since success in battle would not always require a clear victory.

Second, even though honor, because it ensured Belgian ontological security, required Belgium to fight and die at the hands of the Germans, judging by the reaction of most European states Belgian justifications and actions adequately demonstrate how much *consensus* existed on what a collectively “honorable” action looked like in 1914 Europe. So when Lebow writes about the morally complex nature of “honor-driven worlds,” a reply recognizes how the degree to which such worlds are either competitive or consensual depends upon how often states keep in mind their collective

identity commitments, and/or whether they judge their prospective actions by their external honor considerations. While one might quickly endorse the case of Belgium in 1914 satisfying internal honor (because it related to a self-identification with *neutrality*), we can think of many more troubling situations of a state using a different form of self-identity to structure its policies (i.e. a “nuclear state”).

Third, and perhaps most provocatively, the observation that the Belgian decision to fight Germany proved to be enormously costly for the Belgian state means that nation-states driven to satisfy their ontological security might realize their self-identity drives in metaphorically “suicidal tendencies.” As morally problematic as that phrase sounds, the brief concluding section justified the Belgian decision on the basis of its transformational possibilities – in that, to paraphrase Abou A.M. Zeid, “the highest grade of honour” is “attained when the ideal can only be realized at the expense of the performer himself . . . in such cases” a state like Belgium “gives practical proof” that in its consideration self-identity was “larger than life” (Zeid 1966: 258). The existential angst which befalls all social agents is therefore solved through a painful, costly, and tragic, but also emancipatory, action, such as that taken by the Belgians in 1914.

The Belgian and British cases are ontological security “success stories” in the sense that both of these states pursued policies that confronted and eliminated threats to self-identity. Yet a fluid view of agency, inherent in the ontological security story, means that the “identity success rates” for such actions vary. What about those actors who pursued policies costly in self-identity terms? The following chapter assesses how past self-identity disruptions not only haunt the memories of nation-states, but motivate them in their future policies as well.

6 Haunted by the past

Shame and NATO's Kosovo operation

The American chattering classes that helped frame the debate over Kosovo during its beginning military stages stated that it was unimportant both to America's strategic interests and to the domestic interests of its opinion leaders: "But you need only ask your Congressman to find Kosovo on a map – and watch the blank stare that comes back at you – to appreciate how unimportant Kosovo is to any vital American interests."¹ Another remarked: "Empire as social work? It has come to that. It is empire without swagger, and with a heavy heart."² A third stated:

Despite its bizarre claim that the fate of Europe hangs in the balance, the Clinton administration recognizes that this is mainly a humanitarian mission. Its goal – to stop the atrocities in Kosovo – is a noble effort but a *naive* one.³

A final important example comes from the pages of the *National Review*:

In their eyes, if the war enhanced US security, its purpose would be less high and its character less admirable. For them, Kosovo is another Somalia, another Haiti, another chance to *do what we failed to do in Rwanda: foreign policy as social work*. There is not much *reasoning* at work here. [American Senator from Minnesota] Paul Wellstone talks of "a knot in my stomach," and [Democratic Senator David] Bonior says that the refugee situation "grabs me in a very visceral way."

(Abrams 1999: 52, emphasis added)⁴

When armed with an ontological security interpretation, Abrams's comments especially evoke several observations. First, while the "social work" quip is not new, the positioning of Kosovo as repentance for "Rwanda" is intriguing. Abrams seems to find such reasoning inappropriate. Also inappropriate for Abrams is the cited Senators' "visceral" reaction to the refugee situation, in that Wellstone and Bonior are making *private* statements imbued with emotion.

Besides the derision of the emotional, irrational, private, and incomplete nature of Bonior and Wellstone's comments, the above quotation sees foreign

policy in either/or terms; that is, a foreign policy action must serve the rational self-interest of a nation-state (defined by traditional security terms) or the "moral" interest of saving those in need. It cannot be both. This is unsurprising considering what was discussed in Chapter 2, namely that for over a century now even the most astute social theorists have separated any social interests and actions into "rational or self" v. "moral" categories. Abrams's implication is that because Wellstone and Bonior could not specifically articulate their "visceral" interests in the Kosovo intervention, other than in emotional terms, the United States had no traditional security interest in saving ethnic Albanians.

The delegitimation of the Kosovo operation as "motherly" social work is nothing short of what Peterson terms a "mapping strategy," that is a "practice of power which disciplines meaning, enable[s] and disable[s] resistance" (Peterson 1992: 190). As such, these critiques were used to portray the purpose of Kosovo as a form of emotional irrationality. The United States, and other NATO powers, did indeed have a self-interest to pursue through the Kosovo intervention.⁵ If we consider past foreign policy opportunities where the United States massively failed to live up to its vision of Self as *identity threats*, then there were ontological security interests, in addition to "traditional security" interests, in the US ameliorating the plight of the ethnic Albanians. Rational action in ontological security research is understood as the sum of acts that agents perform which "make sense" (to them). When tied to and implicated in *identity*, actions which appear to us as having some moral (or, as Tickner observes, "feminine")⁶ qualities are in fact hardly irrational if they serve a state's sense of self-identity.

There is no indication that a more forceful discursive assertion of American ontological security interests would have worked to stem the criticisms noted above. Yet such justifications, albeit in a limited fashion and thus not nearly at the forefront of Clinton's foreign policy goals, were still used in important contexts. These represent evidence that American foreign policy makers recognized American self-identity as implicated in the Kosovo crisis, and an ontological security interpretation sheds light upon the rational purpose behind American actions – a purpose to experience its shameful past in the context of an opportunity to "go the other way" in Kosovo.

This chapter uses an ontological security framework to interpret how the outcomes of past policy decisions motivated the NATO member states to intervene in Kosovo in the spring of 1999. Regarding Kosovo, the argument defended in this chapter is that *the plight of the ethnic Albanians threatened each NATO member state's self-identity, what I term their "ontological security," because the main contributing NATO members encountered a metaphorical sense of "shame" over past historical memories and experiences.* While each source of ontological insecurity was somewhat unique, these individual insecurities mobilized into a collective security action.

As I stated in Chapter 3, since interventionist cases like Kosovo are on the face of it difficult to explain using prevailing, materialist-informed

approaches, IR scholars are left trying to develop their own explanatory frameworks by using a "definitions first" approach.⁷ Such an approach has its advantages, but there are also drawbacks with operationalization and normative judgments about what constitutes "humanitarian" action. This will oftentimes leave scholars into the "either/or" trap discussed in Chapter 2 – in that any material or strategic gain which a state accrues in an intervention taints it as un-humanitarian. Most importantly, by defining what "is" or "is not" humanitarian, scholars tend to develop it as action separate in International Relations from the internally driven motives of states. What interests are served for the intervening states during a humanitarian intervention? How do such interventions fulfill the "security-seeking" drive behind foreign policy? If states are rational actors, how are such interventions "rational?" Finally, why do states intervene to stop abuses at one time (1999 in Kosovo) and not others (Rwanda and Bosnia in the early 1990s)?

This chapter proceeds through three sections. In the first section, I provide a background to the case, and then review some existing interpretations of Kosovo (see pp. 116–124). As I mention in Chapter 1, I am not attempting to "falsify" these alternative interpretations, but rather present them to better sharpen my ontological security reconstruction of the case. The latter is then presented in the second section, where I identify the sources of shame evident in NATO member state discourses, sources which culminated in a collective security effort, Operation Allied Force, to end the ethnic cleansing policies of Serbia (see pp. 124–143). In the third section, I discuss why and how particular sources of "shame" might remain a salient source of anxiety for states and why at the same time intervention might not necessarily follow in the manner that it did for NATO member states in Kosovo in 1999 (see pp. 143–147).

Background to Kosovo and existing interpretations

Background

Following World War II, Rump Yugoslavia became a communist state consisting of six republics: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, and Montenegro; and two provinces, Kosovo and Vojvodina. Kosovo formally became a semi-autonomous region in 1974 under the Yugoslav Federal Constitution (informal autonomy had fifty years precedence). But in 1989 this autonomy was rescinded by Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic, who imposed full Serbian control over the region. Led by a semi-underground (and nonviolent) political party, the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), ethnic Albanians in Kosovo demanded independence throughout the early 1990s. The Serbian leadership at the same time encouraged Serbian migration into the region and continuously repressed the Albanian majority in the area.

The 1995 Dayton Accords, which brought peace between Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia, provided a technical definition of Serbian territory that included the province of Kosovo. In short, the Accords legitimized Serbian rule of Kosovo, and the nonviolent strategies of the LDK were no longer uniformly supported by Kosovo Albanians. From 1996 onward, the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) began attacking Serb police stations and other institutions of the Serbian government. Serbian troops were sent into areas controlled by the KLA in February of 1998, ratcheting the conflict to a more intense level. This fighting created hundreds of thousands of ethnic Albanian refugees and drew the active attention of the international community. Under the threat of NATO air strikes, in October 1998 Serbia agreed to withdraw troops and allowed for the peaceful return of refugees, and the Serbs accepted international (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, OSCE) monitors into the region. These measures were backed by United Nations Security Council Resolution 1203.⁸ But the cessation proved fragile, and on January 15, 1999, forty-five ethnic Albanians were executed by Serb forces outside of the village of Racak. This massacre received intense global media coverage and confirmed for leaders of NATO states that the Serbs would not honor any agreements.⁹ In mid-February of that same year talks led by NATO member states and in conjunction with the United Nations (UN) began in Rambouillet, France, between Serbs and the Kosovo Albanians. While the Kosovo Albanians agreed to sign an accord – after being assured of a protective NATO peacekeeping force – the Serbs, perhaps because of this guarantee of NATO peacekeepers, refused. While fighting continued, talks resumed in mid-March, culminating in a failed last-ditch effort on March 22, 1998, by chief American negotiator Richard Holbrooke. NATO forces began air strikes on March 24. They ended on June 10 after a week and a half of negotiations. In between, Serb forces accelerated their ethnic cleansing campaign.¹⁰ Serb forces agreed to pull back and allow peacekeeping forces into Kosovo. These forces constitute a KFOR (Kosovo Force) protection force which remains in Kosovo today.

The mainstream perspective on NATO's Kosovo intervention

As it has become one of the most researched cases in International Relations, a multitude of explanations exist which examine why NATO states intervened in the Kosovo crisis.¹¹ While there are various, and at times contradictory, liberal accounts available to interpret NATO states' motives, in general liberal IR theory posits that state agents have rational incentives to satisfy the interests of domestic groups in their foreign policies.¹² NATO state agents were pressured by domestic groups (interest group coalitions, public outcry, or both), and were thus forced to intervene to satisfy these societal demands. Yet the level of domestic outcry did not itself compel NATO states to intervene in Kosovo, and in fact there is plenty of evidence

to suggest that domestic populaces restricted NATO state agents from a more comprehensive bombing strategy, whereby, in Wheeler's words, the "concern with maintaining domestic legitimacy exerted a powerful constraint on NATO strategy and forced the Alliance to invest great faith in air power in achieving its humanitarian and security objectives" (Wheeler 2000: 268). Thus the best that liberal theory can offer us in this case is to explain the limited *form* of NATO's action, rather than its motivating rationale. Liberal theory in general is haunted, in my (and others') view, by the fact that "liberal" democratic structures are not intended to promote foreign policies which "rescue" foreign nationals (see also the discussion in Chapter 3). Samantha Power states in her seminal book about genocide and American foreign policy:

It is in the realm of domestic politics that the battle to stop genocide is lost. American political leaders . . . reason that they will incur no costs if the United States remains involved *but will face steep risks if they engage*. Potential sources of influence – lawmakers on Capital Hill, editorial boards, non-governmental groups, and ordinary constituents – do not generate political pressure sufficient to change the calculus of America's leaders.

(Power 2002: xviii, emphasis added)¹³

A plausible argument could say that the above was also true in all NATO states throughout the 1990s, and may make intelligible, to paraphrase Wheeler, the "fact . . . that no Western government . . . intervened to defend human rights in the 1990s unless it [had] been very confident that the risk of casualties were almost zero" (Wheeler 2000: 300). Instead, in self-identity terms the Kosovo crisis hampered the ability of "liberal" states to plausibly articulate and narrate their sense of Self, as I discuss in the following section (see pp. 121–131). It would have damaged the ability of such states to, in Giddens's (1991) words, "keep a particular narrative going."

Traditional security accounts such as neorealism posit that changes in the distribution of power largely precede a change in policy, yet such frameworks, while they are supposed to "predict" state behavior, are somewhat meaningless in this case. Karen Ruth Adams presents the quandary for structural realism's ability to interpret the Kosovo case in stark terms: "Great power *indifference* to weak states is also most likely in a *unipolar* system, because the dominant state has no reason to worry that other great powers will manipulate situations to their advantage" (Adams 2006: 24, emphasis added). If international politics in 1999 can be considered a "unipolar" form of distribution of power, a consideration with which most reasonable scholars and analysts would agree, and Yugoslavia a "weak" state, then the United States should not have had an interest in the NATO operation. Yet the United States was the predominant contributor to the NATO mission.

There is also a slightly more nuanced structural argument to be made which would posit how Kosovo was more about NATO "demonstrating" its power and influence to its Russian and Chinese detractors than it was about intervening to prevent genocide. While Russia and China did oppose the intervention by threatening to veto any proposals for such action in the United Nations Security Council, we are still left wondering *why NATO would choose Kosovo as its platform for "demonstration?"* The claim that states intervene simply to demonstrate their power to deter rivals seems reasonable, but it is a claim that is wholly indeterminate and unspecified. We have no idea when, where, or in what form this "demonstration" will take, only that any show of force is a demonstration of power to *someone* in the international community of states. "Predicting" that states will "demonstrate" their power somewhere and at some time is an imprecise prediction indeed.

A further argument made by various contributors to the Sterling–Folker volume who present "neoliberal" (Kay 2006, esp. p. 64) or "neoclassical realist" (Taliaferro 2006), is that NATO member states acted to ensure their credibility as nation-states and that of their collective security organization. In essence, the "prestige" ("moral" or otherwise)¹⁴ of NATO was on the line, since member states had been warning Milosevic as far back as 1997 that they would take action if he would not stop policies meant to "cleanse" Kosovo of ethnic Albanians. Some realist authors, like Hans Morgenthau, see credibility as an important aspect constituting the "power" of states to attain their national interest goals. This is also similar to the argument that moral authority is a "power resource" (Hall 1997). The "credibility" argument means that states see it as in their interest to promote policies which "back up" words with actions, and in this case NATO powers weighed "the *prospective loss* of relative prestige and status" in the Kosovo intervention (Taliaferro 2006: 41, emphasis added).

The historical materialist position on Kosovo also recognizes the issue of "credibility" at work,¹⁵ albeit from a slightly more critical position. According to Noam Chomsky, "humanitarian" language was deployed as a cloak to disguise the profit-driven interests of various groups:

The technical meaning of humanitarian crisis is a problem somewhere that threatens the interest of rich and powerful people. That is the essence of what makes it a crisis. Now, any disturbance in the Balkans does threaten the interest of rich and powerful people, namely, the elites of Europe and the US. So when there are humanitarian issues in the Balkans, they become a humanitarian crisis. On the other hand, if people slaughter each other in Sierra Leone or the Congo, it's not a humanitarian crisis.¹⁶

Alan Cafruny provides a precise understanding of which "interests" the "rich and powerful" had in forcing key NATO participants, like the United

States, to intervene in Kosovo. Besides being an arena to "demonstrate" the "overwhelming dominance of the US military to Europe," Kosovo is "adjacent" to an area that would have provided an alternate and convenient route for a pipeline, allowing US multinationals to avoid having to support the construction of a pipeline through Iran (Cafruny 2006: 217–218). According to Cafruny, the use of force by the United States served social and economic forces that were products of the global economy more than mainstream approaches (like realist or constructivist) are willing to acknowledge.

There is indeed evidence that member states saw NATO "credibility" on the line, especially when that credibility included putting a stop to a regionally destabilizing conflict like Kosovo. Most NATO policy makers would have agreed with Britain's then foreign secretary Robin Cook's position on April 14, 1999, one which linked NATO credibility with each state's traditional sense of "security" interests:

Our national security depends upon NATO. NATO now has a common border with Serbia. . . . Our borders cannot remain stable while such violence is conducted on the other side of the fence. NATO was the guarantor of the October agreement. What credibility would NATO be left with if we allowed the agreement to be trampled on comprehensively by President Milosevic and did not stir to stop him?¹⁷

Member states packaged the "credibility" argument with their concern over European "order," which sounds similar to the international society arguments English School scholars have made for years.¹⁸ In America, President Clinton went in front of the American people during the first night of air strikes to justify the operation with a map as a visual aid:

We act to prevent a wider war, to defuse a powder keg at the heart of Europe. . . . Take a look at this map. Kosovo is a small place, but it sits on a major fault line between Europe, Asia, and the Middle East, at the meeting place of Islam and both the Western and Orthodox branches of Christianity.¹⁹

Later in the speech Clinton pointed out that Greece and Turkey, both important allies, would face a refugee crisis if the problem was not addressed. Clinton used a "fire analogy" in his explanation:

Let a fire burn here in this area, and the flames will spread. Eventually key US allies *could be drawn into a wider conflict, or we would be forced to confront later only at far greater risk and greater cost.*²⁰

So it would be incorrect to say that credibility and stability were not considered by NATO member states in the Kosovo operation. More likely, at

least for the Americans, traditional security considerations *coincided* with ontological security interests – both credibility and stability coupled with identity commitments motivated American intervention. But it is perhaps even more accurate to say that Clinton justified *American* involvement by linking action to some kind of strategic traditional security interest so that the American people (and key members of the foreign policy community), bathed in a realist, zero-sum mentality of foreign policy following fifty years of Cold War “interest” pursuits, could see some tangible benefits coming out of the intervention.²¹

Yet the “stability” interpretation is also incomplete and logically inconsistent. First, while Cook’s Britain and a few other European leaders referenced the destabilizing effects of Milosevic’s policies to justify NATO’s intervention, I note on pp. 124–125 how European leaders seemed more concerned with stopping a humanitarian disaster rather than the possibility of the conflict spilling outside of the Balkans. A second related note is that the NATO member state which had the *most* to gain in stability terms was Italy, while the United States was geographically situated the furthest from the conflict. Yet the Italians were *most reluctant* to join the NATO operation and seemed relatively unconcerned about the spillover of refugees or even the conflict threatening Italy by widening in scope.²² Umberto Morelli notes that of the five members of the negotiating “Contact Group” at the talks at Rambouillet the Americans and the British were the most determined on military intervention: “the Germans, the French and, most of all, the Italians were the least convinced – *the desire for war seemed, indeed, to be in inverse proportion to the distance from Kosovo*” (Morelli 2001: 60, emphasis added).

I am in large agreement with elements of, for instance, Taliaferro’s neo-classical, “credibility”-based interpretation of this case. NATO as a collective security organization magnified the perceived capabilities that each state had at its disposal, which in turn constituted their view of their own agency. Yet the “credibility” account only observes how states make promises and then find incentives to fulfill those promises; it does not, however, explicate why those nation-states made those promises in this particular case and at this particular time. A “gap” thus did indeed exist for NATO states, yet the subject of the gap, in my view, was not represented by NATO putting its “prestige at the hands of Milosevic” (Taliaferro 2006: 47), but rather, from an ontological security perspective, the self-regarding promises NATO states had made about themselves – the biographical narratives which bind states’ sense of Self established, again to paraphrase Onuf (1989: 88), a “deed” which enabled NATO states to act to protect their ontological security.²³

Critical readings of Kosovo

Several variants of critical approaches provide related, but also unique, interpretations of the Kosovo intervention. Rosemary Shinko’s post-modernist

interpretation understands NATO's action as the accumulation of sovereign states' interest in disciplining the "internal 'souls' of their own citizens" (Shinko 2006: 179) through the use of violence against Serbia. Sovereignty itself is a form of politics, thus being one "technique of discipline that relies upon a series of permanent coercions in order to train individuals to be docile" (Shinko 2006: 176). Thus:

[NATO states] were not concerned with ethnic diversity in Kosovo ... nor were they interested in self-determination for Kosovo. They were interested in reiterating and validating their own legitimacy and power in order to discipline politics within their own states. ... They recognized the specter of dissolution that haunts all civilizations.
(Shinko 2006: 179)

This critique of the Kosovo intervention – and, make no mistake, that is what Shinko's study represents – is quite compelling and I'm in agreement with the general thrust of it. Specifically, I agree that the NATO operation was for participant states' internal consumption (national rather than international), that Operation Allied Force was conducted to confront certain "specters" which haunted NATO states. I also agree that violence was used in order to attain a sense of ontological security, which, in an abstract sense, is a form of discipline if we think of "docility" as a sanitized sense of order. But I disagree as to the "specters" which haunted NATO states: it was not the concern for their own physical dissolution into disorder, but rather a disordered sense of national self-identity that drove NATO states to act. Furthermore, when one views the cases where force has been deployed for the stated purpose of rescuing individuals or groups, the list is quite small, as noted by David Campbell:

Rather than rushing in to put in place [as many Western and Serbian critics claimed] its supposed desire for imperial hegemony ... the international community has at all times taken its time, looked the other way, pursued all and every non-military option despite their projected failure, and then finally, reluctantly acted when the evidence of atrocities could no longer be resisted.

(Campbell 2001: 118)

Francine D'Amico's critical feminist perspective reveals the normatively problematic and gendered consequences of the NATO operation, which included an increase in sex trafficking to "provide sexual services for 45,000 NATO KFOR troops as well as UNMIK and NGO personnel" (D'Amico 2006: 278–280), some of which were forced against their will. The war also reinforced gender roles, which further deprived the women of post-conflict Kosovo.

Indeed, since military force was used in Kosovo, and I am using it as an example where an ontological security account interprets such use of force

as "rational," this chapter may be seen as a tacit endorsement of the use of warfare as a form of rescue. Such endorsement runs counter to the history of feminist IR scholarship that has revealed the ways in which nonviolent approaches to conflict successfully combat violence and subjugation (see, for example, Ruddick 1990; Bayard de Volo 2001). As such, the Kosovo War might instead be interpreted not as a form of "care ethic," but rather as yet another example of just male warriors rescuing "women in need of protection" (Tickner 1996: 155).

Yet I think three issues should be noted here. First, a gendered perspective might also reveal how humanitarian intervention itself has been delegitimized as a "feminine" manifestation of foreign policy, because it largely runs counter to traditional security definitions of "the national interest." Instead, humanitarian intervention is supposedly a form of "social work," whereby, according to Michael Mandelbaum: "While Mother Teresa is an admirable person and social work a noble profession, conducting American foreign policy by her example is an expensive proposition" (Mandelbaum 1996: 19).²⁴ This was indeed the tactic, noted on p. 115, used by American critics of the Kosovo intervention to delegitimize on the grounds of "inappropriateness" the stated reasons for the Kosovo intervention, which had the ability to resonate because they use gendered categories or phrases (i.e. Ajami, "social work"; Zakaria, "naïve"; and Abrams, "social work" and "not much reasoning at work here"). Second, as Campbell (2001) further notes, ethnic Albanian women were subject to these atrocities in Kosovo, in the form of rape and forced migration.²⁵ One does not have to, in Campbell's words, provide a "blanket endorsement of NATO's actions" to still recognize the emancipatory benefits to NATO's operation (Campbell 2001: 120). While the intervention was admittedly limited, imperfect, and may have accelerated the atrocities it was meant to combat and stop, I am inclined to agree with Samantha Power's assessment that the atrocities would have been worse in Kosovo "if NATO had not acted at all" (Power 2002: 472).²⁶ Third and finally, feminist IR scholars, even those who would disagree with all violent forms of resistance, might consider the Kosovo case as an opportunity to use ontological security tactics to problematize the self-identity of states, with the goal being a reformulation, if not a broadening, of nation-state security interests. Such tactics position human suffering, oppression, and the rape of women in war as a form of self-identity threat, as in "what does the continued toleration of these practices say about who we are as a nation-state?" Thus, by using discursive strategies, a feminist critique helps shape, in ontological security terms, a biographical narrative that becomes more conscious of such forms of gendered violence.

Two final critical perspectives are noted in this section. Maja Zehfuss (2002b) and Iver Neumann (2002) provide discursive interpretations of the NATO case. Zehfuss's Derridean deconstruction of Kosovo examines how the language used by NATO state agents created the "reality" of Kosovo, fixing the boundaries of what was an "acceptable" action, and thereby

conversely rendering a nonviolent solution to the situation "unacceptable." In a related vein, for Neumann NATO states represented themselves as *the* form of "humanity" through speech acts, thus casting Serbs as outside humanity, thereby neutralizing any legitimate counter-narratives. According to Neumann, "globalization constitutes a major precondition for how, in the Kosovo war, NATO could so easily represent itself as the guardian of human rights" (Neumann 2002: 73).

There is some overlap between these accounts and my ontological security perspective. I generally agree that the NATO operation was, in Neumann's words, an act "about who" NATO states were and "how" they were "supposed to continue to exist" (Neumann 2002: 73). There was also indeed a "totalizing" discourse evident in especially Clinton's, Blair's, and Chirac's speeches on the subject. Nevertheless, Neumann's account obscures the internal narratives which inscribed and reinscribed national meanings so that NATO states to act in Kosovo. Likewise, Zehfuss and I part company on one important point. She posits:

The problem is that if we understand the boundary, which we believe we experience . . . we consider our choices limited by a mysterious outside power that we cannot ever directly experience. As a result, because we have no choice, and because this is the way things are, we limit our responsibility. (Zehfuss 2002b: 118)

On the other hand, an ontological security perspective which embraces contingency, namely, how that contingency generates anxiety in social agents, asserts that the reason the plight of the Kosovo Albanians generated such anxiety was *because* NATO member states recognized their agency. Reality was not fixed here; as evidenced in the NATO states' discourse, each source of shame was produced precisely because in their past actions NATO states had "acted differently." The fact that they could go either way – act or not – was the precise condition which made Operation Allied Force possible.

An ontological security reconstruction of the Kosovo case

One further interpretation was omitted above, and that is because it is such a prevailing view of humanitarian intervention in general it deserves to be considered in its own right throughout the remainder of this chapter. Regarding this specific case, it is represented by Patrick Jackson's "relational" constructivist interpretation, where

[the] NATO bombing campaign itself was at least in part a product of a legitimization struggle, as the United States and its European allies pressed for a negotiated resolution to the conflict in Kosovo and the Yugoslavian regime refused to submit to their demands.

(Jackson 2006: 139–140)

Actors must legitimate their actions because "the basic requirement [is] that rule must be justified in principle because it rests not just on force but on acquiescence . . . legitimacy is a necessary component of authority and thus of power" (Bukovsky 2002: 70). This is also a key position of Nicholas Wheeler's seminal solidarist English School work on humanitarian intervention – that the set of actions a nation-state might pursue are constrained by state agents' ability to find a "plausible legitimating reason" for such an action (Wheeler 2000: 4). The agents of Operation Allied Force's participant states used "nested community arguments" which linked national interests to "broader interests" such as the notion of "Western values." Jackson's interpretation of NATO's Kosovo operation is the basic position of the larger "environmental" approach to collective identity noted in Chapter 2, whereby NATO became a community that member states were committed to uphold: "failing to go along with these demands can call a state's commitment to the larger community into question" (Jackson 2006: 149).

Jackson, Wheeler, and others who have reviewed the Kosovo case provide much discursive evidence to defend the community-based assertion that the ability of NATO state agents to legitimate the crisis influenced the context of the bombing campaign. But I think the fact that the Kosovo campaign was a multilateral operation somewhat obscures the more internally driven mechanism which was at work with every NATO state – that such states were driven by ontological security needs to cast out demons from disjunctured historical pasts. Whether it was the United States, Britain, France, Germany, or Italy, each major contributing member to Operation Allied Force created individual meanings for acting in a multilateral operation. NATO was the vehicle, not the environmental cause, for realizing these identity commitments.

Nevertheless, NATO itself played a role in that, as I mentioned on p. 119 in the context of the "neoclassical realist" interpretation, it magnified the capabilities of participant states, capabilities which became intrinsically constitutive of the identity of each state. The fact that the main contributors to the intervention – the United States, Britain, France, and Germany – were all democracies provides an opportunity to detail how the ontological security drives of individual democracies operate in a collective security arrangement. Two aspects of the NATO intervention are relevant regarding ontological security: (1) whether the increased material capabilities of a collective security organization increased the anxiety of nation-states with the prospect of doing nothing in Kosovo; and (2) whether there were different sources for ontological insecurity for each state in which Kosovo was a locus for recall.

To remind the reader, in attempting to secure their states' self-identity through time state agents must take into account both their sense of integrity about a situation *and* how materially capable they are to produce an intended outcome. Those situations that can be materially attended to represent "critical situations." In a case like Kosovo, the material capabilities of each state were magnified through a collective security organization. These

increased material capabilities, combined with the recall of particular (to each state) sources of shame resulting from past self-identity disruptions, created a heightened sense of anxiety in the major NATO participant countries. In the Kosovo case, the increased level of material capabilities led to an increase in the perceived self-identity costs each NATO member faced in "doing nothing." At several points leading up to and during the Kosovo war the British prime minister, Tony Blair, justified British involvement through the capabilities NATO possessed, and these capabilities made "looking away" from the Kosovo situation an untenable position: "Only NATO has the necessary experience and capabilities to set up and lead such a force, as it has shown so successfully in Bosnia for more than three years."²⁷ American President Bill Clinton posed a counterfactual to the American people which put American and NATO capabilities front and center, in a speech on March 23, 1999:

[N]ot "we" the United States [but] "we" 19 countries in NATO. . . . You've got to decide, my fellow Americans, if you agree with me that in the 21st Century, that America, as the world's superpower, ought to be standing up against ethnic cleansing *if we have the means to do it and we have allies who will help us do it in their neighborhood.*

(Auerswald and Auerswald 2000: 699, emphasis added)

Yet while the actions meant to alleviate the Kosovo crisis came from a collective security organization, the sources for ontological security varied from state to state. This demonstrates that individual states recall their own *individual* pasts to create meanings for actions meant to alleviate (at least what appear to observers to be) *collective* identity threats. In this section I provide some examples of the different sources of shame that each NATO member faced, why each state felt anxiety over those past failures, and how this created different conceptions in each state of what would be the proper action to alleviate the suffering of ethnic Albanians. Each NATO member state had a unique domestic situation which influenced its decisions. It is my position that, because of both the context of the Kosovo crisis and their respective national histories, "shame" was most relevant for three of the main contributing members – Britain, Germany, and the United States – yet all member states (including France and Italy) were motivated by self-identity commitments in contributing to the operation.

As I stated in Chapter 3, for shame to be relevant it must be discursively referenced by policy makers in the context of creating *meanings for their actions*. In structuration theory, agents use *recall* "as the means of recapitulating past experiences in such a way as to *focus them upon the continuity of action*" (Giddens 1984: 49, emphasis added). In the Kosovo case, Britain, Germany, and the United States used their past failed policies and the ontological insecurity which those policies generated to justify most directly to their *domestic* audiences their involvement in the Kosovo war. Media

images indeed played a role in this recall; however, in an ontological security interpretation, the images, for instance, of ethnic Albanians fleeing Kosovo that were broadcast leading up to and during the early stages of the war, the "apocalyptic scenes of hundreds of thousands of refugees" (Judah 2000: 251), were not necessarily important because of any sympathy they engendered when transmitted back to NATO member states' audiences.²⁸ They were important in ontological security terms because they evoked specter images which disrupted each country's intersubjectively constructed sense of history. Because of shared histories and sense of self-identity, when they are presented in a context or locus of "reflexivity" this audience should relate to the purpose of the actions meant to address ontological insecurity. That said, because references to the past must be recalled and articulated at all, let alone in the context of military action, the chances are good that support for these policies will not be uniform across each domestic populace. In what follows I provide (1) the sources for each state's shame; (2) why these generated insecurity in each state (i.e. why each source was important for each state); and (3) discursive evidence for each source of shame. (For a summary of the British, American, and German discursive references, see Table 6.1).

Britain: appeasement, World War II, and Bosnia

The discourse used by both the core foreign policy leaders of Britain and the debates by opinion leaders in the House of Commons reveals two salient sources of shame. It is obvious, first, that British leaders felt insecure over the then prime minister Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler's Germany coming out of the Munich Agreement prior to World War II.²⁹ Most leaders analogized Milosevic to Hitler, at least in the sense that both were dictators and that "appeasement" never worked with any dictator. The difference between the two cases, of course, was that while Hitler executed the worst genocide in human history, it was his compromising of sovereignty through invasion, a crime against states (not individuals), for which British appeasement was most directly culpable. The Holocaust was more a by-product, rather than a direct outcome, of Britain's 1938 mistaken trust in Hitler. Milosevic's policies in 1999 Kosovo, on the other hand, threatened individuals within the sovereign territory of Serbia proper, and to suggest that his ethnic cleansing policies would have developed into a land grab policy through war with neighboring countries is a stretch. Nevertheless, in 1998–1999 British discourse often conflated the two crimes (external and internal aggression) and linked them both to appeasement.

For example, Tony Blair likened the conflict to the evils of World War II on several occasions, using phrases such as: "It is time for my generation to reflect on the fight of our parents' generation against Hitler's regime."³⁰ The prime minister continually presented the then-current operation in Kosovo as one which would avoid these past mistakes:

Table 6.1 Discursive shame and NATO's Kosovo operation

NATO member state	Source of shame and identity disconnect	State agent, context, date of statement	Discursive reference
U.K.	Appeasement (World War II) and the Holocaust	Defense Secretary G. Robertson, <i>News of the World</i> , 03.28.1999	"More than most, the British people understand that appeasement did not work in the 1930s. Nor will it in the 1990s. And so we had to bring Milosevic to heel"
U.K.	Bosnia	Foreign Secretary R. Cook, House of Commons, 05.25.1999	"The reports...are chillingly familiar from the behavior of the same Serb forces during the civil war in Bosnia. At that time, it took <i>the international community</i> three years to muster the resolve to launch an air campaign....If we do not want to see another installment of the same brutality...we must demonstrate that aggression does not pay by forcing Milosevic to reverse the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo"
America	Rwanda (Bosnia)	President Bill Clinton, remarks to Veterans' groups, 05.14.1999	"I think the only thing we have seen that really rivals that rooted in ethnic or religious destruction in this decade is what happened in Rwanda, and I regret very much that the world community was not organized and able to act quickly there as well"
Germany	Holocaust (but constrained by German war "guilt")	Schroeder, address to Social Democrat Party Congress, 04.11.99	"Especially we Germans...we must never again allow murder, expulsions, and deportations to be tolerated by politicians"
Germany		Schroeder, <i>Der Spiegel</i> interview, 04.12.1999	"Regarding Hitler's fascism children [have] asked their parents: Why did you not do anything at the time? Why did you do nothing to prevent it? I would not like to be in a situation in which I must answer similar questions with regard to the brutality in Kosovo. I would like to be able to say in such a situation that I did what was possible and rational"

The conflict we now face in Kosovo is a test of our commitment and our resolve to ensure that the 21st century does not begin with a continuing reminder in Europe of the worst aspects of the century now drawing to a close.³¹

The British defense secretary, Geoffrey Robertson, also used the specter of appeasement to justify British involvement in NATO. On March 28, Robertson justified British involvement:

We [can]not simply stand idly by. We must learn the lesson of the early days of Hitler. Had we stood up to his tyranny earlier, the course of history might have been very different. *More than most, the British people understand that appeasement did not work in the 1930s. Nor will it in the 1990s. And so we had to bring Milosevic to heel, before the spark of violence erupt[s] throughout the Balkans.*³²

It is more accurate to specify this first source of shame as Britain's anxiety over its World War II appeasement policy and to link that to confronting "aggression," rather than Britain's anxiety over allowing the Holocaust to unfold per se. Nonetheless, British opinion leaders all shared a sense of remorse over the Holocaust and Britain's culpability, if not direct responsibility, for appeasing a tyrant who slaughtered six million Jews. Most likely this anxiety was reinforced by the powerful images being projected out of Kosovo onto British television sets showing the mass deportation and evacuation of the Kosovar Albanians. These images "recalled" a disastrous British policy and they served to motivate and legitimate the narratives, like the following, issued by Robertson on May 18 to the House of Commons, that British leaders used to justify the Kosovo War:

During the question session that followed my speech, a small old man rose at the back of the hall to put a point to me. In the silence of the meeting, he told me that he had been in Auschwitz concentration camp in Nazi Germany in his youth. That small old man told me and the people at the meeting that, as a holocaust survivor, he could *recognize* genocide when he saw it and that he was seeing it again today in Kosovo. Mr. Michael Sanki reminded us that, after the Second World War, we all said "Never again." ... For my generation and so many others in this country – who are very lucky to be alive in a democracy today – this is our moment to say and to mean "Never again."

(Robertson, in *Hansard's*, 18 May 1999, col. 966)

Righting past wrongs also recalled the British failure to act quickly enough in Bosnia in the early 1990s. As with the insecurity over appeasement, British policy makers uniformly acknowledged this failure as a motivating

factor for their actions in Kosovo. In his March 23 speech before the House of Commons, Prime Minister Blair stated:

We act also because we know from bitter experience throughout this century, most recently in Bosnia, that instability and civil war in one part of the Balkans inevitably spills over into the whole of it, and affects the rest of Europe, too.

(Blair, in *Hansard's*, 23 March 1999, col. 161)

Robin Cook also reiterated this position well into the war in late May in a debate in the House of Commons, when the Blair government was on the defensive about the progress of the war. Cook said:

The reports of ethnic cleansing, rape of young women and massacre of young men are chillingly familiar from the behavior of the same Serb forces during the civil war in Bosnia. At that time, it took the international community three years to muster the resolve to launch an air campaign. This time, the Governments of NATO are agreed that Milosevic must be faced down now. If we do not want to see another installment of the same brutality visited on Montenegro, Sandjak or Vojvodina, we must demonstrate that aggression does not pay by forcing Milosevic to reverse the ethnic cleansing in Kosovo.

(Cook, in *Hansard's*, 25 May 1999, col. 180)

During the debates throughout the conflict, there is even evidence of the "shame blame game" which I mentioned briefly in Chapter 3. To refresh the reader, I argued that "passing the buck" for responsibility over past identity-based security failures occurs between states in the same way states "pass the buck" for handling traditional security threats. Shame buck-passing will thus include a debate over interpreting who is to blame for the past failures. What is evident in the British debates is that such "blaming" occurs *within* states as well, in this case between representatives of the Labour and Conservative Parties. On October 19, 1998, in a debate in the House of Commons, Labour's Robin Cook responded to a charge by the Conservative Michael Howard that the Blair government was moving far too slowly to prevent the tragedy in Kosovo:

[Howard:] Does he not acknowledge that, if action had been taken along these lines in March or April, as I then urged, hundreds of lives would have been saved, hundreds of thousands of people would still be living in their homes and enormous suffering and anguish would have been prevented.

[Cook:] ... Finally, let me pick up the right hon. and learned Gentleman's comment about delay in reaching this point. I dare say that, if the topic were not so tragic, his criticism would be comic in its hypocrisy.

Many of us remember exactly how the last Conservative Government dithered for three years while Bosnia burned. The right hon. and learned Gentleman sat in the Cabinet for those three years, and the only reference to Bosnia that we have been able to find for that period is a statement that Britain should not take any more refugees from Bosnia. If the right hon. and learned Gentleman really wants a remedy for those three years of *shameful* delay, the best thing that he can do is support, not oppose, the Government's efforts to bring security and self-government to Kosovo.

(*Hansard's*, 19 October 1998, cols. 955 and 956)

What is obvious throughout this discourse is the continuity for the reasons for action – British anxiety resulted from Britain's mistakes in appeasing Hitler in World War II and in delaying action in Bosnia until many had already been murdered.³³

United States: a haunted hegemon

"We started helping them when I was President. President Bush continued that policy and broadened the uses of which our aid can be put and we need to do more of that kind of work. It's a good thing we're helping the Philippines. It's a good thing we're helping other countries that are trying to increase their own capacity to deal with the threat of terror."

[PERSON IN AUDIENCE YELLS OUT:] "What did you do for Rwanda?"³⁴ – Former US President Bill Clinton, March 23, 2003

As noted above, the United States provided other reasons besides "preventing" a human tragedy to justify its involvement in the NATO operation. Yet if we take a closer look at the American discourse in the months leading up to the Kosovo war, we can find other purposes behind America's involvement. Because it possessed the greatest material capabilities of any NATO member, the United States faced a special sense of responsibility and purpose regarding the plight of the ethnic Albanians. Combined with its material capability, then, two sources of shame motivated American action.

Prior to and during the Kosovo war the British, including members of the Labour Party, expressed remorse over Britain's slow response to the Bosnian slaughter. But because Bosnia occurred on the Conservative prime minister John Major's watch, the Blair government's sense of "shame" was tempered a bit by the knowledge that at the time they had forcefully proposed British involvement in Bosnia despite Conservative foot-dragging.

By contrast, America's main source of "shame" during the 1990s (which I would say continues today) had been its inaction during the Rwandan genocide, and the same administration that was in office during the Kosovo crisis had also held office in 1994 when America stood idly by as Hutu

extremists systematically slaughtered from 800,000 to one million Tutsis between April and June of that year. Many accounts have detailed the Clinton administration's stumbling response to the reports of genocide, and its general inaction during the crisis.³⁵ There is ample evidence that the lack of an American response to the Rwandan genocide weighed on the consciences of those who served in the Clinton administration at the time. While their post-1994 admissions of remorse are little solace to the massacred Rwandans, these proclamations demonstrate the depth to which some American leaders felt repentant for American inaction during that genocide.

Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State in the second Clinton administration (during the Kosovo crisis), was the American ambassador to the UN during the Rwandan genocide. Albright was a first-hand observer of, and participant in, the Security Council's idle standing by in April and May of 1994. In a *Frontline* program aired during the tenth anniversary of the Rwandan genocide, Albright partially absolved herself from responsibility (playing, again, what I have termed the "shame blame game") by saying:

In retrospect, it all looks very clear. But at the time, what was happening in Rwanda, the situation was unclear. But when you were at the time, when it was unclear about what was happening in Rwanda, it was very clear that Congress was not supportive of additional peacekeepers, very clear that the Pentagon was not interested in getting deeply involved.³⁶

The Clinton administration and all members of the UN Security Council were fully aware, even a month ahead of the massacre that Hutu *inter-ahamwe* militias were gathering to systematically kill Tutsis and moderate Hutus. And it seems that Albright herself does not fully believe that the Clinton administration knew "too little" to do anything, as evidenced by the following statement in the same program: "I wish that I had pushed for a large humanitarian intervention. People would have thought I was crazy. It would never have happened. *But I would have felt better about my own role in this.*"³⁷

Clinton's remorse has become even more focused, at least in public, since the Rwandan genocide. Almost exactly a year to the day before intervening in Kosovo, Clinton issued what has become known as "an apology" in a speech during his visit to Rwanda. He noted that the United States, and the international community as a whole, shared the burden for failing to act:

We did not act quickly enough after the killing began . . . all over the world there were people like me sitting in offices, day after day after day, who did not fully appreciate the depth and the speed with which you were being engulfed by this unimaginable terror.³⁸

At the University of Arkansas during one of his "speaking tours" on American college campuses during the spring of 2003, Clinton was asked by an Arkansas student: "Mr. President, the lack of intervention in Rwanda – can you tell us why the U.S. didn't intervene?" Like Albright, Clinton tried to put American inaction in context:

I think that the people that were bringing these decisions to me felt that the Congress was still reeling from what had happened in Somalia, and by the time they finally – you know, I sort of started focusing on this and seeing the news reports coming out of it, it was too late to do anything about it.³⁹

Yet, again, like Albright, Clinton must know that the United States, through his leadership, could have done something during that time, as he also stated in his answer:

And I feel terrible about it because I think we could have sent 5,000, 10,000 troops there and saved a couple hundred thousand lives. I think we could have saved about half of them. *But I'll always regret that Rwandan thing. I will always feel terrible about it.*⁴⁰

Clinton has repeated this regret elsewhere, most recently in his memoirs:

With a few thousand troops and help from our allies, even making allowances for the time it would have taken to deploy them, we could have saved lives. *The failure to try to stop Rwanda's tragedies became one of the greatest regrets of my presidency.*

(Clinton 2004: 593)

Besides the emphasized portions of both quotations, which demonstrate American shame over the Rwandan genocide, one should also note that Clinton recognizes (or believes) in both of these quotations that 5,000–10,000 (or "a few thousand") troops could have "saved a couple hundred thousand lives. I think we could have saved about half of them." If the latter estimation is to be believed ("half of them"), Clinton believes that the United States, with allied assistance, could have saved 400,000 Rwandans with a small intervention force. Again, this is an important estimation in light of what I proposed in Chapter 3: "not intervening in certain crises can produce ontological insecurity *because* those crises were so preventable and because the state recognizes its own capabilities to influence outcomes."⁴¹ While Clinton's proclamations, beginning with the 1998 "apology" to the Rwandans, are not free from criticism considering the role the United States could have played in preventing the genocide, they are not "meaningless" from an ontological security point of view,⁴² but rather can be interpreted as an (albeit shallow) engagement with a painful disruption in the American Self.

Yet while these passages are tangible evidence that Rwanda generated ontological insecurity, how are we to know that the memory of Rwanda played any role in the American actions in Kosovo? Early in the crisis, one "anonymous" administration official stated: "In Rwanda we failed to respond the way we should have, and the president apologized. . . . Kosovo is our first opportunity to act on what we learned in Rwanda, and you see our response has been to take action."⁴³ And further into the crisis it was evident in Clinton's own words that the shadows of Rwanda played a role in the Kosovo intervention:

I think the only thing we have seen that really rivals that rooted in ethnic or religious destruction in this decade is what happened in Rwanda, *and I regret very much that the world community was not organized and able to act quickly there as well.*⁴⁴

Notice again, however, that this remorse for the failures of the American Self is distributed to "the world community."

While the main source of American shame in the Kosovo crisis was Rwanda, the Bosnia situation was also referenced.⁴⁵ In a White House speech leading up to the crisis Clinton laid out the intended goals for the Kosovo war against Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic: "My intention would be to do whatever is possible . . . to weaken his ability to massacre them, [not] *to have another Bosnia.*"⁴⁶ A few days later, Clinton mentioned Bosnia as a shameful tragedy that could have been prevented earlier, and as a model for humanitarian problem solving: "[w]e learned that in the Balkans inaction in the face of brutality simply invites more brutality, but firmness can stop armies and save lives. We must apply that lesson in Kosovo, before what happened in Bosnia happens there too."⁴⁷

What was it that underpinned the "learning" process of the Clinton administration? Returning to the discussion in Chapter 3 regarding the process of a biographical narrative – specifically, that how actors' *understandings* of what "causes" or "drives" events influence their perception of their own agency – the most central aspect America needed to address in order to find a "routine" to alleviate these perceived "humanitarian" crises was the perception of what was fueling the ethnic conflict in Kosovo. The idea that Serb and ethnic Albanian identities were permanent fixtures of a common descent, that they could not just be "wished away," was a view that had been a nice policy crutch which absolved Western policy elites from taking any responsibility to stop genocide.⁴⁸ In essence, Western, and especially American, policy makers needed to alter this view – doing so would then allow them to perceive their own ability to effect change; and indeed they did so by shifting to a more "instrumentalist" or "circumstantialist" view of ethnic conflict. More directly responsible for the variation in ethnic identification, according to instrumentalism, are the manipulation and mobilization by elites of the groups they lead for political purposes.⁴⁹

Clinton expressed his revised understanding of ethnic conflict during the Rwanda "apology" speech already referenced:

It is important the world know that these killings were not spontaneous or accidental. It is important that the world hear what your President just said – they were most certainly not the result of ancient tribal struggles. Indeed, these people had lived together for centuries before the events the President described began to unfold.⁵⁰

Thus when Clinton responded to critics of his Kosovo policy,⁵¹ who no doubt had pointed out the inconsistencies during his administration, he was most repentant for past inaction and placed the blame for this inconsistency on a previously warped interpretation of history:

There are those who say Europe and its North American allies have no business intervening in the ethnic conflicts of the Balkans. . . . I myself have been guilty of saying that on occasion or two and I regret it now, more than I can say. For I have spent a great deal of time in these last six years reading the real history of the Balkans and the truth is that a lot of what passes for common wisdom in this area is a gross oversimplification and misreading of history.⁵²

Therefore, because the conflict in the Balkans was driven by elites (such as Milosevic), and not the masses, it was no longer intractable, it could be "solved," and so American state agents could no longer "comfort" themselves with a primordial view of this crisis, and thus absolve their own inaction in the case of another ethnic conflict.⁵³

German shame v. German guilt

Two countervailing, and well-documented, forces were at work in Germany regarding policy preferences for the Kosovo war. Pacifist elements guilty about German militarism clashed with those promoting social justice and ashamed of a Holocaust past. The first "stems from the two World Wars" (Savarese 2000: 373). Maja Zehfuss interprets German military involvement in Kosovo as both "problematic" and "necessary" "because of the history of the Third Reich." Involvement was problematic because of Germany's attempted World War II conquests; necessary because deployment would right the past wrongs of the Holocaust (Zehfuss 2002a: 85–86).⁵⁴

The ontological security interpretation helps us understand what was driving these forces, if we return to the distinction, noted in Chapter 3, between "shame" and "guilt." Actions which contradict self-identity produce *shame*, whereas *guilt* is "produced by the fear of transgression." Individuals who break laws are "guilty," whereas no formalized rule needs to be compromised for shame to be produced. The reason I find German

involvement in the Kosovo war most interesting is because I interpret the "problematic" (Zehfuss's word) aspect as relating more to German "guilt" at compromising state sovereignty (breaking international law), and the "necessary" (again, Zehfuss's word) aspect as relating to German "shame" over the Holocaust. Thus "shame" became a more encompassing force in the German decision, although, just as in 1860s Britain, and America and Britain in 1999, the "decision" by Germany to deploy forces in Kosovo looked more like a process rather than a simple "event," as Gerhard Schroeder, the German Chancellor, and fellow Cabinet members had to make the case that Germany had a responsibility to act.

Jonathan Bach also identified this "tension" in German society by analyzing debates which have pervaded German discussions since unification over the deployment of military forces. What I refer to as "German shame" is reflected in what Bach terms "the prevailing discourse":

[which] begins by acknowledging that in the Second World War German soldiers committed atrocities under the leadership of the criminal Hitler dictatorship. ... [Thus] as a moral imperative, learning from history means atoning for past crimes.

(Bach 1999: 150–151)

And what I have termed "German guilt" culminating in Germany's pacifist traditions has been reflected in what Bach terms the "counter-discourse":

As with the prevailing discourse, the counter-narrative is the Second World War. ... Germany's contribution [to the international community] must consist of non-violent means for two reasons. ... First, Germany's responsibility to itself and its past ... [and] Second, non-violent means are ultimately the only viable approach for changing the world.

(Bach 1999: 155–156)

This tension unfolded in Germany's domestic political landscape and illustrates the importance of domestic political coalitions in the making of foreign policy (Kaarbo and Lantis 2003; see also Kaarbo 1996). Schroeder's Social Democratic Party (SPD) had one year prior won an election which returned the party to power for the first time since 1982. Both the SPD and the Green Party with which it had allied were constituted by traditional pacifist elements which stemmed from German guilt over World War II. Several events illustrate the "problematic" struggle Schroeder faced from these elements. During the early stages of the Kosovo conflict, Schroeder was confronted by a pacifist finance minister, Oskar Lafontaine, who manifested his opposition to the Kosovo policy by refusing to release funding that had been requested by the German defense minister, Rudolf Scharping, for the Kosovo operation. Lafontaine eventually resigned from the Cabinet, yet

Schroeder still faced opposition at his party congress in early April during the opening weeks of the Kosovo war.

It was in such an atmosphere that Schroeder recalled Germany's checkered past to justify military deployment in Kosovo. Recalling a "historic responsibility," Schroeder stated:

Especially we Germans, who have brought guilt onto ourselves in our history and suffered under murderous dictatorial regimes, we must never again allow murder, expulsions, and deportations to be tolerated by politicians.⁵⁵

To deploy forces, however, Schroeder had to overcome what Sabrina Ramet and Phil Lyon called the two "taboos of the post-war German historical experience." One was the involvement of German soldiers outside the NATO area, and the second (more directly) "concerned the fact that German soldiers were being sent not just abroad, but abroad in combat to a region where the *Wehrmacht* (military of the Third Reich) had perpetrated some of its worst atrocities" (Ramet and Lyon 2001: 94).

In this vein the German press attempted to resolve this tension on behalf of the pacifists by recalling the "second taboo":

[One] newspaper [*Frankfurter Rundschau*] reminded people of 6 September 1941, the day on which Hitler's pilots attacked Yugoslavia dropping bombs on Belgrade. By doing so the newspaper makes people *relive* the feelings of guilt for the original aggression and transfers it to Belgrade in the 1990s under NATO's missiles.

(Savarese 2000: 373, emphasis added)

As I stated in Chapter 3, there are certain arguments which can be framed to force international actors to develop anxiety over an existing crisis because of their sense of self and the historical narrative they base their actions upon. Additionally, agents responsible for this narrative can be NGOs, or, as in this case, the media. Schroeder was well aware of the "taboos" of Germany's historical experience when he was asked in the beginning weeks of April during an interview with the German weekly news publication *Der Spiegel* whether "one can send German troops in regions, in which Germans in the Second World War raged cruelly?"

[Schroeder]: That we may not do it, is a thesis, which I take very seriously. But for me the reverse argument applies: Because we were criminally active indeed there, it is also a special responsibility of the Germans, itself for human rights, against deportation, to begin against brutalities. Our past, in which we intervened for the wrong political goals, *orders* for me that we do not stand apart, if others occur for the correct goals.⁵⁶

Schroeder's discursive remorse over past German generations was coupled with a justification of German action, as evidenced by his words later in the interview:

There was a very lively debate [in German society] regarding Hitler's fascism in which children asked their parents: Why did you not do anything at the time? By which they meant, why did you do nothing to prevent it? I would not like to be in a situation in which I must answer similar questions with regard to the brutality in Kosovo. I would like to be able to say in such a situation that I did what was *possible and rational*.⁵⁷

The last words of this excerpt illustrate two noteworthy issues regarding my ontological security argument. First, I again refer the reader to Chapters 1, 2, and 3, where I stated at several points that states seek ontological security, and that actions meant to fulfill self-identity commitments are *rational* because they avoid threats to identity. Even "humanitarian" actions are in a state's *self-interest* if they serve to avoid these threats. Schroeder sees German action as rational because it "makes sense" for Germany to become involved in a conflict which raises the specter of Germany's shameful past. In doing so, Schroeder uses what were termed in Chapter 3 both "retrospective" and "prospective" forms of shame. Second, another element of my ontological security argument is the recognition by nation-states of their own agency, and the anxiety which develops in turn from nation-states realizing that they could have made a difference. Schroeder's use of the term "possible" to justify German action illustrates that he viewed NATO (and Germany as a member state) as an agent capable of bringing to an end the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians by the Serbs.⁵⁸

It is essential to remember that Schroeder, [Foreign Minister] Fischer, and [Defense Minister] Scharping belonged to the activist core of a protest generation which had challenged not only the Germany of the 1960s and 1970s, but also the previous generation for its moral and political failures in the 1930s and 1940s.

(Ramet and Lyon 2001: 94)

Fischer, because of the Green Party's almost uniform pacifism, was faced with an even more daunting political responsibility than Schroeder. Zehfuss writes:

[The Greens] had been overwhelmingly opposed to Bundeswehr participation in the Gulf War. Yet Bosnia, and subsequently Kosovo, posed a completely different problem. Because of the atrocities committed, and the Holocaust imagery related to them, Bosnia came to be seen as a fundamental challenge to a pacifistic position.

(Zehfuss 2002b: 113)

This is probably why, like Schroeder, when pressed to justify German military involvement Fischer (in an interview given at NATO headquarters in April 1999) also recalled Germany's past in the same narrative Schroeder used at the SPD conference, and in addition compared Milosevic to Hitler and Stalin:

My generation asked our parents, "Why did it happen in Germany during the war and why didn't you resist?" This is the question we have to ask ourselves now. . . . Milosevic is ready to act like Stalin and Hitler did in the '40s: to fight a war against the existence of a whole people.⁵⁹

Again, the visions of ethnic Albanians "were interpreted and related to systems of meaning. They mattered greatly in their symbolism with respect to the history of the Holocaust" (Zehfuss 2002b: 115).

How did German involvement further serve Germany's ontological security needs? We can see from what has been presented so far that Kosovo was useful for Germany to transcend the disruptions of its history, but how did it enable the production of a new German "self?" Germany's history made most Germans yearn for a return to a "normal" nation-state – with a "normal" foreign policy. Jonathan Bach identifies Germany's "prevailing discourse" as including "morality, responsibility, and maturing linked to normalcy and normalcy is synonymous with solidarity (a form of sameness) with allies" (Bach 1999: 160).⁶⁰ In October of 1998, the *Economist* commented on a prospective Schroeder government by stating:

As yet, there is no reason for other countries to fear a Schroeder administration, even if its assessment of Germany's national interests may be far more jarring to its neighbors than Mr. Kohl's use to be. That, after all, will be evidence of normality.

(*Economist* 1998: 56)

So it was the deployment of troops which assured Germany's "normal" place as a member of the international community. When asked in the *Der Spiegel* interview about what the implications were for German involvement, Schroeder stated: "It is already a fundamental change of the German foreign policy, but it has something to do with becoming a nation of adults."⁶¹ Other German ministers, like State Secretary of the Foreign Office Wolfgang Ischinger, coupled this "maturation" process to German realization of its own capabilities and a place it could resume, ever gradually, in the international community:

We are not a totally normal country, and will not become one in the foreseeable future either. . . . What has been accomplished is that the Federal Republic of Germany can now make contributions towards answering the challenges, such as the search for a peace settlement in

Kosovo, that are commensurate with its weight, its role, its economic standing and its military structure. This means that we are now able to make "normal" contributions.⁶²

So, in Germany at least, while German *guilt* remained at the fore in German political debates, *shame* was a more compelling force for Germany to involve itself in the NATO operation. Most significantly, this was the first time Germany had dispatched combat troops and material outside its borders since World War II.⁶³ While much of the German media (as noted on p. 000) attempted to recall German *guilt* over its external actions in World War II, German public opinion remained, throughout the conflict, relatively supportive of German involvement in the Kosovo war.⁶⁴ Such support was maintained by Germany's leaders, who held a countervailing view (from the press) that "the Kosovo crisis [was] an opportunity to partly exorcize the demons of the past. They recognized in the Kosovo conflict an *opportunity* to make atonement for the sins of the previous generation through the vigilant defense of human rights" (Ramet and Lyon 2001: 94, emphasis added).⁶⁵ It was not enough for Germany to simply acknowledge the Holocaust (although that was an important step of "distanciation"),⁶⁶ but the actual *use of force* repaired (temporarily at least) a "divided" German Self.

French and Italian self-identity

Besides the United States, Britain, and Germany, the French and Italians constituted most of the remaining contribution to the NATO action. The French used similar language, based in the defense of human rights, to justify their contribution to the NATO operation. And, like (most notably, although not solely) the British, the French drew parallels with the Bosnia conflict and said that as members of Europe they could not stand idly by and watch the situation in Kosovo unfold as that in Bosnia had. The French prime minister, Lionel Jospin, stated in an address to the French General Assembly on March 26, 1999:

After the tragic events of Bosnia, the same confrontations, the same mindless action, the same fanaticism, the same hatred were being unleashed. ... We could not just watch, resignedly, those terrible pictures – the violence against civilians, the villages wiped off the map, the floods of refugees. We could not consent to being stunned witnesses of the preparation of fresh massacres. Vukovar, Srebrenica, Sarajevo (Bosnian cities where Serbs had committed atrocities against Bosnian Muslims): to that list of martyred cities, we could not stand idly by and watch the addition of Pristina, Klina, Srbica [Kosovar cities].⁶⁷

Some accounts have noted the conflict within French society over the Kosovo crisis. Bernard Lamizet and Sylvie Debras note three historical

factors, three "aspects central to French identity," which prompted the large amount of media coverage of the Kosovo crisis and which influenced French motives in the Kosovo war: (1) the comparison of the plight of ethnic Albanians in Kosovo to the French resistance during World War II; (2) the "Algerian analogy" that the KLA was "the expression of national feeling in a way similar to that of the FLN (Front de Liberation Nationale, the main group of anti – French resistance during the 1960's Algerian civil war)";⁶⁸ and (3) France's place in building a new Europe (Lamizet and Debras 2001: 109).

The French leadership (President Jacques Chirac, Foreign Minister Vedrine, and Prime Minister Jospin) mainly grounded French actions in terms of France's place in shouldering a *European* responsibility – both for Europe's past failures and for its promotion of human rights within European borders. The French felt responsible for leading European construction (which included articulating a European collective security interest) and then defending a "civilized Europe," thereby referencing what France and Europe could tolerate in terms of "civilized" conduct.

In an interview with *Le Journal du Dimanche*, Foreign Minister Vedrine used human rights abuses as a pretext for French actions, but in the context of a European responsibility:

France's involvement, decided on by President Chirac and the Prime Minister, is justified by the extreme seriousness of the tragedy in Kosovo – it is intolerable to allow the recurrence in Europe of such scenes of barbarity – and the risks of regional destabilization they entail.⁶⁹

Prime Minister Jospin, when asked in a television interview with the France 2 network whether Kosovo was a "moral war," stated that French actions were based on

a conception of morality, I would also say on one of civilization, on a vision of Europe. We are at the end of the twentieth century, Europe has lived in peace for fifty years. This Europe is the Europe of the European Union, which settles its economic, social and cultural problems in harmony, without national interests being forgotten, but disputes are settled peacefully, through dialogue, through discussion in a community.

And President Jacques Chirac, while conjuring up images from the past, noted in a May 3, 1999 national broadcast:

To tolerate the horrors we are witnessing would mean *losing our soul*. That would allow the canker of the unspeakable once again to take hold on our continent. At the heart of the European project, at the heart of our common future, which we have been building, stone by

stone, since we raised Europe from the ruins of the Second World War, lies, it must never be forgotten, a certain idea of mankind.⁷⁰

Self-identity needs compelled the French to contribute to the NATO operation. Even though the French rarely made any references to discursive self (French) remorse, French leaders like Chirac used self-identity phrases to mobilize support. For instance, Chirac stated on March 26, 1999, that he "would like the whole nation to demonstrate its solidarity. These are universal values of *our* republican tradition that we are defending."⁷¹ French leaders also acknowledged their role in a new Europe and what they could plausibly tolerate as a predominant member of that community. The traditional security argument, on the other hand, posits that states (as agents) will structure their actions through "alliance balancing" according to material power calculations. In that vein, coupled with its historical ties to Russia (and Serbia), France should have opposed the NATO operation for prudential reasons. Yet France did the opposite.

Unlike the French, the Italians were a (if not the most) reluctant contributing member of the NATO Kosovo intervention. As I stated on p. 121, it is somewhat puzzling from a traditional security perspective that the Italians, being the *closest* geographically to the Balkans and thus having the most to gain in terms of seeing the conflict and the displacement (sometimes into Italy) of Kosovo refugees come to an end, were *somewhat against* participating in a NATO action.⁷²

The Italian reluctance stemmed both from a strong pacifist presence in the Italian public and government and also from Italy's limited capabilities as a military power. Italy's contributions to the operation included allowing NATO to use the Aviano airbase as a location for launching the many sorties carried out against Serb targets during the war. While public support for the military operation rarely reached a majority mark of 50 percent, Italy found other ways to contribute which were more consistent with its pacifist tendencies. The enormous Arcobaleno Mission, launched on March 29, 1999, set up refugee camps in Macedonia and Albania for Kosovar Albanians escaping the carnage of their homeland. Morelli notes:

[The Mission] [s]ucceeded in winning over to the cause of military intervention a tendentially pacifist public opinion, rendered the war acceptable and to a certain extent caused a rallying to the government's side of Catholic and left-wing elements who were opposed to the war but saw the humanitarian mission as a noble cause to serve. The insidious pacifist distaste for the war was therefore turned to positive effect, in the form of aid for the refugees.

(Morelli 2001: 71)

More than likely, the Italians felt pressure to become involved as a credible NATO partner rather than be left out in the cold, and this pressure

provided an efficient counterweight to the pacifist resistance in the country.⁷³ The Italian prime minister, Massimo D'Alema, found an effective way, through the Arcobaleno Mission, to present the conflict in terms in which the pacifist elements (as well as the Catholic Church, as noted on p. 000) could find Italian involvement acceptable.

Self-identity and collective action

The creation of meanings for action differed for each NATO member state. While there was a "prevailing narrative" for NATO action, the state "sub-narratives" diverged somewhat from this. In the case of Britain and the United States, this developed into a different urgency, and strategy, for military action. From the beginning, Britain proposed sending ground troops, whereas the United States resisted until late in the operation any proposal for ground troops.

While it was not my purpose to develop a theory on collective action, I think these illustrations suggest how the transfer of ontological security-seeking behavior to collective security action (or, specifically, self-identity commitments transferred to collective identity commitments) may be imbued by separate forms of individual state recall, which may in turn manifest in different policy preferences of member states.

The Kosovo case also illustrates how there are, generally, political costs to attending to ontological security in democracies. Democracies must create meanings not only to justify their actions to an international audience but also to legitimate their actions to their electorate, and these two "levels" of justification may not parallel one another.⁷⁴ A democracy's self-identity, which (as I demonstrated in Chapter 5) is relevant to foreign policy options, may come into conflict with its collective identity commitments and subsequent willingness to participate in collective security actions. In the case of the Belgians, of course, there was a dialectical but reinforcing mechanism between the two (self and collective), but such alignment does not always occur.

"Humanitarian" intervention v. the salience of "shame"

While the discourse of NATO member states during the Kosovo crisis demonstrates how ontological security needs constituted their foreign policy decisions, some of these sources of shame have remained rather salient for NATO member states in separate contexts, although they have not always prompted as comprehensive an action as Operation Allied Force.

For example, American anxiety over the Rwandan genocide has been present in two recent crises – in Liberia and Darfur (in Western Sudan). In the summer of 2003 several Bush administration officials justified American interests in Liberia with reference to Rwanda. Since Liberia had historical ties to the United States,⁷⁵ there were abundant calls by Liberians (and

others, like the UN) for an American intervention to establish stability.⁷⁶ As noted in Chapter 3, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell was so influential in forming initial American foreign policy following the Cold War that a "military doctrine" was named for him.⁷⁷ The Powell Doctrine did not identify humanitarian crises as important because such events were not vital to national security and were difficult to define in black and white "enemy" terms. Yet of all the members of the Bush Cabinet, Powell was most supportive in the summer of 2003 of the idea of an American-led intervention in the Liberian crisis. Powell and many members of the State Department expressed a desire for a larger American role in the area because the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) peacekeepers that were on the ground at the time "just [did not] have the capacity to deploy forces and keep them sustained in the field." In an interview with the *Washington Times* published on July 23, 2003⁷⁸ Powell referenced how the United States: "looked away once before in Rwanda, with tragic consequences." He also acknowledged how the most capable were responsible for preventing such tragedies from unfolding yet again: "we do have some obligation as the most important and powerful nation on the face of the earth not to look away when a problem like this comes before us."⁷⁹

With less success, some American opinion leaders have used the Rwandan genocide, and America's role in allowing it to unfold, to justify American interests in preventing a similar humanitarian disaster in the Darfur region of Western Sudan. The American Democratic Party's 2004 candidate for president, John Kerry, in the first presidential debate of 2004, cited how the Iraq War had "overextended" American forces as a reason for why no American troops had yet been deployed to stop what even the United States (through Colin Powell) had acknowledged as a genocide situation in Darfur.⁸⁰ Yet perhaps most illustrative of the American interest in self-identity commitments was Kerry's conclusion about America's role in Darfur:

But I'll tell you this, as president, if it took American forces to some degree to coalesce the African Union, I'd be prepared to do it because we could never allow another Rwanda. It's the moral responsibility for us and the world.⁸¹

American Senator Jon Corzine, in promoting the "Darfur Accountability Act,"⁸² a bill he co-sponsored with Senator Sam Brownback, stated on the US Senate floor on March 2, 2005: "'Never again' is a rallying cry for all who believe that mankind must speak out against genocide. It rings from the horrors of World War II and Rwanda." And, as Clinton had during the Kosovo crisis, Corzine linked potential actions in Darfur with America's role in preventing genocide, with specific reference to America's failure to act in Rwanda:

We also have the weight of history. *We* bear the responsibility that came out of the Holocaust and remember the horrors that led to the Genocide Convention. *We* recall our sacred promise to stop genocide, a promise betrayed ten years ago in Rwanda.

Furthermore, Corzine literally linked "American interest" in Darfur with American self-identity:

Ten thousand people are dying in Darfur every month. Will we have to wake up one day and find that we allowed Rwanda to happen before we act? It is time for serious accountability. Our humanity is being challenged. *The essence of who we are is at stake.*⁸³

Yet if shame (such as American shame over Rwanda) is so salient, how are we to explain the very limited approaches the Bush administration decided to take in Liberia and Darfur? It would seem that the Liberian or Darfur cases could have served to remind Americans of Rwanda in 1994. Yet an ontological security approach can also explain this seeming inconsistency – as there are three factors which may explain the limited American responses to these crises, reflecting the idea that certain "components" of self-identity will inhibit and/or benefit the ability of states to confront such situations.

First and foremost, the United States has been fully engaged in the Iraq War, as of this writing, over the past four years. The costs to ontological security are reduced by this perception of a state's own material capabilities and its ability to produce tangible outcomes. The fact that the United States is so greatly involved in the Iraq war *decreases* the relevant costs to American ontological security inherent in pursuing such limited approaches to Liberia or Darfur.

The two further factors which can explain the limited American approach in Liberia and Darfur correspond to the vulnerability of states to calculating "identity costs" through "crisis assessment" (again, see Chapter 3). In one vein, limited American actions in Liberia and later Sudan were influenced by the lack of media coverage of the events. Remember here that the general conclusion I drew at the end of Chapter 4 was that states or other non-state actors know what actions or presentations make a state not only physically insecure, but also ontologically insecure as well. I posited in Chapter 3 that discourse is the medium through which co-actors can generate anxiety in certain states, even materially "powerful" states, and thus this discourse may compel these powerful states to pursue policies to avoid ontological insecurity. While insecurity-generating discourse may originate from any type and locus of actor – domestic, international, supranational, or NGO – media (in the general sense of that term) are important for distributing "images" which reinforce these discourses in a systematic fashion. Because information agencies like the American media have been so limited in their coverage of these crises, the powerful visual images of war-torn

Liberians or the people of Darfur which may have served as a "recall" device of the Rwandan genocide for American policy makers were and continue to be too rare to exert any pressures upon self-identity.⁸⁴

Also as noted in Chapter 3, state agents are dependent upon military intelligence to assess the costs of any prospective foreign policy action. This dependence constrains the ability of state leaders to pursue a set of security interests. In some cases military leaders may be reluctant to intervene because of their philosophical disagreement with the motives for and benefits of an intervention. In the case of Liberia, American proponents of intervention faced the obstacle of an American Defense Department and military bureaucracy that intentionally shelved and avoided any suggestions calling for action. Such opposition was never more clearly evident than on July 7, 2003, when observers from *within the Defense Department* presented a report advocating a quick intervention, and then the report was subsequently quashed by more elevated administrators in the department.⁸⁵

Conclusion: ontological security and intervention

Anthony Lang's impressive book on military intervention begins with the observation that "humanitarian intervention is not working" (Lang 2002: 1). Lang's explanation of such an empirical observation is that nation-states which engage in such interventions don't really intend to save strangers, so to speak. They instead use the intervention as a performative platform, an opportunity to parade the national purpose of their states. That national purpose gets in the way of a successful outcome, because interventions are a form of politics: "intervention, an action undertaken by a state becomes an attempt to display publicly the moral and historical presence of a political community ... the conflict between the alternative moral visions embodied by different agents usually undermines its success" (Lang 2002: 194).

Lang's account is quite compelling, and it suggests that "humanitarian interventions," because they are internally motivated, are doomed to failure. Much of what has been stated in this chapter agrees with the motivational origin located by Lang – that humanitarian interventions are really more about a nation's purpose (or self-identity) than they are about stopping human rights abuses. Yet an ontological security account provides us with an alternative way to interpret how states also have self-interested incentives in *successfully completing* interventions. If states engage in interventions in order to realize their "national purpose," could not the same national purpose be constituted by the drive for states to protect their national self-identity, which thus might compel a state to successfully implement such an intervention? This is especially possible if those states' national purpose is in turn shaped by past failed attempts to live up to the national self, as was the case with NATO powers in Kosovo. Thus, states might face huge self-identity costs for *not* attempting to stop those "humanitarian" crises which they perceive to be the most easily prevented. In short, a cathartic interest exists

for states to realize their national purpose not only in the process of an intervention, but also in its successful completion as well.

But is this what happened in the Kosovo case? How can we say that NATO states truly had an interest in successfully stopping the abuses if they were only willing to use the safest form of (air) warfare? We should keep in mind that in Kosovo certain military leaders in the NATO alliance, as well as certain political leaders of the NATO states, advocated a different military strategy which could have prevented the Serbs from accelerating their ethnic cleansing policy. Wheeler argues that "[h]ad the political will existed in the Alliance, a large expeditionary force could have been built up in Macedonia and Albania, signaling [sic] to Milosevic that NATO was serious about defending human rights" (Wheeler 2001: 270). In fact, "will" existed, since British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Defense Secretary George Robertson, and NATO Supreme Commander Wesley Clark all at one time or another advocated a more sophisticated and multifaceted military approach.⁸⁶ What prevented the deployment of ground troops, or the helicopters advocated by Clark, were bureaucratic and domestic obstacles such as the American Department of Defense, Military Chiefs and their chairman (Hugh Shelton), and an American public lukewarm about the intervention from the start, all opposed to anything but air power as a solution for resolving the crisis.⁸⁷ One can only speculate on whether the "accelerated" abuses produced by NATO's air-only war would have been avoided had these barriers not been in place.

While NATO state agents did not always place ontological security interests in the forefront of their defense, they did employ ontological security arguments to create meanings for their actions. Even combined with the empirical evidence of Britain's 1860s neutrality and Belgium's 1914 decision to fight Germany, the role of ontological security in International Relations remains a largely unexplored process. Thus, in my concluding chapter (Chapter 7), I suggest some further venues where scholars might develop an ontological security perspective, further sharpening our understanding of the "meta-narratives" which frame contemporary global politics.

7 The future of ontological security in International Relations

I have argued in this book that the need for ontological security drives states to structure their action in ways which attend to their self-identity needs, sometimes in materially costly ways. I have also tried to demonstrate how “humanitarian” or “moral” action is a security interest of certain states when they help secure these self-identity needs. The crises examined in the empirical chapters represented “critical situations” which disrupted the self-identity of nation-states. Because threats to identity make states insecure, states must take into account these identity threats through their foreign policy decisions. Thus they are both constrained (as the British were following the Emancipation Proclamation) and enabled (as NATO countries were during the Kosovo crisis) by their ontological security interests. In essence, I have argued that self-identity, self-interrogative reflexivity, memory, and (metaphorical) shame are aspects of the ontological security process which obtain at the level of nation-states. This is possible because state agents “narrate” the biography of the nation-state.

Yet I have also attempted to distinguish my argument from those which commonly assume that “humanitarian” or “moral” action is a “type” of action which must be explained by looking at the changes in the *international* context. Admittedly, an element of “we-ness” was involved in all of my empirical cases. During the American Civil War, after Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation the British identified with the American North, although this identification was limited to the issue of slavery. The Belgians’ external honor was secured through recognition of their external commitments to a collective European community. European nation-states, in turn, admired the Belgians for upholding a common principle, especially for doing so through great physical sacrifice. And NATO states all demonstrated, through their words, a sense that the actions of the Serbs could not be tolerated in their community of states.

What I have argued here is that states engage, for instance, in “other-help” behavior because it fulfills the needs of *self*-identity, and there exist occasions where these self-identity needs will coincide with those of a community. Yet even states in collective security organizations (as in the case of each individual NATO country during the Kosovo crisis) are influenced by

individual security interests. Even cases of seeming “identity integration,” such as the European Union, are somewhat constituted by the self-identity needs of states seeking out ontological security (as they were during the Kosovo crisis, i.e. France’s need to fulfill its own sense of *national identity* manifested in its full fledged support for a *European project*).

This book bears upon several existing areas of research. Security Studies scholars might recognize that ontological security challenges some traditional assumptions about what “drives” state behavior, thus what “rational” security interests look like. Ontological security illuminates not only why states pursue “non-material” incentives in their foreign policy actions, but also how nation-states structure their militaries to serve identity needs rather than simply “physical” security needs. Indeed, in competing for policy choices military agencies are promoting their own vision of a National Self. The cases also demonstrate how the more interesting research questions explored in IR are those which posit how states can “rationalize” their decisions so that the actions which follow are possible. Self-identity, rather than survival, becomes an operative analytical concept around which future security research could be centered. International Ethics scholars might also find interest in the argument and case studies developed in this book. I have made an interpretive argument about how self-identity is served through humanitarian, honor-driven, or moral action, yet the argument also develops important normative “if . . . then” propositions that follow from that interpretation; that is, if humanitarian action is a rational interest of states, and such actions serve the self-identity needs of those states, then is humanitarian “action” really that “abnormal?” In light of the Belgian case, scholars might also continue to amend the “reasonable chance for success” condition of *jus ad bellum*, a condition, as I discuss in Chapter 5, that is intimately linked to the survival assumption paramount in traditional security literature. Finally, practitioners might recognize the strategic possibilities of ontological security in International Relations, although, in light of what I discuss at the end of this chapter (pp. 160–164), this was not a central purpose of the book. Such strategies might focus on challenging members of the international community to act on the basis of their self-identity drives, thus provoking nation-states to confront crises as a form of self-help that, in turn, might benefit larger sectors of the international community.

How can nation-states protect themselves from that which threatens their sense(s) of Self? As I stated at the end of Chapter 4, because of contingency we cannot adequately predict when and where critical situations will arise which will serve as initial disruptions or identity threats. I have also asserted in the preceding chapters that these self-identity disruptions are not always a “bad” thing in that the routines which they disturb may themselves be responsible for much of the suffering we see in global politics. It thus becomes paramount to develop an understanding of self-interrogative reflexive processes. Such processes are important both for those who represent states and for those seeking to reform state actions – since it is only through

self-interrogative reflexivity that states can effectively monitor and amend their policies to confront identity threats. The remainder of the chapter is dedicated to beginning to understand this process of self-interrogative reflexivity, an understanding which hopefully will continue to be developed through future IR research.

Self-interrogative reflexivity

In general, reflexivity has two related connotations. The first refers to the *self-awareness of states as states* – involving how states ask what their past and current actions imply about “who they are” as a state. This form of reflexivity is linked, according to Guzzini (2000), to the “reflexive modernity” perspective of Ulrich Beck. A reflexive world is an open world where states monitor their actions. State agents reflect upon the content (and form) of their country’s “national interest.” Reflexivity does not fully equate with “self-reflection” – while all states are capable of reflexively monitoring their actions, not all choose to be self-reflective. But reflexive monitoring makes self-interrogation possible, and it is the latter form of reflexive monitoring, to stimulate states to engage their senses of Self, that I discuss in this section, focusing upon several “sites” which might serve to enhance these interrogative capabilities of nation-states.¹ Finally, while it is vital for nation-states to engage their sense of Self, self-interrogative reflexivity does *not* always lead to a progressively “better” subject, as Petr Drulak contends: “reflexivity, which is often viewed as a positive move that improves the human condition, does not have to be treated in this way. Contingency works either way and social innovations can be both good and bad” (Drulak 2006: 143).

Second, because reflexivity involves actors “maintain[ing] a continuing ‘theoretical understanding’ of the grounds of their activity” (Giddens 1984: 5), the production of knowledge itself is a factor in reflexive monitoring. Giddens terms this the “double hermeneutic”: “the meaningful social world as constituted by lay actors and the metalanguages invented by social scientists; there is constant ‘slippage’ from one to the other involved in the practice of the social sciences” (Giddens 1989: 374, emphasis added; see also Guzzini 2000: esp. 156–162). This means that in producing knowledge about certain subjects scholars influence what they study, and thus reflexive theorists recognize what this “slippage” implies regarding our pursuit of knowledge about international politics. I discuss this issue in the next section (see pp. 160–164).

How was the first understanding of reflexivity important in the cases examined in this book? It was through self-interrogative reflexive behavior that 1860s Britain, Belgium in 1914 (in the War Council Meeting especially), and NATO members in 1999 were capable of determining a policy to accommodate what they perceived to be identity threats. If states were not capable of self-interrogative reflexivity, then the meanings states

give to crises could only change if the level of physical security threats changed as well. For example, the Emancipation Proclamation would not have changed the meaning the British made of the American Civil War. British anxiety over slavery would not have mattered. Yet the British did indeed engage in a self-interrogative reflexive discussion of who they were (self-identity), what the American Civil War was (both before and after the Emancipation Proclamation), and, most importantly, what their actions regarding the latter (American Civil War) would mean to the former (their own sense of self-identity).

Self-interrogative reflexivity will not be popular with everyone or at every time. Under a state of (perceived) societal physical threat, state agents are likely unwilling (but not unable) to engage in reflexive monitoring since such monitoring may inhibit the ability to implement policies which target perceived existential threats. Interrogative reflexivity involves the questioning of issues of self-identity, on which there may be two (or more) opposing viewpoints, and such questioning may be a signal of weakness to both external and internal adversaries. Second-guessing may also serve to hinder the efficacy of traditional “security” policies. In fact, there are some ideologies which would interpret the constant interrogation of a national Self to not only be a challenge to authority, but a dangerous process which could, in the extreme, imperil the existence of a nation-state.² The practice of suspending self-interrogation serves the status quo, specifically the interests of those in power. Elites thus have a vested interest in consolidating one and only one version of a state’s self-identity, preventing the “disorder” which occurs during the contestation of the Self. Citizens of states might also have an interest in resisting self-interrogation as they internalize one version of their country’s self-identity and emotionalize it in the form of patriotism. Thus both the elites and masses will conform to the prevailing view of self-identity and, in the same vein, seek to quiet any discourses which serve to challenge it. This is the case even in democracies, perhaps especially so during times of physical insecurity, when, according to Niebuhr:

the reality of the nation’s existence becomes so sharply outlined as to arouse the citizen to the most passionate and uncritical devotion toward it that it is in these moments when the nation’s existence can be resolved only by deception.

(Niebuhr 1932: 96)

This makes sense since societal reflexivity will include critical narratives which may undermine the legitimacy of a nation-state’s controlling powers. The irony of self-interrogative reflexivity is that it may *disturb* before it *heals*. In other words, because it “disembeds” (state) agents from well-established and emotionally satisfying routines, and because routines are linked to a version of self-identity, self-interrogative reflexivity threatens sectors of a nation-state, making reflexivity itself a “risky” proposition.

This stated, there exist several “sites” that might stimulate nation-states to reflexively engage their sense of Self (see also Table 7.1), and also two processes/strategies which international actors might use to stimulate such self-interrogation. Because the “reflexive project of the self” is “the process whereby self-identity is constituted by the reflexive order of self-narratives” (Giddens 1991: 244), one of the bases for self-identity contestation will be the self-narrative that state agents produce to justify policy actions, or the “referent” by which international actors can engage a targeted state’s sense of Self. A consistent biographical narrative is transformed by being “altered and reflexively sustained” through “debates” and “contestations” (Giddens 1991: 215). Thus, these sites might develop and foster the willingness of targeted states to engage in self-confrontation.

Constitutive conditions of national self-interrogation

Social movements

Social movements can challenge and shape national narratives in order to influence the security interests of states. While social movements challenge national *policies*, they often voice their grievances by referencing national *identity*, invoking moral claims by implicating one with the other. The biographical (self-)narrative that a state uses to describe and justify its actions serves also as a comparison device, a form of discourse that becomes the basis for the contestation of self-identity by societal groups. Social movements take into account this narrative when voicing their concerns over an existing policy.

Table 7.1 Origins of the stimulation of self-interrogative reflexivity

<i>Constitutive condition of reflexivity</i>	<i>Influences state’s ability to reflexively monitor action. . .</i>
Autonomous global media	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitute a conduit for “identity threats.” Make states aware of external situations that they are capable of confronting • Must be autonomous, otherwise media simply reinforce prevailing narrative
Social movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bring marginalized groups into society who challenge definitions of a state’s self-identity. • Influence state’s foreign policy by redefining identity and “interests”
Legitimacy of international organizations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide forums for debates about state’s place in international society
NGO and transnational actor critical counter-narratives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a forum for issues of collective and self-identity • Reveal how outcomes of a state’s foreign policy are “inconsistent” with that state’s dominant self-narrative • Force states to justify the disconnect (between actions and justifications)

Sidney Tarrow's seminal work on social movements gave the following example of how a type of social movement (the American Civil Rights movement of the twentieth century) used the American self-narrative as a basis to legitimate its grievances over unequal treatment:

Equal opportunity rights were a useful bridge, based on *traditional American political rhetoric*, between the movement's main internal constituency, the southern black middle class, and the "conscience constituents" whose support was necessary to bolster it from the outside. Liberals were most easily appealed to by the *contradiction* between the value America placed on rights and the denial of equal opportunity to African Americans.

(Tarrow 1994: 129–130, emphasis added)

It was more than just political rhetoric which legitimated civil rights' claims. Because it based its claims on calling out the disconnect between an American self-narrative and the American treatment of southern blacks, the Civil Rights movement found successful mechanisms for *changing* American policies.

While Tarrow's example references how a domestic social movement changed a state's domestic policies, social movements themselves have proved to be important mechanisms for change regarding foreign policy as well, as documented by several IR studies.³ Because they represent marginalized groups or values, social movements can help bring about new visions of self-identity which (in turn) allow states to better confront "external" identity threats.

These movements include activists and groups, both domestic and transnational, constituted around a variety of issues, including religious, feminist, gay and civil rights, etc., who are able to challenge pre-existing assumptions and policies. Cecilia Lynch notes that "[social movements'] primary significance lies in their ability to contest, to loosen the boundaries of conventional notions of interest by *exposing their contradictions* ... and to use discursive compromises to open the way toward further contestation" (Lynch 1999: 214, emphasis added). In sum, the most adept social movements use the biographical (self-)narrative of states to legitimate their claims in the hope that such legitimization will lead to policy reforms.⁴

International organizations

International organizations (IOs) have a limited ability to *curb action*, but they can be an important external condition which may compel state agents to discuss *what a proposed action implies about their state's own sense of self-identity*. This deliberation over self-identity may then lead to a contestation over ontological security interests, manifested in the form of debates over foreign policy choice(s).⁵ IOs, even those deemed "less legitimate," may still

force opinion leaders within states to ask self-reflective questions: Who are we? Why are we doing this? What would this policy say about who we are? *How will history judge us?* In this way, international organizations represent “important site[s] of struggle over the normative meaning and legitimacy of state practice” (Lynch 1999: 215).

Michael Barnett and Martha Finnemore have recently put forward an important thesis on the current state of international organizations and the issue of their “legitimacy.” The authors posit that many international organizations have been constituted by the liberal ideals which have spanned the globe under the guise of “universalism”:

Liberal political ideas about the sanctity and autonomy of the individual and about democracy as the most desirable and just form of government have spread widely, as have liberal economic notions about the virtues of markets and capitalism as the best (and perhaps the only) means to “progress.”

(Barnett and Finnemore 2004: 166)

Yet if these ideals are so “universal,” why is there strong resistance to international organizations? Because IOs are expanding and because they are becoming less accountable, the authors see IO legitimacy in peril. In part, this is because “the liberal norms embodied and promoted by these organizations are generally not matched by the accountability or participation procedures that liberalism favors” (Barnett and Finnemore 2004: 15). “IO legitimacy” takes two forms – a procedural form (procedures of the organization must be viewed as proper and correct) and a substantive form (“successful at pursuing goals that are consistent with the values of the international community” (Barnett and Finnemore 2004: 166). Barnett and Finnemore propose that IOs compromise both of these forms of “legitimacy,” thereby undermining their mission to carry out liberal ideals. Most important is the autonomous nature of IOs, which implies that IOs are a bureaucracy and thus an autonomous social form which exerts *authority* over states. Thus Barnett and Finnemore assert that because IOs are, in fact, wholly autonomous they are less accountable to the states they are supposed to serve.⁶

This thesis, if correct, leads to a troublesome and paradoxical conclusion: although IOs are becoming more powerful, “the very source of their power to do good might also be the source of their power to do harm, to run roughshod over the interests of states and citizens that they are supposed to further” (Barnett and Finnemore 2004: 173). This means that (in lieu of IO reform) states will continue to perceive IOs with less and less legitimacy. This leads to stark implications for state reflexivity: because states might choose to ignore and/or take a hostile stance toward the “prescriptions” of IOs, they will choose to reinforce their own self-interests, thereby reinforcing, over time, the same form of *self-identity*. In sum, one important

condition of self-interrogative reflexivity will disappear, and a world devoid of “legitimate” IOs is a world where states become resistant to accommodating the externally changing world because they rigidly enforce their existing forms of self-identity.

Autonomous global and domestic media

The repeated display of images, experiences, and situations can engender reflexive debate when national societies view these images as self-identity threats, particularly in those societies which are materially capable of confronting such situations. This is not to suggest that these media representations could lead to a more “Imagined Community” of individuals who find more in common the more they get to know (through the media) one another.⁷ These images impact ontological security not because they increase amounts of affect or empathy, but because contradictory images can serve to overwhelm a nation-state’s biographical narrative.

The issue of media autonomy is important here, as the news media can and do support certain policies over others and therefore selectively disseminate information to control public opinion.⁸ Since their presentations can shape public debate, if global and domestic news media outlets eschew an independent mission to find/gather facts, and instead present only those facts which reinforce a particular foreign policy action, state societies may never be forced to “debate or contest” policies since certain situations may not be interpreted as a threat to self-identity. As I stated at the end of Chapter 6, this is what has largely happened in the United States in the face of the Darfur genocide. Generally, the decision by media outlets on *how much attention* should be given to a situation will shape which issue(s) a state’s society will debate.

It is possible to understand what might follow, in ontological security-seeking terms. If a state is constantly shielded from critical situations (which themselves would otherwise engender the need to engage in self-interrogation), and if the media shape information so that dominant “policy narratives” are reinforced, citizens of states will never need to question the foreign policy actions of their government (or all governmental actions, for that matter). While opinion leaders and policy makers, because they are privy to intelligence reports, will usually know better than society (writ large) what is happening “out there,” if a state’s society is not presented with accurate semi-objective information it may never hold policy makers accountable for disconnects between self-identity and foreign policy actions (or inactions). Or worse, these societies may never acknowledge alternative forms of Self, being too sequestered to imagine those possible futures in the first place.

Transnational actors and counter-narratives

NGOs and other transnational actors such as, but not limited to, terrorist organizations, may stimulate self-interrogative reflexivity by pointing out

how the policies of a particular state are continuing to produce problematic outcomes in specific parts of the world. Human rights NGOs in this respect are “dual-purpose.” They seek to provide the international community with “on the ground” information to publicize atrocities so that blame can be assessed and allocated to certain culpable intrastate parties. Yet this information is also directed at parties capable of intervention to force them to justify their inaction in the face of impending humanitarian catastrophes. Thus NGOs oftentimes direct much of their “critique” at the most powerful states, not for their actions, but for their inaction.

Rod Hall and Thomas Biersteker posit that “there are at least three different ways in which private authority is exercised by NGOs.” For two of these NGOs also exert pressure on states to engage in critical reflection on issues of self-identity. First, “by virtue of their authorship, or expertise,” NGOs “provide expert advice as part of their effort to influence policy preferences” (Hall and Thomas Biersteker 2002: 14).⁹ In the context of humanitarian disasters (which can be one form of an identity threat), this expert advice often includes prescriptions for how states can ameliorate and/or combat humanitarian crises. Sometimes implicit, oftentimes explicit, in these NGO “reports” is a discourse critical of powerful states for their inaction in the face of unfolding humanitarian crises.¹⁰ This critical discourse can lead states to engage in debate and contestation over both the humanitarian crisis (by figuring out, with the aid of NGO reports, what can be done) and what a continued policy of *inaction* implies about that state’s own sense of *self-identity*.

Hall and Biersteker also note a second way that NGOs exert a private authority – by exercising an “emancipatory or normatively progressive social agenda.” This agenda implicates NGOs’ “ostensible objectivity or neutrality as non-state actors.” Hall and Biersteker call this a form of “moral authority” (Hall and Thomas Biersteker 2002: 14). Many times, what may seem an “emancipatory agenda” may simply be NGOs “pressur[ing] states to practice what they preach” (Ignatieff 2001: 8). The latter equates to a discourse which asks states to engage their sense of Self in light of their actions (or inactions, as the case may be). Thus, while states may disagree with the conclusions of NGO reports, they feel compelled to respond to at least most of them because they do find (some) legitimacy in these reports and see the NGOs themselves as a form of moral authority.

Yet the “emancipatory” agenda of NGOs does indeed call into question their objectivity, and thus some scholars (and policy makers) see NGOs as political organizations rather than agents of moral authority (Mutua 2001). This can be problematic because NGOs, unlike states, may not as easily be held accountable for their actions (see Ignatieff 2001: 9). Nevertheless, there is much evidence that NGO reports can generate the need for states to critically evaluate their own foreign policy practices and what those practices imply about a state’s self-identity.¹¹

I also include other transnational actors, especially terrorist organizations, as agents whose critical narratives may lead targeted states to debate issues of their own self-identity (such as the oft-heard question posed by Americans following the September 11 attacks – “Why do they hate us?”). Again, however, there is no guarantee that terrorist discourse will lead targeted states to engage in reflexivity. Because terrorist groups themselves are a form of physical threat they may lead the society of states to “close up” discussion on issues of self-identity. Further, terrorist discourse may lead states to reinforce existing self-concepts, since messages from terrorist organizations oftentimes precede or follow a terrorist attack. The attending sense of physical insecurity, as I mention on pp. 151–152, would lead to less reflexive behavior.

But the fact remains that *some* portion of a state’s society will remain curious and ask not only what it is about “them” (a terrorist organization) which makes “them” hate “us,” but, further, what it is about “us” which might generate “their” hate. These latter forms of question reflect a concern with a nation-state’s projection of self-identity; they are the types of questions which motivate a state’s society to reflect upon its own National Self.

NGOs themselves may be seen, and terrorist organizations may see themselves, as forms of “moral authority,” but in this context there is no guarantee that they are exerting “moral authority” over states, or, put another way, that these critical discourses may lead states to even debate issues of self-identity. Since authority, according to Hall and Biersteker (2002), implies “legitimacy of power,” the claims by NGOs or terrorist organizations, on the contrary, may not compel states to do anything even after they have engaged in self-interrogation. The outcome could simply be that states reinforce the same sense of self-identity, and this is likely since self-identity, in states, is a contested project which has *political implications* for whose “vision” of the nation-state “self” wins out. Therefore, we may observe states, in the face of these critical counter-narratives, reinforcing the same biographical narrative they used before the criticisms were voiced. And even if states choose to revise their self-identity, and thus their ontological security interests, the motivation for change itself reflects, in my view, less the *legitimacy* of the claims of NGOs and/or terrorist organizations, and more the *perceived illegitimacy* a state sees in its own foreign policy actions.

Strategies for stimulating self-interrogation

In addition to these sites where self-interrogative reflexivity can be stimulated one can identify the processes or strategies available to agents who wish to motivate this self-interrogation.

Reflexive discourse

As introduced briefly at the end of Chapter 3, a first practice which can motivate self-interrogation we might call “reflexive discourse” (see also

Steele 2007b), whereby international actors call out the discrepancy between a targeted state's actions and its self-narrative. This discourse strategy challenges a targeted state's self-identity and thus the interest such a state has in confronting certain crises. Like communicative argumentation (see, for example, Risse 1999, 2000), reflexive discourse is a form of "verbal persuasion"; an "identity argument" which works "by producing or calling upon previously existing identities and differences among groups and claiming that specific behaviors are associated with certain identities" (Crawford 2002: 24–25). It is also quite similar to what Janice Bially-Mattern calls "representational force," where language is constructed to trap "victims with the credible threat emanating from potential violence to their *subjectivity*" (Bially-Mattern 2005: 96). However, reflexive discourse as it is based upon the ontological security drive of states requires the "author" to reference a targeted state's *self-identity*, rather than the responsibilities such a targeted state has to collective principles or international agreements. Furthermore, the purpose of reflexive discourse is not to *change* a targeted state's identity, forcing it "in line" with the intersubjective structures of international society. Rather, its intention is to incite a targeted state to reflect upon its sense of Self in light of its actions. Finally, reflexive discourse does not assume, a priori, the "common life world" important in communicative approaches (see Risse 2000).

Reflexive discourse could manipulate targeted states' ontological security in a variety of ways. For instance, and as briefly discussed in Chapters 3 and 6 of this book, it could coax nation-states into attending to humanitarian crises, implicating what inaction in the face of such a crisis says about the targeted state's "sense of self." I have argued elsewhere (Steele forthcoming) that this type of discourse was used, probably unintentionally, by UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Jan Egeland during the Asian Tsunami crisis of December 2004. Egeland's remark that many of the rich countries were being "stingy" with their general international aid was interpreted by some in the Bush administration as a statement regarding America's initial offer of assistance in the unfolding crisis. The administration within days increased its pledge of aid from \$15 million to \$350 million. In ontological security terms, it was not America's commitment to the international community that mattered during the Tsunami, but its commitments and responsibilities to its sense of Self. Being considered "stingy" challenged the vision Americans had about their state's *self-identity*.

There exists another possible form of reflexive discourse which is used, as suggested on p. 157, by transnational terrorist groups. By engaging powerful international actors not only with acts of terrorism, but also with audio and visual broadcasts, terrorist groups serve to challenge the authority that is the basis for the self-identity of those actors. To wit, it is not only the physical threat by which such groups can alter targeted states – the practice of broadcasting messages itself, as bin Laden and his associates have continued to do following the September 11 attacks, serves as a

reminder that the United States has been unable to “exact the full costs from the terrorists who claim a right to punish powerful states” (Lowenheim 2007: 310). Such extraction is one basis for a powerful state’s authority. Discursive “provocation of the hegemon” can serve to “undermine the sense of community and shared values and interests among all states,” thus isolating that hegemon even further from its allies (Mendelsohn 2005: 66). Thus the practice of this version of reflexive discourse would serve to coerce powerful countries to alter their self-identity, and thus their interests, in problematically violent ways.

Reflexive imaging

Reflexive discourse has its limits, however, in that because targeted states are led with by adept political agents such discourse will eventually be met tit-for-tat language meant to obfuscate, conceal, and divert. A policy to extract information from terrorist suspects is thus not “torture” but “coercive interrogation.” The powerful can therefore acrobatically avoid being impacted by reflexive discourse. Thus a second practice which has the ability to stimulate self-interrogative reflexivity occurs through the distribution of unfavorable images which represent (and re-present) the state being targeted. This practice can go further than pure reflexive discourse; state agents cannot as easily “talk their way out” of a particular identity disconnect if they are required to tackle a visual presentation of “the state” because it would require them to ask their citizens to ignore their “lying eyes.”

Such a practice is of course somewhat dependent upon the media, who serve as the gatekeepers of information. But this gatekeeping function is being challenged in an internet age. As such, we see reflexive imaging strategies employed, for example, by “bloggers” such as Andrew Sullivan, or artists such as Clinton Fein, both opponents of the American legalization of torture.¹² Sullivan has on several occasions posted the Abu Ghraib prison pictures, as well as a photo of a waterboard from Tuol Sleng Prison in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. The latter is a museum dedicated to displaying the institutionalized practices of the Khmer Rouge. Sullivan’s express purpose is to implicate America’s ontological security with an image, writing on one occasion: “This is America under this president. Look at it.”¹³

Yet even with “imaging” we have no guarantees, as images are, like language, “polyvalent” or open to multiple interpretations. As Rosemary Foot discusses in a recent article, the same Abu Ghraib photos which shocked many Americans and the world were *released by the American military* for purposes of internal consumption (Foot 2006: 138). So the “particular [American] reputation has been projected via demonstrations of military and technological strength, [and with] images of the subjugation of the enemy.” This was also a matter of American self-identity – images projected by the state to “discipline” both American citizens and the world at large by

“demonstrat[ing] mastery over the enemy” (Foot 2006: 138, emphasis added). Therefore, even if images “get out” that we might assume should, knowing that particular state’s self-identity, “shame” a nation-state, there is no way to predict exactly how such images will be interpreted – only that they might serve (albeit temporarily) to disrupt a nation-state’s ability to ignore or obfuscate.

Confronting meta-narratives: scholarly “self-interrogation”

It is not enough, of course, to be aware of the challenges states face in attempting to engage their senses of Self; nor even to be aware of the strategies various social actors might utilize to stimulate such self-interrogation. As mentioned in the previous section (see p. 150), the issue of reflexivity is also bound up with the scholarly production of knowledge, in that scholars construct the knowledge which the practice of international politics makes possible. In a much-discussed Presidential Address to the International Studies Association meeting, Steve Smith confronted this issue directly, asserting “that the discipline of International Relations is complicit in the constitution of this world of international relations” (Smith 2004: 499). One avenue where scholars can “sing our world into existence” is through the production of meta-narratives. Cecilia Lynch discussed this issue at the end of her seminal book on interwar peace movements: “Not only should we be wary of the narratives constructed by participants in these cases, but we should also be critical of the narratives *we construct to analyze them*” (Lynch 1999: 217, emphasis added). While several “meta-narratives” permeate international politics, and the “spillage” between analysis (International Relations) and practice (international relations) will continue, it is my position that IR scholars need to confront two particular meta-narratives: namely that the spread of democracy will lead to perpetual peace, and that nation-states are consumed first and foremost by their physical survival. Both of these have been generally important in the context of the making of state self-identity, and especially responsible, in my view, for the dark turn recently taken by the American Self.

“The spread of democracy will save us”

How could what has been termed an “empirical” of political science (Levy 1988: 662) by one scholar, and a “fact” by another (Russett 1993) – that democracies do not fight one another – become a problematic meta-narrative needing to be challenged? Because it was not a theory which remained in the political science “laboratory,” but a discursive resource used by political actors to justify their policies, most recently (although not exclusively) by the Bush administration regarding its Iraq War policy. I (Steele 2007a) and others (Kratochwil 2006 and Williams 2005a, for example) have discussed what this implies about the relationship between subject and objects

in approaches to IR. But also important is how the belief in democracy as a “universal good” has served to justify the spread of democracy by the barrel of a gun, also stimulated a disturbing democratic Self/non-democratic Other nexus, a “version of Manicheanism . . . where evil is a ‘force’ to be defeated” (Rengger and Jeffrey 2005: 12). Such Manicheanism, named the “demonological approach” to foreign policy by Hans Morgenthau, has normatively problematic by-products (Morgenthau 2006: 9). Thus the belief in democracy as a universal good has shielded certain democratic republics from being able to recognize, before it is too late, these un-democratic actions which, when uncovered sometime in the distant future, threaten their ontological security.

The belief in the inevitable “march” toward perpetual, systemic peace also implicates the ontological security process as well, in that it reduces the need for agents to engage in the political process. As with all “evolutionary” or “progressive” philosophies, the idea of “perpetual peace” proposes an “end” point – a confederation of liberal republics constituted by the conflict of those republics against illiberal regimes.¹⁴ Unfortunately, as Reinhold Niebuhr famously observed regarding “historical religions,” the end point of such eschatologies becomes difficult to obtain:

These Messianic expectations begin as expressions of national hope and expectations of national triumph. Only gradually it is realized that man’s effort to deny and to escape his finiteness in imperial ambitions and power add an element of corruption to the fabric of history and that this corruption becomes a basic characteristic of history and a perennial problem from the standpoint of the fulfillment of human history and destiny.

(Niebuhr 1943: 4)

What Niebuhr proposes is that the belief in the *eschaton* reduces the human capacity to engage politics – such uniformity inhibits the ability of humans to recognize the possibility for corruption, and thus to engage in a political manner the basis for corrupt power. It appears that this is the case with the inability of democratic nation-states, and some scholars doing work on the “democratic peace,” to recognize the dire consequences of a foreign policy based on the “progressive” expansion of this “zone of peace.”

“Nation-state survival is paramount”

The emphasis upon the survival motive of nation-states has been discussed in this book and is the subject for many existing critical accounts on security (see Chapter 3). Additionally, each empirical case challenged the notion that nation-states are first and foremost concerned with their survival (Belgium being the most radical contradiction of the three). Yet what it has wrought upon the practice of international politics is relevant to issues of ontological

security in many ways, two of which are worthy of immediate mention here. First, the larger analytical emphasis upon nation-state survival has focused upon one form of violence (war) to the exclusion of the many other “marked forms” which exist in world politics (Smith 2004: 510). It has also obscured forms of suffering which are the result of the pronounced unequal distribution of resources throughout the world (Smith 2004: 508). Thus the physical survival of nation-states that has been the focus of mainstream International Relations overwhelms and exacerbates the “human security” problems which plague a majority of the world’s population. The former, rather than the latter, constitute self-identity interests for “rational” states, thus enhancing this marginalization even further.

Second, as I also mentioned in Chapter 1, the focus on national survival has been used to legitimize almost any policy as a “trump card” for state agents to play. The debate in America over “torture” is one where we see this tension most pronounced.¹⁵ Make no mistake, however, the recent American practices of torture and the treatment of detainees (including the rendition of “terror” suspects to “black site” countries where explicit torture can be carried out more fully) are all about self-identity. As also discussed in Chapter 3, the American biographical narrative has emphasized “strength” for some time (Weldes 1999). Yet besides the emphasis upon strength and “will,” the additional prominence in neoconservative ideology upon “authority” requires American policy makers to “create obedience through a combination of fear, coercion, and the propagation of belief” (Williams 2005a: 30).¹⁶ This is all of course linked to the issue of nation-state survival – in order to serve the “survival” drive countries need strong leaders.

Yet we might recognize how the same emphasis upon “strength” in a state’s self-identity also makes that state inherently vulnerable, subject to manipulation by other international actors the state deems to be threats to its physical security. Furthermore, the same policies which are meant to ensure a state’s survival can also paradoxically be a hazard to that state, as the current Iraq War is demonstrating in spades. Yet scholars who acknowledge this, who moreover argue that they “were in the vanguard of the opposition to war with Iraq in 2003” and explicate the costs of such a war – “thousands of Americans and Iraqis killed and wounded, a price tag that will eventually exceed \$1 trillion[!], and no end in sight” (Walt 2006: 4) – might also need to address how their very scholarship may be somewhat responsible for narrowing the meaning of the “security” of nation-states, thereby serving to reinforce the epistemic context which allows the powerful to implement costly policies in the first place, rather than continuing to be “exempt from the personal and professional responsibility of question[ing] the limits of ... theory” (Kolodziej 1992: 429). Unfortunately, such assumed exemption seems to be rather commonplace, cloaked in the veil of “scientific inquiry” which still somewhat pervades International Relations.

Ontological security in International Relations

As I mentioned at the beginning of the book (see pp. 1–2), the United States, and the world to some degree, has suffered from the inability of an effective “counter-narrative” to emerge which could provide a measured resistance to these two meta-narratives. While this book is not an attempt to develop a larger counter-narrative with the hopes that it will begin to appear in the discourse of international politics, I generally agree with Foucault that such counter-narratives can “spring” from the very disciplinary mechanisms which the powerful use to dominate (Foucault 1977: 219). Also imperative is for IR scholars to become even more cognizant of our role in constructing these meta-narratives. Reflecting upon our own role in reconstructing accounts, we need to, as one scholar reminds us, “be aware of the politics of constructing,” that the “value in telling a different story is in the telling, in illustrating the ways in which these stories are constructed and could be constructed differently” (Shephard 2005: 401). In our own self-interrogation, we must grapple with the possibility that state agents are political agents, and they may have completely different goals for their nation-states than we think they should have. We must, furthermore, do better than calling ourselves “scientists” while at the same time asking that which we study to go around “repeating” our theories in order to “have the effect of a self-fulfilling prophecy.” If we go about asking international actors to engage in, for instance, “[r]epeating the norms [of democratic peace] as descriptive principles [in order to] help to make them true. *Repeating* the proposition that democracies should not fight each other [in order to] reinforce the probability that democracies will not fight each other” (Russett 1993: 136, emphasis added), they might actually do so, but for *political* purposes to justify policies which are neither peaceful nor democratic, as it were. Instead, in light of the issue of self-interrogative reflexivity, I would only ask scholars to continue to critically examine the assumption that IR, and political science generally, can be pursued along the models of the physical sciences – where subjects and objects can be separated. Finally, we should also, in Anthony Lang’s words, be aware of how “the creation of ‘experts’ on various issues needs to be challenged as problematic; these individuals, while capable of providing valuable insights, must not be the only ones responsible for the creation of narratives about various parts of the world” (Lang 2002: 204). Such deference may be necessary on occasion, but over time it can also serve to reinscribe the very conditions of authority which are responsible for the problems these “experts” are consulted about in the first place.

I have argued in this book that we should look at the possibility that states are being driven by needs other than their physical sense of security. I do not see any need to develop ontological security into a framework for hypothesis development from which one could “predict” state behavior. This runs completely counter to the nature of the social agency I have outlined in

this book, for if the contingency of social action is a condition of its realization, then we can hardly “predict” what form that action might take. All state agents have choices, although the constraints imposed upon those choices vary. Shame, self-identity, anxiety, guilt – these are processes which can only occur if we take as one of our basic assumptions a fluid view of human (and state) agency. “Powerful” states, for instance, are capable of carrying out their decisions, and, most importantly, their knowledge of this capability, of *this freedom*, implicates them in the outcomes those decisions produce. They cannot as easily as other less capable agents absolve themselves of this responsibility by pointing to forces “beyond their control,” although they have tried and will continue to try. The ontological security story is not a determinist view of international politics. Contingency is a fact of life.

I will therefore avoid the practice, which has become so common in International Relations theory, of “prophecizing” about world politics at the end of my study: “human prophecies – which are a form of prediction – are often self-negating” (Lebow *et al.* 2000: 52). Agency levies upon us (1) opportunities for transforming world politics to attend to our own needs; and (2) responsibility for the outcomes of our actions which affect the needs of others. There can be no “morality” in international politics if we accept only one, let alone neither, of these two propositions.

Notes

1. Introduction

- 1 “Historically, the key difference ... has been between policy preferences for an international order in which the United States seeks to institute and live by certain mildly communitarian organizing principles, and one in which it avoids entanglement in any serious institutionalized commitments. These positions are defined as ‘multilateralism’ and ‘unilateralism’” (Ruggie 1996: 4).
- 2 On costly moral action, see Kaufman and Pape (1999); for the “danger” of honor, see Thucydides (1954); see Osgood (1964) regarding the danger of humanitarian action.
- 3 Ontological security is defined as “a sense of continuity and order in events” (Giddens 1991: 243). Several IR scholars have used Giddens in their work.
- 4 This is the view of Chaim Kaufman and Robert Pape (1999). I deal with this argument in greater detail in Chapter 2.
- 5 See Wheeler (2001).
- 6 It should be noted that Morgenthau’s view of the ability to “predict” social life is a more nuanced and limited one. He places an emphasis on probabilistic rather than deterministic prediction, and even that is fully constrained by the complexities of human life; thus one can “point to the different conditions that make it more likely for one tendency to prevail than for another, and, finally, assess the probabilities for the different conditions and tendencies to prevail in actuality” (Morgenthau 2006: 22).
- 7 Bull’s point in the quotation is to assert how humans value predictability in their lives, yet his entire book, and even to varying degrees the entire English School approach (Dunne 1998: 7–9), reveals the manner in which human behavior, while patterned, cannot be understood properly through causal prediction. Morgenthau also criticized the “ahistory” of predictive theory, branding it a form of “progressivist theory” and even more serious a failure than the Wilsonian idealism of the interwar period (Morgenthau 1970: 40; see also Morgenthau 2006: 9).
- 8 While the distinctions between the strategic and ontological security argument are developed in Chapter 3 and throughout the case chapters, this is not to overlook the important work that has been produced which reveals the more critical nature of classical realism. A review of such work would begin with post-structuralists in the early 1980s (Ashley 1981, 1984) through the 1990s (Der Derian 1996) and conclude with the recent high-quality scholarship by “reflexive” or “willful” realists (see Lang 2002; Lebow 2003; Williams 2005a, 2005b).
- 9 We can see his objection to overemphasizing speech in his critique of Freud’s “slips of the tongue.” Freud sees all slips as underpinned by some motivation; Giddens does not: “if most particular forms of language use are not directly

- motivated, then it follows that most slips of the tongue cannot be traced to unconscious motivation" (Giddens 1984: 104).
- 10 This emphasis on getting language "exactly right" for actors was especially acute regarding the American approach to Rwanda, where American policy makers avoided the use of the term genocide to describe what was happening in order to avoid responsibility for American inaction. See, especially, the response provided by Christine Shelley, Spokeswoman for the American State Department, as detailed in the PBS *Frontline* special, "Triumph of Evil" (available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/etc/script.html>).
 - 11 Michael Shaara's character Union Colonel Joshua Lawrence Chamberlain in the American Civil War novel *The Killer Angels* summed up prior to the battle at Gettysburg what a permanently separated American Union might have entailed: "if they (the South) win there'll be two countries, like France and Germany in Europe, and the border will be armed. Then there'll be a third country in the West, and that one will be the balance of power" (Shaara 1974: 179).
 - 12 The list of political psychology studies in foreign policy is too long to mention here. Cognitivist studies that have focused on "role theory" (Walker 1987), "analogies" (Khong), or "misperception" (Jervis 1976) are just a few examples of foreign policy research that applied psychological theories to try and explain decision making. Few cognitivists, however, have applied these concepts to states, instead focusing upon certain individual leaders, whose otherwise "rational" cognitive abilities were affected by certain conditions.
 - 13 (Singer 1961). Hedrik Spruyt writes:

Agent-structure problems permeate all levels of politics. It depends on what one takes to be the agent and what the structure. The individual can be embedded in the structure of a bureaucratic organization. That organization, taken as an agent with a particular corporate identity, is in turn embedded in a larger political structure, and so on.

(Spruyt 1994: 14)

- 14 "Conventional constructivism" refers to the teleological social theory of Alexander Wendt (1999, 2003). While Wendt's compelling work through the years is often used to generalize about constructivism, it really is more of a liberal teleology than constructivism, as noted by Vaughn Shannon (2005), among others. See Ross (2006) for the role of emotion in Wendt's constructivism.
- 15 "Obviously, not all emotions are helpful in making a decision that might be seen by others as 'rational' from a cost-benefit standpoint. However, what most fail to realize is that emotional responses are necessary in order to make any decision at all" (McDermott 2004: 693).
- 16 This is a somewhat shocking omission, since Mitzen posits that the way we "know a type" of state is not through its own self-organization but in its ability to "define" its needs "as a goal in terms of the meanings and practices of that system" in which it operates ((Mitzen 2006b: 352). Yet how else are we to know what "goals" a state has, and how are we to know what drives those goals, if not through discourse?
- 17 Close readers of Giddens will point out his objection to viewing collectivities as agents. Yet I posit that he does leave open the possibility of viewing collectivities (like state decision makers) as agents when "there is a significant degree of reflexive monitoring of the conditions of social reproduction" (see Giddens 1984: 220-221). The burden falls on me, then, to prove that such collective reflexive monitoring occurs, and is therefore possible.
- 18 One caveat to this final defense of ascribing ontological security to state agents (and, therefore, to states) is appropriate. The post-structuralist would look at this

understanding of the state, and the importance of discourse, as evidence that state agents not only use narrative to create a coherence of the whole but use discourses of power to exclude certain populations from national membership – to designate the “deviants” in a society. This is the position of Jenny Edkins (2003), among others, and it may be true. Accordingly, I address this issue in Chapters 2 and 3. For now, it is safe to say that there is an incredibly political nature inherent in the inventory that state agents engage within when developing the biographical narrative of their states, and the exclusionary possibilities that narrative holds represent a dark side to ontological security (a dark side that is not inevitable, however).

2. Identity, morality, and social action

- 1 As Campbell (2001, esp. fn. 12) also notes, the major works in this normative turn include those by Chris Brown (1992) and Smith (1992). See also Mervyn Frost's seminal book (Frost 1996).
- 2 Neorealist theory has embraced systemic-level variables, yet, as Richard Ashley (1984) first observed, neorealism is at the same time utilitarian, assuming states to be rational and calculating “units,” and structuralist, assuming that systemic power distributions determine behavior.
- 3 John Gerard Ruggie makes a similar point in “Continuity and Transformation in the World Polity” (Ruggie 1983).
- 4 This is the whole basis for Wendt's World State thesis, which rests upon the precondition of the need of corporate actors to be recognized, and the fact that “it is through recognition by the Other that one is constituted as a Self in the first place,” asserting a “dependence of Self on Other” (Wendt 2003: 511, emphasis added).
- 5 Finnemore (1996), for example, places primacy on this outside-in approach, as it is largely a bracketing mechanism rather than an ontological maxim. Yet this by no means disregards agency; of course, in many other places in her work (see also Finnemore 2003) she shows how we only know a structure when we see states referring to it to justify their actions. So structure can be largely constitutive.
- 6 Yet this outside-in approach to state interests, and, ostensibly, the self-identity of states, is emphasized by scholars who we might not consider to be “conventional” constructivists. Many of the studies in the seminal 1996 edited volume on *The Culture of National Security* seek to show the prevalence of systemic-level factors and how they constrain state behavior (Katzenstein 1996a). As noted on p. 33, Richard Ned Lebow takes an almost deterministic view of how environment shapes self-identity.
- 7 The seeming tautology that arises when using democratic culture to predict “democratic” behavior is sidestepped in a number of ways, such as lagging variables in a regression analysis or developing a separate measure of democraticness for states. Because it is so “rare to find a general theoretical model for norm formation” in constructivism, Sarah Mitchell provides such a “model” that tries to explain democratic behavior in non-democracies. Ascribing the settlement of territorial disputes by a third party as a “democratic” variable (regardless of the nature of the third-party arbiter, since no parameter is given for it), Mitchell's analysis shows how the systemic proportion of democracies increases the likelihood of such behavior (Mitchell 2002: 758).
- 8 David Dessler, using the effects of language to illustrate it, was one of the first IR theorists to develop this transformational aspect of “structure” (Dressler 1989: 452–454; see also Onuf 1989). For an impressive analysis of the agent-structure issue in constructivist social theory, see Gould (1998).

- 9 Neorealism does this as “it sees system structures in the manner in which they appear to states – as given, external constraints on their actions – rather than as conditions of possibility for state action” (Wendt 1987: 347).
- 10 [http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q = enabling](http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=enabling).
- 11 See also Doty 1993.
- 12 See also Neumann’s comments, some critical, regarding Campbell’s use of self/other (Neumann 1999: esp. 26–28).
- 13 Niebuhr, writing about Augustine: “he [Augustine] does not recognize that the commingling [of love of God and love of Self] is due, not to the fact that two types of people dwell together but because the conflict between love and self-love *is in every soul*. It is particularly important to recognize this fact in political analyses” (Niebuhr 1953: 138, emphasis added).
- 14 We do need the other to know who we are, it is true, but that is not what drives our behavior; the “self does not experience the experience of other directly. The facts about other available to self are actions of other *experienced* by self” (Laing 1969: 5, emphasis added). That is, we experience ourselves by experiencing what others say or signal about us. The “other” only exists as the Self experiences it.
- 15 Wachtel’s target in his chapter is Freud, who he claims acontextualized the Self and whose “vision for so long dominated intellectual discourse on matters psychological that even as alternative views have emerged both within and outside of psychoanalysis, they have incorporated more of Freud’s grounding assumptions than we realize” (Wachtel 1996: 47). This statement is evidence that in the field of psychology scholars have been moving from the acontextual understanding of the Self to a socially determined (or driven) Self; whereas I am working the inverse in this book – mainstream scholarship having posited (in my view) an overly socialized sense of self-identity in states, a sense of self-identity that instead needs to be internally understood in ontological security terms.
- 16 Traditional action “may shade over into value rationality.” Value-rational and affectual actions “have a common element, namely that the meaning of the action does not lie in the achievement of a result ulterior to it, but in carrying out the specific type of action for its own sake” (Weber 1968: 24–25).
- 17 Wight (1995) identifies an inverse argument in Francois Laurent: “There is a profound difference between individuals and nations; the former have their vices and their passions which are continually leading them to do wrong; the others are fictitious beings whose agents are generally the *most intelligent and most ethical of their time*. And even where intelligence and morality are lacking, public opinion contains them and will increasingly contain them within the limits of duty.”
- 18 Donnelly points out how the related concept of glory influenced the Greek city-states in the Peloponnesian War: “Athens’ largest imperial adventure, the ill-fated Sicilian expedition, is driven by desires for glory and gain . . . utterly unconnected with self-sufficiency, and flying in the face of safety” (Donnelly 2000: 69).
- 19 As Lebow acknowledges, “[honor] was a cause of conflict among states rather than individuals. But it was also a potent source of solidarity at the individual and communal levels.” Referring to soccer teams, he notes that “honor in the sense of dignity is independent of how many rounds of competition a team survives or where it ends up in the rankings” (Lebow 2003: 272, also fn. 49).
- 20 Donnelly elaborates on this point in the context of his review of Thucydides: “honorable behavior . . . is a matter of everyday conformance to social norms” (Donnelly 2000: 177–178, fn. 19).
- 21 Donnelly explicates honor primarily as a “heroic ethic” evident in antiquity rather than contemporary international politics, and he also does not discuss why states desire honor (or glory) (Donnelly 2000: 177–178).

- 22 More recent “realists” have echoed these concerns over “moral” precepts, confronting the post-Cold War appeals to “humanitarian” action as dangerous: “U.S. intervention in these “humanitarian” crises should be, at best, exceedingly rare ... using American armed forces as the world’s ‘911’ will degrade capabilities, bog soldiers down in peacekeeping roles, and fuel concern among other great powers that the United States has decided to enforce notions of ‘limited sovereignty’ worldwide in the name of humanitarianism. This overly broad definition of America’s national interest is bound to backfire as others arrogate the same authority to themselves” (Rice 2000: 53–54). Notice again how Rice (in this case) separates national interests from “humanitarian” action.
- 23 Emotional affections underlie most conceptualizations of humanitarian intervention. Bihku Parekh’s definition of humanitarian intervention is an action which is “primarily guided by the sentiment of humanity, compassion or fellow-feeling” (Parekh 1997: 54). Fiona Terry states that “any assistance, if it is to be humanitarian, must be motivated first and foremost by a concern for the welfare of people, regardless of who or where they are” (Terry 2002: 240).
- 24 “Collectivist states have a desire to help those they identify with even when their own security is not directly threatened” (Wendt 1999: 124).
- 25 It is important to note that these types of social action were a form of his “ideal types,” as Weber had “no intention of attempting to formulate in any sense an exhaustive classification of types of action ... [he only intended] to formulate in conceptually pure form certain sociologically important types to which actual action is more or less closely approximated” (Weber 1968: 26).
- 26 “As a moral argument, realism amounts to a claim that the reasons for overriding the constraints of ordinary morality in emergency situations are themselves moral” (Nardin and Mapel 1992:15).
- 27 This is of course a play on the title of Nicholas Onuf’s (1989) book. See Lebow (2001).
- 28 About Augustine, whose work I deal with in the following chapter, Niebuhr wrote: “his conception of the radical freedom of man, derived from the biblical view, made it impossible to accept the idea of fixed forms of human behavior and of social organization, analogous to those of nature ... furthermore, his conception of human selfhood and of the transcendence of the self over its mind, made it impossible to assume the identity of the individual reason with a universal reason” (Niebuhr 1953: 133–134).
- 29 Orwell painted a much bleaker picture of human consciousness: “The Party said that Oceania had never been in alliance with Eurasia. He, Winston Smith, knew that Oceania had been in alliance with Eurasia as short a time as four years ago. But where did that knowledge exist? Only in his own consciousness, which in any case must soon be annihilated” (Orwell 1983: 30). Thankfully, Niebuhr’s individuals, and modern nation-states, don’t have the keen ability to annihilate consciousness.

3 The possibilities of the Self

- 1 Waltz qualifies this assumption, that his model is a “simplification of reality,” and that

the assumption [of the survival motive] allows for the fact that no state always acts exclusively to ensure its survival. It allows for the fact that some states may persistently seek goals that they value more highly than survival; they may, for example, prefer amalgamation with other states to their own survival form. It allows for the fact that in pursuit of its security no state will act with perfect knowledge and wisdom.

(Waltz 1979: 92).

- 2 Joseph Grieco also notes: "the key result of the recognition by states of the possibility that force can be used against them is that they have security as their principal interest . . . anarchy causes states to be agents concerned first and foremost with their survival and security" (Grieco 1997: 186–187).
- 3 "Security-as-being" is used in McSweeney, and he defines it as "confidence in an actor's capacity to manage relations with others" (McSweeney 1999: 157). R.D. Laing first developed ontological security, using the term "ontology" because "in its present empirical sense . . . it appears to be the best adverbial or adjectival derivative of 'being'" (Laing 1969: 40, fn. 1). This is the basis, it seems, for Heidegger's "Dasein," whose being is consumed by "the possible": "The Being possible which is essential for Dasein, pertains to the ways of its solicitude for Others and of its concerns with the 'world,' as we have characterized them; and in all these, and always, it pertains to Dasein's potentiality-for-Being towards itself, for the sake of itself" (Heidegger 1962: 183).
- 4 As noted on p. 61, Kierkegaard elaborates on this distinction.
- 5 The Confucian scholar Mencius, living in China during the "Warring States" period, also related the notion of *i* (shame) to human beings and political leaders. One scholar notes that "[a] sense of compassion (*jen*) and a sense of shame (*i*) according to Mencius, were innate in human nature" (Hsu 1996: 157). Shame here is a necessary condition for morality: "whoever is devoid of the heart of shame is not human" (Mencius 2003: 73).
- 6 Those familiar with the more senior literature in anthropology, written over fifty years ago (Ausubel 1955; Benedict 1946, cited in Tangney *et al.* 1996), will notice how shame was conceptualized as a "public" emotion and guilt a more private violation of the Self. This is the exact opposite of the conceptualization taken by Laing and in the more recent psychological literature as well as of that taken by Giddensian structuration theory. I obviously take the latter approach to distinguishing shame from guilt.
- 7 One position in social psychological literature on the subject is that shame and guilt are different in terms of degree rather than kind. But recent research has shed light on the idea that while both shame and guilt relate to self-regarding emotions, they are indeed distinct (Tangney *et al.* 1996).
- 8 "Liberal democracies" may be more exposed to shame because they are more vulnerable to charges of hypocrisy, both internally (by their citizens) and externally (by the international community). Neta Crawford notes this (Crawford 2002: 115, fn. 79). Giddens argues that "anxiety in a certain sense comes with human liberty . . . freedom is not a given characteristic of the human individual, but derives from the acquisition of an ontological understanding of external reality and personal identity" (Giddens 1991: 47). This suggests that with freedom comes vulnerability to anxiety. Democracies, perhaps, are more capable of "ontological insecurity."
- 9 Shame itself is an experience, but it might eventually also have a physical presence. As it relates to freedom, in that we cannot be ashamed of those acts we commit where we had no choice, shame might be said to produce in this fashion the "nausea" that developed within, and then became, Sartre, who confronted freedom in a similar sense: "The Nausea has not left me and I don't believe it will leave me so soon; but I no longer have to bear it, it is no longer an illness or a passing fit: it is I" (Sartre 1964: 170). Nausea might refer to that process whereby an individual "becomes sick" at just "the thought" of something unpleasant. Thus, the ideational experience of shame might lead to physical disruptions.
- 10 (Giddens 1981: 83). Collingwood notes that for the ancient Romans, "history . . . meant continuity with their past" (Collingwood 1946: 34).

- 11 Such intersubjectivity includes, of course, the ability of state agents to construct an "Imagined Community" through "fictive" spatial measures such as, in Benedict Anderson's (1991) terms, the Census, the Map, and the Museum.
- 12 "Historical knowledge is that special case of memory where the object of present thought is past thought, the gap between present and past being bridged not only by the power of present thought to think of the past, but also by the power of the past thought to reawaken itself in the present" (Collingwood 1946: 294).
- 13 History plays a primary role in Lang's theory of agency: "The diplomat does not just combine the elements of national power in his presentation of the state; more importantly, he represents the national purpose, the historical record of the state, a historical record that embodies the political and ethical ideals of the community" (Lang 2002: 18).
- 14 "Memorialization that does not return to a linear narrative but rather retains the trace of another notion of temporality does occur. It is found when the political struggle between linear and trauma time is resolved ... by a recognition and *surrounding* of the trauma at the heart of any social or symbolic order" (Edkins 2003: 16). See also Herman (1996: 5). Ontrauma, see also Fierke (2000) and Schick (2007).
- 15 "The diachronic link of connecting the past through the present to the future via our individual and common projects. Who we are is significantly shaped by where we think we come from" (Kratochwil 2006: 16).
- 16 Crawford discusses how these processes inform foreign policy belief systems:

The ingredients of a particular dominant foreign policy belief system within a state are based on the particular history of the state (or dominant political group) as mythologized by national historians, dramatic personal and group experiences such as war or occupation, and individual socialization.

(Crawford 2002: 72)

- 17 See Krasner (1999), Runciman (2006), and Bukovansky (2005).
- 18 Laing writes: "Participation of the self in life is possible, but only in face of intense anxiety. Franz Kafka knew this very well, when he said that it was only though his anxiety that he could participate in life, and, for this reason, he would not be without it" (Laing 1969: 95).
- 19 Heidegger made a similar (although admittedly not identical) distinction between fear and dread: "If ... that which threatens has the character of something altogether unfamiliar, then fear becomes *dread*" (Heidegger 1962: 181–182).
- 20 Freeman uses Augustine's Confessions to illustrate a four-step process where distancing is but one element (preceded by and continued by "articulation" and "appropriation") necessary in the realization of "a new Self."
- 21 "In the same way that a text is detached from its author, an action is detached from its agent and develops consequences of its own ... our deeds escape us and have effects which we did not intend" (Ricoeur 1981: 206).
- 22 Yet even here ontological security could be repaired, what Laing also terms the "divorce of the self," something "which is painful to be borne, and which the sufferer desperately longs for someone to help mend." Further, the disembodied self can no longer operate on its own and is therefore ripe to be reoccupied by another actor (Laing 1969: 173–174).
- 23 "Remorse delays action, and it is action that ethics specifically requires" (Kierkegaard 1966: 105). Recognize, however, from the discussion in Chapter 2, that "ethical action" also requires remorse.
- 24 Survivors of traumatic experiences often face this problem, termed by some psychoanalysts "repetition compulsion": "From this perspective the survival of trauma is more than the fortunate passage past a violent event, a passage that

- is accidentally interrupted by reminders of it, but rather the endless *inherent necessity* of repetition, which ultimately may lead to destruction" (Caruth 1996: 33).
- 25 "There is thus a paradox of otherness, a tension between proximity and distance, which is essential to historical consciousness" (Ricoeur 1981: 61).
 - 26 Lebow discusses the fact that the Greek word *katharsis* "is a medical term, and Aristotle used it metaphorically to signify a purge of the soul that restores a healthy balance by removing toxic emotions and ambitions" (Lebow 2003: 43).
 - 27 Tilly 1975: 42.
 - 28 "From the time of their foundation, states have sought to control the right to define political identity; since their legitimacy has constantly been threatened by the undermining power of subnational and transnational loyalties, states' survival and success have depended on the creation and maintenance of legitimating national identities" (Tickner 1996: 53).
 - 29 Although at times NGOs and other transnational actors can reinforce the state system. In this context see Barak Mendelsohn's (2005) study on terrorism and international society, and Steele and Amoureux's (2005) work on NGOs, panopticism, and monitoring genocide.
 - 30 "Of course, with the invention of writing, those memories which have been discarded remain somewhere and can be "re-collected" again and become sometime in the future again part of the collective remembrance" (Kratochwil 2006: 17).
 - 31 Freeman observes this about Augustine's *Confessions*:

Augustine had managed to acquire certain psychic defenses along the road of his sorry life, which served to provide that pernicious blanket of security that often keeps us hopelessly in the dark about who and what we are . . . he is only able to identify these defenses in retrospect, after they have become stripped away.

(Freeman 1993: 37)

- 32 "The story is never finished: the scripting of memory by those in power can always be challenged, and such challenges are very often found at moments and in places where the very foundations of the imagined community are laid out" (Edkins 2003: 18–19).
- 33 The placement of feminist perspectives in International Relations theory is indebted to the work of not only Tickner (1992, 1996), but also Peterson (1992), Grant and Newland (1991), and Sylvester (1994).
- 34 We can think of Randall Schweller's (1996) "evil state" attributes that are undoubtedly both masculine *and* unfavorable.
- 35 A robust literature exists in feminist social theory on the public–private issue. See, for instance, Brennan and Pateman 1979; Elshtain 1974, Howell 2005; Howell and Mulligan 2005; Okin 1979; 1991; Pateman 1988; Phillips 1991; Runyan 1992; and Sapiro 1995.
- 36 I am using shame here in a Giddensian sense, yet the concept of shame comes to us from the Greeks, and permeates, as Elshtain identifies (Elshtain 1981: 15, fn. 11), Plato's *Republic*.
- 37 Alexis de Tocqueville wrote about American democracy in such a way:

[T]he majority in the United States has immense actual power and a power of opinion which is almost as great. When once its mind is made up on any question, there are, so to say, no obstacles which can retard, much less halt, its progress and give it time to hear the wails of those it crushes as it passes.

(Tocqueville 1966: 248).

- 38 Having emigrated from Weimar Germany, Morgenthau wrote of what can happen in any nation-state with an over-zealous populace when in conflict:

[T]he citizen of the modern warring nation ... "crusades" for an "ideal," a set of "principles," a "way of life" for which he claims a monopoly of truth and virtue ... since it is this "ideal" and "way of life" that he fights in whatever persons they manifest themselves, the distinctions between fighting and disabled soldiers, combatants and civilians – if they are not eliminated altogether – are subordinated to the one distinction that really matters: the distinction between the representatives of the right and the wrong philosophy and way of life.

(Morgenthau 2006: 249)

- 39 Sartre 1992: 258.

- 40 A good review of the research on prison suicides appears in Allison Lieblich (1999).

- 41 We could call the former "playing the blame game," but perhaps it is more analogous to the "buck-passing" practices of pre-World War II European states with the "German problem." See Christiansen and Snyder (1990).

- 42 I further clarify this component of nation-state ontological security in Chapters 4, 5, and 6.

- 43 Daya Thussu observed through content analysis of CNN's coverage leading up to the Kosovo war that

The focus of CNN news bulletins leading up to the bombing was on Serbian atrocities – real or alleged. Photographs taken by US spy satellites of suspected mass graves were regularly shown on CNN. Television viewers worldwide were shown pictures of the misery of refugees, fleeing their homes.

(Thussu 2001: 352)

Such images play upon the recall noted in section 2 of this chapter (see pp. 55–57). Media images influence the ability of state agents to narrate a coherent account of the national Self.

- 44 As noted in Power's chapter on American inaction regarding Rwanda, military agencies have a variety of tactics at their disposal (Power 2002: 372–373); chief among them is to use the intractable web of bureaucratic agencies to delay actions until the "crisis" has passed. Dissenters within agencies may be fired or resign in protest.

- 45 Peter Maas notes the Powell doctrine's inability to avoid genocide: "Powell made the mistake of treating a genocidal policy as an unbeatable monster" (Maas 2002: 87). U.S. Secretary of state Colin Powell's change of heart regarding humanitarian rescue is thus illuminating in the context of, for instance, the Bush administration's support for a limited intervention in Liberia in 2003.

- 46 See Snyder 1991.

- 47 See Onuf 1989: 78–95.

- 48 Onuf's view of language as constitutive differs somewhat from Albert Yee's view that, once "particular arguments and phraseology have been deployed, a 'rhetorical momentum' is generated which operates independently to affect policies" (Yee 1996: 95). I have avoided the issue of causation and constitution in this chapter.

- 49 For examples of learning theory, see Reiter 1994; Jervis 1976; Snyder 1984.

- 50 Human Rights Watch (HRW) has at times focused solely on shaming the United States. HRW founder Aryeh Neier has stated that "as an American

organization, we could focus significantly on U.S. policy, and U.S. policy was so significant on a worldwide basis, that our impact would derive from our relationship to U.S. policy" (Korey 1998: 344).

- 51 For signaling, see Morrow (1999: 86–91). Morrow describes signaling occurring "when one actor knows something of relevance to another actor's decisions" (Morrow 1999: 86).

4. The power of self-identity: British neutrality and the American Civil War

- 1 One British diplomat and historian, writing in the interwar period, stated: "the long battle against the slave-trade is one of the noblest in British history ... its victory remains one of the greatest blows in the cause of freedom that has ever been struck" (MacInnes 1934: 155). MacInnes also writes that some of the British motivation for pursuing an abolitionist course was propelled by British anxiety over its practice of colonial subjugation: "England, at one time the most guilty nation in the world, has thus in the past century *striven to make amends for her crimes against helpless savages*" (MacInnes 1934: 210, emphasis added).
- 2 It could be argued that allowing the war to continue ensured a divided America. However, in late 1862 and early 1863 (the time period analyzed in this study) the outcome of the war was still unclear. Most British policy makers were convinced that intervention was the most prudent way to ensure a divided America.
- 3 Frank Owsley mentions the specific forms, at various times, that intervention took: repudiation of the blockade, mediation during a stalemate, formal recognition of the South following Confederate military successes, or outright armed intervention (Owsley 1959: 542).
- 4 One historian writes: "A veteran of a half-century in British politics, Palmerston was an exponent of *Realpolitik*" (McPherson 1988: 553). For a gratingly reverent view of Palmerston as a realist, see Layne 1997.
- 5 I borrow the term "positivist fallacy" from Nicholas Wheeler (2000: 71).
- 6 There have been many historical studies which conclude this as well; Owsley identifies it as part of the "older school" that placed England's non-intervention upon a high and idealistic basis: "the sympathy of the Lancashire population – and of the common people generally – with the Union as a great experiment in democracy, as a great model which was held up to the English; and their antipathy to slavery" (Owsley 1959: 545).
- 7 Historians have used the terms "conservative," "liberal," and "radical" for roughly three philosophical traditions of nineteenth-century British politicians. Generally, nineteenth-century British "Conservatives" believed in a limited and aristocratic government, defended the Church of England (and thus the institutionalization of anti-Catholic laws) from legal reform, and generally valued order over political reform. While nineteenth-century British "Liberals" supported the abolition of slavery, they only supported a *gradual* reform of political structures. "Radicals" were those nineteenth-century British politicians, like John Bright and Richard Cobden, who supported the abolition of slavery but also wide-scale parliamentary reform and the "democratization" of the masses, as well as Catholic emancipation. (For an extended discussion of British politics during the nineteenth century, see Jones 1993 and Black 1969.)
- 8 Lincoln issued the EP in September 1862. Most accounts show that it reached the shores of Britain sometime later that month. It came into effect on January 1, 1863.
- 9 Gladstone was rebuked by Palmerston and fellow members of the Cabinet for this statement, and he soon issued the following clarification in a letter to Russell dated October 17, 1862: "according to some of the newspapers, some words

which I have used at Newcastle respecting America have a wider sense than I intended" (Gladstone, quoted in Shannon 1982: 469). Nevertheless, he was a strong supporter of Russell's proposal for mediation during that same time, a time when British citizens were being "rapidly drawn into Southern sympathies" (Shannon 1982: 471).

- 10 The October 9, 1862, *Times* account includes the quotation, with *loud cheers* included to indicate the audience's reaction (Shannon 1982: 468).
- 11 The letter was published in newspapers across America that day, including Greeley's own *New York Tribune* (August 22, 1862, added).
- 12 Howard Jones asserts that "the presence of Slaves in the South at first posed problems for the antislavery British ... but President Lincoln unintentionally relieved them of that dilemma by denying any relationship between slavery and the war and arguing that his sole purpose was to serve the Union" (Jones 1999: 9).
- 13 Doris Kearns Goodwin writes:

despite his greater access to intelligence from abroad, Seward failed to grasp what Lincoln intuitively understood: that once the union truly committed itself to emancipation, the masses in Europe, who regarded slavery as an evil demanding eradication, would not be easily maneuvered into supporting the South.

(Goodwin 2005: 468).

- 14 According to David Paul Crook, "much evidence still stands to the effect that the northern image abroad improved, in the long run, after Lincoln adopted a war aim which was more *intelligible* to European public opinion," and the EP's "very existence added a new dimension to the dialectics on mediation which cannot be ignored" (Crook 1974: 237–238, emphasis added).
- 15 *Hansard's*, 18 July 1862, col. 520, emphasis added.
- 16 *Hansard's*, 18 July 1862, col. 532.
- 17 I refer the reader to the Laing quotation from Chapter 2: "All one 'feels,' 'senses,' 'intuitions' etc. of the other entails inference from one's own experience of the other to the other's experience of one's self" (Laing 1969: 14).
- 18 Most historians would agree with Howard Jones's claim that, "admittedly, Russell recognized the role of slavery in bringing on the war, but he did not go any farther than to assert that the establishment of two American republics – one slave – the other free – was the solution" (Jones 1999: 53).
- 19 Secretary of War George Cornewall Lewis had been against intervention, basing his views largely, although not solely, on its untenable international legal grounds. The EP reinforced his view, but in a new light. Lewis's opinion was heavily informed by that of his stepson-in-law, William Vernon Harcourt. The latter, writing under the pseudonym "Historicus" in the London *Times*, stated that, "to my mind, in the one word 'slavery' is comprehended a perpetual bar to the notion of English mediation as between the North and the South ... [a bar] to forcible intervention, because it would be immoral" (quoted in Crook 1974: 240).
- 20 *Parliamentary Papers*, vol. LXXII: 69.557. Most historical accounts support this view that Russell and Gladstone "clung to intervention as the most humanitarian way to end a war that had reached a new level of intensity at Antietam. Few British observers initially recognized that the struggle had quietly taken an anti-slavery turn" (Jones 1999: 111).
- 21 *Hansard's*, 30 June 1863, col. 1807. Gladstone biographer Morley paraphrases further, reporting that Gladstone observed that "the cause of the South was so connected with slavery that a strong countercurrent of feeling must arise in the mind" (Morley 1903: 86), a countercurrent which ran against the South's "strict adherence to slavery" (Shannon 1982, vol. 1: 489).

- 22 "I should think it necessary to communicate with the maritime Powers of Europe before taking any steps" (*Hansard's*, 4 August 4 1862, col. 1179–1183).
- 23 *Hansard's*, 23 March 1863, col. 1730.
- 24 *Hansard's*, 23 March 1863, col. 1740, emphasis added. The concept of "routines" is also alluded to in Kaufman and Pape's study, where they assert that the ability of abolitionists to "keep British anti-slavery moving forward" was due to "simple inertia. After the Slave Trade Department of the Foreign Office was established in 1821, anti-slavery gradually became increasingly routinized and institutionalized in British foreign and colonial policy." They note that a "few committed abolitionists served directly in the corridors of power," and place Lord Palmerston as one of those who "generally supported anti-slavery" (Kaufman and Pape 1999: 660).
- 25 *Hansard's*, 23 March 1863, col. 1740, emphasis added.
- 26 Jones states that "intervention became even more likely in mid-September 1862, when news arrived in Europe of the Union's second resounding defeat at Bull Run. . . . Russell triumphantly assured Palmerston that [Union General George] McClellan's failure to deliver on his promise to conquer the South gave further justification for a British intervention" (Jones 1999: 98). But after the Union victory at Antietam, Palmerston told Russell: "The condition of things therefore which could be favourable to an offer of mediation would be great success of the South against the North. That state of things seemed ten days ago to be approaching. Its advance has been lately checked" (Adams 1925: 43; see also McPherson 1988: 556).
- 27 Gladstone's post-EP statements were also made after the devastating Union defeat at Chancellorsville in May of 1863. This Confederate victory, according to Shannon, was actually the basis for the debated bid in June regarding recognition for the Confederacy (Shannon 1982, vol. 1: 482).
- 28 These are the words of Harcourt, Secretary of War Lewis's nephew, in the "Historicus" letter mentioned in note 19 and published in the London *Times* on November 17, 1862 (Crook 1974: 240).
- 29 See R.J.M. Blackett's (2001) review of how the debates affected the British populace.
- 30 McSweeney's otherwise compelling work makes the mistake of applying this label to most constructivist literature (McSweeney 1999: 126). This is incorrect because constructivists account for the structure of identities and how those structures change, hardly making identities deterministic. (See also Hall 2000.)
- 31 McPherson notes that the "South's best chance for European intervention" thus ended by late 1862 (McPherson 1988: 556).
- 32 Temperley observes that "much that was said [in these debates] throws more light on British than on American issues" (Temperley 1972: 249).
- 33 As noted on p. 000, what partially defines critical situations is that they are "unpredictable."

5. "Death before dishonor": Belgian self-identity, honor, and World War I

- 1 Melian Dialogue, quoted in Thucydides 1954: 362, 366. For IR treatments of Thucydides, see Lebow 2001; Lebow 2003; Alker 1996: ch. 1; Heilke 2004).
- 2 Richard Ned Lebow notes: "For many present-day realists . . . Thucydides' history is a primer on strategy and alliances and how they are shaped, or should be, by considerations of power" (Lebow 2003: 115). Joseph Nye, in his well-assigned introduction to the IR textbook *Understanding International Conflict*, observes here that "the Athenians stated that in a realist world, morality has little place. Might makes right" (Nye 2006: 20).
- 3 Of course, the Melians did posit that "good fortune" might lead to success.

- 4 In terms similar to those used by the Athenians, German Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke stated in a 1913 meeting in Berlin attended by Kaiser Wilhelm and King Albert that "small countries, such as Belgium, would be well advised to rally to the side of the strong if they wished to retain their independence" (Galet 1931: 23).
- 5 Total civilian deaths in Gray (1990, vol. 2: 292); August 1914 figure in Kislenko (2005: 147). Another historian writes that German units in the town of Dinant shot "700 civilians, including thirty-nine children between six months and fifteen years of age" (Meeus 1962: 351).
- 6 Haythornwaite 1992: 148.
- 7 Everett 1982: 248.
- 8 Weiler and Tucker 2005: 192.
- 9 Much work on the values of honor and shame focuses on Ancient Greece. See, for example, Fisher 1992; Cairns 1993; Lebow 2003; Williams 1993; on the role of both in the Bible, see DeSilva 1995.
- 10 A concept somewhat related to honor, that of "prestige," is often portrayed by realists as being a function of "economic and military power" (see Gilpin 1981: 30). Ralph Hawtrey (1952, quoted in Gilpin 1981: 32) writes that "the reputation for strength is what we call prestige. A country gains prestige from the possession of economic and military power. ... In a diplomatic conflict the country which yields is likely to suffer in prestige because the fact of yielding is taken by the rest of the world to be evidence of conscious weakness" (Hawtrey 1952: 65). Thus prestige is mainly relevant in these treatments only for those states which have the largest economic and military capabilities, or, in short, great powers. A literal distinction is made between prestige and honor by King Albert biographer Emile Cammaerts. The Belgian king, in a reply to Germany's Kaiser Wilhelm, referenced how Belgium faced a "loss of honor" as a result of the German ultimatum. Cammaerts relates that "Albert's conception of honor was not based on the aristocratic idea of pride or prestige, but on the fundamental principle of honesty, in private and in public matters, which is at the basis of all decent civilization" (Cammaerts 1935: 31).
- 11 "Continental jurists introduced a similar distinction: between "objective honor," which refers to a person's reputation (an odd use of the term because there is nothing objective about such an assessment), and "subjective honor," which is a person's self-worth" (Lebow 2003: 271–272).
- 12 Historian Meeus writes that the leaders of European countries were using "Belgium" as "just a pawn in the game" of power balancing (Meeus 1962: 283). It may be more accurate to call the Concert not a "balance of power" but a "just equilibrium":

The notion of a need to actively maintain and manage the balance of power was not unique to Vienna (the concept of balance of power as a political goal could be traced back at least to the Peace of Utrecht in 1713). However, the concept of *just equilibrium* that dominated the Vienna discussions conferred authority on the Great Powers precisely because they represented themselves as guarantors of the territorial order in the aftermath of Napoleon – the greatest challenger of territorial sovereignty in modern Europe up to that time. (Lowenheim 2007: 149)

- 13 There were a myriad of internal factors which inspired this revolution, including economic (working conditions of the poorest classes) and social (youthful and unstable population) (see Meeus 1962: esp. ch. 9).
- 14 The goal of maintaining the independence of individual states is served, according to Hedley Bull, by the creation of states like Belgium and Netherlands, but when they are "buffer" states the true purpose behind their recognition may be to

preserve the international society of which great power states are controlling members (Bull 1977: 17).

- 15 Wilhelm's comments came during a Berlin visit by Leopold II in January of that year. Wilhelm stated:

The French want war. Well! They shall have it. As for your country, I advise you to prepare. Your army is inadequate. ... In the tremendous struggle which is about to begin, Germany is certain of victory, but this time you will be forced to choose.

(Albertini 1957: 417)

Another historian writes that "as the peril grew greater and more apparent, Belgian opinion did not side with France" (Meeus 1962: 350).

- 16 Belgian politics throughout the nineteenth century was defined by political discord between the Liberal and Catholic parties, and then, beginning in the 1860s, the Socialists (see Strikwerda 1997).
- 17 Meeus writes that "without an appreciation of these conditions, it would be impossible to understand the national unity of 1914 and the spontaneous resistance of the people against invasion" (Meeus 1962: 342).
- 18 What Meeus calls "a source of unity on the national level" (Meeus 1962: 344) illustrates the "overarching loyalty" characteristic endemic to what Lijphart (1978) has termed a "consociational" democracy.
- 19 Alan Zuckerman writes :

[T]he Belgians continued to believe in miracles, trusting the treaty that guarded their neutrality and the premise that no harm should come to them because they bore no blame for European tensions. That a Serb had murdered an Austrian archduke meant nothing to Belgium.

(Zuckerman 2004: 8)

- 20 The German ultimatum is quoted by Albertini (1957: 454).

21 The German Chancellor stated in his "Reichstag speech" of August 4, 1914: "Necessity knows no law. Our troops have occupied Luxemburg and perhaps have already entered Belgian territory. That is a breach of international law. ... France could wait, we could not" (Albertini 1957: 455).

- 22 Belgian historian Leon van der Essen writes:

When the nephew of King Leopold, Prince Albert, became king of the Belgians under the name of Albert I, he certainly never imagined a day would come when the very existence of his country would be put at stake by the felony of one of the powers which were pledged to defend Belgian neutrality.

(Essen 1916: 170).

- 23 We know what was discussed at the "Crown Council" meeting, mostly through second-hand accounts and the notes taken by the minister of agriculture and public works, Georges Helleputte, as reported by Zuckerman (2004: 12): "Rediscovered only in 1981, his transcript defies complete decoding, for it is mostly phrases and words, not complete sentences, that emerge with certainty. Even so, Helleputte's scrawl reveals more than his colleagues would probably have wished" (Zuckerman 2004: 14).

- 24 Zuckerman notes further regarding this statement : "That he [de Selliers] should have said so seems odd, but to a government concerned about losing its position and its independence, the comment made perfect sense. International law guaranteed that a neutral could repel invasion yet retain its status and rights" (Zuckerman 2004: 17).

- 25 Giddens writes: "The reflexive monitoring of all states involves the invention of 'history' in some sense or another – the documented interpretation of the past that provides an anchorage for anticipated developments in the future" (Giddens 1981: 212).
- 26 Gibson 1917: 15. The American minister to Belgium, Brand Whitlock, describes the reaction to this part of Albert's speech: "The deputies spring to their feet, raise their hands as though swearing to an oath, and cry: "Oui! Oui! Oui!" (Whitlock 1919: 61).
- 27 Quoted in Zuckerman 2004: 17.
- 28 As quoted by Albertini (1957: 465, emphasis added). Historian Marc Schreiber reports Albert's concluding words in the singular, as "I have faith in our destiny" (Schreiber 1945: 107).
- 29 This illustrates that Belgian state agents were, in fact "persons who act in behalf of states" (Jackson 1995: 111). In the same vein, the famous Belgian historian Henri Prieune once stated about Belgium's King Leopold: "He was the guardian of the national honor; and it was this, as much as his own personal honor, that determined the way in which he acted" (as quoted in Meeus 1962: 288).
- 30 For this observation I'm especially grateful to Oded Lowenheim.
- 31 The German ambassador in Brussels, von Below Saleske, stated that "the Belgians will line up to see us pass" (Meeus 1962: 350).
- 32 British General Sir Robert Baden-Powell actually articulated admiration in just such terms, stating:

[I]t would be trite to quote David against Goliath in the case of gallant little Belgium standing up to the ogre of Prussian Militarism, but that historic fight had its counterpart recently where a peaceful, hard-working little tailor was set upon by a big, beery loafer.

(Cammaerts 1935: 176)

- 33 As quoted by Haythornwaite (1992: 148).
- 34 See the recent work by Ringmar (2002) on recognition.
- 35 Meeus characterizes the transformational quality of the Belgian action as such: "this little state with its tiny territory had, on a moral level, become a world power. All the world was interested in its destiny" (Meeus 1962: 352).
- 36 Waltz states that the survival assumption of neorealism "allows for the fact that in pursuit of its security no state will act with perfect knowledge and wisdom" (Waltz 1979: 92).
- 37 Selliers, quoted in Albertini 1957: 461, emphasis added.
- 38 The latter continues to obtain with Mennonites, the Amish, Quakers, and the Church of the Brethren (Koontz 1996: 170).
- 39 While there is, in my view, no Archimedean formula to measure the morality of the principle being advanced by this category of "futile" actions. But scholarship should note what the international response was to such an action, identifying both who responded affirmatively and/or negatively, and why.
- 40 Jules van den Heuvel, quoted in Zuckerman 2004: 17.
- 41 Luigi Barzini, in Caine 1914: 125.
- 42 The British foreign secretary, Sir Edward Grey, also referenced the pain endured by Belgium: "love of liberty and independence is not crushed by oppression and force, but set off by courage and suffering becomes an inspiration to its own generation and is exalted to an imperishable place in history" (Caine 1914: 20).
- 43 <http://www.usafa.af.mil/jscope/JSCOPE03/Zupan03.html>.
- 44 Natural evil, according to Bruce Reichenbach, refers to "all instances of suffering – mental or physical – which are caused by the unintentional actions of human agents or by non-human causes"; moral evil, in turn, includes "all instances of

suffering – mental or physical – which are caused by the intentional and willful actions of human agents” (Reichenbach 1976: 179). (For an engaging review of “moral evil” as a concept in IR theory, see Rengger and Jeffery 2005.)

- 45 The downside to the second parameter, of course, is that it is only useful to the scholar, not to those who wish to inform policy, since it is not used to “predict” behavior but rather to provide a general understanding of the “rightness” of resistance.

6. Haunted by the past: shame and NATO’s Kosovo operation

- 1 Thomas Friedman, *New York Times*, 04.06.1999. Friedman issued a similar assertion at the end of the crisis: “from the start the Kosovo problem has been about how we should react when bad things happen in unimportant places” (*New York Times*, 06.04.1999).
- 2 Fouad Ajami, “The New Hapsburgs,” *U.S. News & World Report*, 06.12.1999.
- 3 Fareed Zakaria, “Wage a Full War, or Cut a Deal,” *Newsweek*, 04.12.1999.
- 4 The astute reader will notice that all of these critics – Friedman, Ajami, Zakaria, and especially Abrams – have been instrumental supporters of the current Iraq War.
- 5 As identified by many critics, some of which are noted later in the chapter (pp. 121–124), there were mixed results from NATO’s Kosovo operation. Generally, supporters of the intervention assert that it put a stop to the ethnic cleansing policies of the Serbs and ensured a measure of autonomy for Kosovar Albanians; critics point out that the operation accelerated abuses during the hostilities and led to reprisal cleansing of Albanian Serbs by returning Kosovar Albanians.
- 6 Quoted in Chapter 3 (Tickner 1996: 152).
- 7 Besides the Finnemore (2003) study, a wealth of literature exists on humanitarian intervention. Several important edited volumes include: Lang 2003; Moore 1998; Moseley and Norman 2002; and Welsh 2004. The most recent work on intervention deals with its moral-legalistic basis, diverse work which Jennifer Welsh characterizes as “divide[d] on the question of humanitarian intervention” (Welsh 2004: 54). Such works include Attack 2002; Ayoob 2002; Brown 2002; Chesterman 2001; Goodman 2006; Heinze 2004a, 2004b; Knudsen 1996, 2005; Lang 2002; Newman 2002; Ramsbotham and Woodhouse 1996; Roberts 1993; Wheeler and Morris 1996; Wheeler 1997, 2004.
- 8 This resolution, adopted October 24, 1998, also required the Kosovo Albanian leadership to “condemn all terrorist actions, *demand[ed]* that such actions cease immediately and *emphasiz[ed]* that all elements in the Kosovo Albanian community should pursue their goals by peaceful means only” (UNSC Res. 1203, available at <http://www.un.org/peace/kosovo/98sc1203.htm>, accessed January 7, 2007).
- 9 French President Jacques Chirac posited in an interview shortly after the end of the air war that, while France and Britain had been directly engaged with the Kosovo situation for some time, it wasn’t until the Racak massacre that the United States finally began to focus on a solution: “The Americans weren’t very keen on themselves getting involved. And then there was the Racak massacre, on 14 January, which of course greatly shocked the world” (Chirac interview with television company *TFI*, 06.10.1999).
- 10 Tim Judah notes:

[B]y the end of the bombing, according to UNHCR [United Nations High Commission on Refugees] 848,100 Kosovo Albanians had left the province. Of these 444,600 went to Albania, 244,500 to Macedonia, 69,900 to Montenegro and 91,057 were airlifted from Macedonia to other countries.

(Judah 2000: 250)

Samantha Power reported:

All told, Milosevic's forces drove more than 1.3 million Kosovars from their homes, some 740,000 of whom flooded into neighboring Macedonia and Albania. It was the largest, boldest single act of ethnic cleansing of the decade, and it occurred *while* the United States and its allies were intervening to prevent further atrocity.

(Power 2002: 450)

11 Sergei Medvedev and Peter van Ham posit that

Kosovo also offers a template for academics, by which to test and taste a smorgasbord of new, often critical, ideas about European politics and security. Whereas some would label "Kosovo" as politics-cum-war as usual, the vast majority [and certainly not a silent one, this time] seems to share the view that this event stands for "something different."

(Medvedev and Ham 2002: 2, quoted in Sterling-Folker 2006: 3)

The Sterling-Folker volume includes sophisticated presentations of various theoretical applications of the Kosovo case, some of which I treat in this section of the chapter.

- 12 Moravcsik's first "core assumption of liberal IR theory" is that individuals and groups in states are "rational and risk-averse" and "promote differentiated interests under constraints imposed by material scarcity, conflicting values, and variations in societal influence" (Moravcsik 1997: 516). (Regarding the Kosovo case, see Boyer and Butler 2006).
- 13 This might explain why American President Bill Clinton's job approval ratings fell 8–10 points throughout the Kosovo campaign. (See <http://pollingreport.com/clinton.htm>, accessed January 7, 2007.)
- 14 See the work of Lowenheim on "moral prestige" (Lowenheim 2003).
- 15 Chomsky summarized this basic position in an interview on April 8, 1999:

Nevertheless, it was necessary, as the Clinton foreign policy team kept stressing, to preserve the credibility of NATO. Now when they talk about credibility, they are not talking about the credibility of Denmark or France. The Clinton Administration doesn't care about those countries' credibility. What they care about is the credibility of the United States. Credibility means fear: what they are concerned with is maintaining fear of the global enforcer, namely, the US. And that's much more important than the fate of hundreds of thousands of Kosovars, or whatever other consequences are incurred. So the US and NATO have helped to create a humanitarian catastrophe by knowingly escalating an already serious crisis to catastrophic proportions.

(Chomsky interview, available at <http://www.zmag.org/chomsky/chomintyug.htm>, accessed January 4, 2007)

Similar lines of argument from that time include the contributions to the March–April 1999 edition of the *New Left Review*, and David Rieff's (1999) article. This has been termed the critique "from the left" by David Campbell (2001: 120).

- 16 <http://www.zmag.org/chomsky/chomintyug.htm>, accessed January 4, 2007.
- 17 Cook, quoted in Henig 2001: 49.
- 18 In an interview on March 28, 1999 with *Le Journal du Dimanche* the French foreign minister justified the NATO action in the following terms: "it is intolerable

- to allow the recurrence in Europe of such scenes of barbarity – and the risks of regional destabilization they entail.”
- 19 Text of national address given on March 24, 1999, *New York Times*, 03.25.99: A15, emphasis added.
 - 20 Text of national address given on March 24, 1999, *New York Times*, 03.25.99: A15, emphasis added.
 - 21 This supports the position I presented in Chapter 3 regarding the effects of “military doctrines” influencing the assessment of a crisis. The American Defense Department, including then Secretary of Defense William Cohen, largely opposed American involvement in the Kosovo operation, and one could posit that these skeptics were influenced by a tenet of the “Powell Doctrine” that cases of humanitarian disaster had no clear solution and thus military actions were imprudent.
 - 22 Of the five main NATO countries which contributed to the Kosovo intervention, Italy was most reluctant to provide military assistance, and Italian public approval for the war never reached above 50 percent. One study notes that support was most consolidated following the launching on March 29 of the Arcobaleno Mission, which called for Italy to take in Kosovar refugees. Both Massimo D’Alema, the Italian premier, and Lamberto Dini, the Italian foreign minister, while pledging their support for the NATO bombings, continually reinforced to their Italian public the idea that Italy was different from the other NATO allies and the Italian contribution to the action would remain limited. The Aviano base remained one of NATO’s main air bases from which bombing runs were launched, and this prompted negative reactions and protests from both the Italian public and its media (see Morelli 2001).
 - 23 Maja Zehfuss, who I quote in more detail in following pages regarding this case, observes that “this focus on NATO’s credibility seems inappropriate. Indeed, the very name of the operation [Allied Force] seems to indicate NATO’s conception of self” (Zehfuss 2002b: 116).
 - 24 Mandelbaum was reflecting on the interventions in Somalia, Bosnia, and Haiti, and chiefly responding to the then American National Security Advisor Anthony Lake’s comments likening America’s foreign policy calling to the work of Mother Teresa.
 - 25 Vandenberg (2000). The use of rape by Serbs is also highlighted in Falger and van der Dennen’s “biopolitics” contribution to the Sterling–Folker volume (Falger and van der Dennen 2006: esp. 298–300), as well as by Kennedy–Pipe and Stanley (2001).
 - 26 An ontological security interpretation should not, however, be likened to a liberal feminist perspective, where “the answer” to the subjugation of women is simply to “add more women” (Mertus 2006: 256; Tickner 2001: esp. 12–13). Relating back to the discussion in Chapter 3 on history and the general role of contingency in social action, my ontological security account is quite skeptical of the notion of “progress.” On this issue, ontological security shares the perspective of critical feminist IR scholars, who assert that it is the *way* in which traditional liberal “progress” is conceptualized that is most problematic, as evidenced by Kimberly Hutchings’s critique regarding discourse ethics:
- [T]he principles of discourse ethics are always underpinned by an account of historical development in which relations between ontogenetic and phylogenetic moral progress reinforce the moral superiority of the cultural tradition which also happens to be politically and economically pre-eminent in the current world order.
- (Hutchings 2005: 165)
- 27 Blair in *Independent on Sunday*, 02.14.1999.

- 28 This would make intelligible some of the rather contradictory reactions to the Kosovo campaign in NATO countries, noted in David Fromkin's critique of American unwillingness to accept Kosovar refugees:

Many Americans were upset even by the original U.S. offer to take in a mere twenty thousand Kosovar refugees. That opposition would define the extent to which the United States is prepared to be humanitarian rather than self-interested. What is morally inconsistent is to be unwilling to resettle Kosovars in the United States, but – supposedly on humanitarian grounds – to support a military intervention to restore them to their homes: a course of action that involved loss of life. Preferring that people die rather than have someone thought to be undesirable move into your neighborhood may be human nature, but it is not humanitarian.

(Fromkin 2002: 182–183)

In ontological security terms, however, this “moral inconsistency” is somewhat logical – Americans were not concerned with the plight of ethnic Albanians outside of confronting what their plight said about American self-identity.

- 29 The Munich Agreement ended the Munich Crisis of 1938. Led most notably by the British prime minister, Neville Chamberlain, it was signed by the major powers of Europe after a conference held in Munich in Germany in 1938 and concluded on September 29, 1938. The purpose of the conference was to discuss the future of Czechoslovakia. Britain, France, and the Soviet Union, in exchange for a peace agreement, surrendered the Sudetenland portion of Czechoslovakia to Nazi Germany. Chamberlain famously stated upon his return to Britain: “My good friends, for the second time in our history, a British Prime Minister has returned from Germany bringing peace with honor. *I believe it is peace for our time.*” (For more on the Munich Agreement, see Taylor 1979; Kee 1988.)
- 30 *New York Times*, 05.10.99: A9.
- 31 Speech in House of Commons, 04.13.1999.
- 32 (Robertson's commentary in *News of the World*, March 28, 1999, emphasis added.) Robertson often linked this argument to the Holocaust, even though appeasement policies were more directly responsible for interstate conflict than intrastate ethnic cleansing. See for instance, Robertson's claim in *Midland Newspapers* on April 6 that “[w]e have not seen scenes like these in Europe since Hitler's attack on the Jews in the Second World War.”
- 33 One British MP, Michael Wicks, even linked the two issues as one continuing source of shameful British negligence:

We now talk about Kosovo, but not long ago we talked about Bosnia. As a new Member in the previous Parliament in 1992, I was shocked by what I took to be the majority view of both sides of the House that we should be extremely cautious about intervention. The view was that, at best, we should go easy and, at worst, do nothing. The Foreign Office was led by the key appeasers. I grew up in post-war Britain, and found it difficult to understand the appeasement of Nazi Germany that had taken place in the 1930s. It was only when I heard debates about Bosnia in this House in the early 1990s that I started to understand the appeasement of the 1930s. In a parliamentary Session in the early 1990s, I visited Sarajevo – not at the height of the conflict, but nevertheless when the city was being shelled. I was there for just two or three days. Talking to people in Bosnia and Sarajevo helped me to understand what it was like to live in that civilized, cosmopolitan city surrounded by mountains from which Serb soldiers could look down the rifle sights of their sophisticated weaponry and decide which old lady, child or

woman to kill that day. In Bosnia, ethnic cleansing gave us a vile new vocabulary to add to the lexicon of International Relations. The situation in Kosovo bears comparison, but is a more extreme case. However, no one could foresee or predict the scale of the tragedy of recent weeks. No one in the House would argue about that.

(Michael Wicks, in Hansard Parliamentary debates, 19 April 1999, col. 652)

- 34 Former President Bill Clinton, "Embracing our Humanity: Global Security in the 21st Century," remarks at the University of Iowa, March 23, 2003, available at <http://www.clintonfoundation.org/032603-sp-cf-gn-gl-usa-sp-embracing-our-humanity,-global-security-in-the-21st-century.htm>, accessed January 10, 2003.
- 35 See, especially, *Power 2002*: esp. ch. 10.
- 36 "Ghosts of Rwanda," transcript available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/etc/script.html>, accessed on January 7, 2007.
- 37 "Ghosts of Rwanda," transcript available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/etc/script.html>, accessed on January 7, 2007, emphasis added. One wonders why Albright should feel such remorse if "pushing for a large humanitarian intervention" would have "never happened." To me, her statement implies that she does not fully believe that such a push would have been futile.
- 38 *New York Times*, 03.26.1998.
- 39 "Ghosts of Rwanda," transcript available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/etc/script.html>, accessed on January 7, 2007.
- 40 "Ghosts of Rwanda," transcript available at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/ghosts/etc/script.html>, accessed on January 7, 2007.
- 41 Many members of the American Congress expressed American interests in such self-identity terms as well. Republican Senator Chuck Hagel stated at the beginning of the war: "History will judge us harshly if we do not take action to stop this rolling genocide" (Hagel, quoted in *New York Times*, "Conflict in the Balkans," Jane Perlez, March 24, 1999: 1).
- 42 IR scholar Michael Barnett, who worked for the United Nations mission in Rwanda during the genocide, made the following remark about this "apology" in the PBS *Frontline* film *Triumph of Evil* (1999):

It was meaningless. It was hollow. It was unclear to me what he was apologizing for and for whom he was apologizing. He didn't say "I take personal responsibility for the failure of the United States, the international community to do something to stop genocide." He made, as I recall, some kind of vague reference to the failure of the international community to act and to help the Rwandans in their hour of need.

(<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/evil/etc/script.html>, accessed January 7, 2007)

- 43 As quoted in the *Times-Picayune* (New Orleans), 04.01.1999: A23.
- 44 *New York Times*, 05.14.1999, emphasis added. Clinton's remarks were made to an American military veterans' group in Washington, D.C.
- 45 Samantha Power interprets the role of both as influencing "senior officials in the Clinton administration": "[Albright] and the rest of the Clinton team remembered Srebrenica, were still coming to grips with guilt over the Rwanda genocide, and were looking to make amends. They feared Racak was just the beginning of a campaign of mini-Srebrenicas" (*Power 2002*: 447, emphasis added).
- 46 As quoted in *New York Times*, "Clinton Voices Anger and Compassion at Serbian Transience," 03.20.1999: A7, emphasis added.
- 47 *New York Times*, 03.25.1999: A15.

- 48 We may never know whether policy elites truly believed the conflicts to be caused by primordial attachments or whether they simply employed that view for purposes of convenience. As David Campbell has stated:

If ethnic and nationalist conflicts are understood as no more than settled history or human nature rearing its ugly head, then there is nothing that can be done in the present to resolve the tension except to repress or ignore such struggles. (Campbell 1996: 173)

- 49 "The leaders of ethnic movements invariably select from traditional cultures only those aspects that they think will serve to unite the group which will be useful in promoting the interests of the group as they define them" (Brass 1991: 74).
 50 *New York Times*, "Clinton's Painful Words of Sorrow and Chagrin," 03.26.1998: A12.
 51 In this context, it is also noteworthy that Clinton chose to employ this argument in front of groups less sympathetic to the Kosovo policy. In the previously cited speech given in front of veterans' groups on May 14, 1999, Clinton stated:

I don't believe that the Serb people in their souls are any better, I mean any worse, than we are. Do you? Do you believe when a little baby is born into a certain ethnic or racial group that somehow they, they have some poison in there that has to at some point when they grow up, turn into some vast flame of destruction? You think the Germans would have perpetrated the Holocaust on their own without Hitler? Was there something in the history of the German race that made them do this? No. We've got to get straight about this. This is something political leaders do. And if people make decisions to do these kinds of things, other people can make decisions to stop them and if the resources are properly arrayed, it can be done. And that is exactly what we intend to do. (Clinton, *New York Times*, 05.14.1999: A12)

- 52 *New York Times*, 05.14.1999: A12.
 53 Nicholas Wheeler writes about the Rwandan genocide:

It is comforting for those of us who live in the West to think that what happened in Rwanda was the result of ancient tribal hatreds. . . . However, this image, which is replete with Conradian overtones of Africa as *The Heart of Darkness*, is simply wrong. The fact is that this genocide, like that of the Holocaust, was the product of deliberate political design. (Wheeler 2000: 209)

- 54 For work on German "political culture," see Berger 1996 and, especially, Berger 1997, 1998. Berger's studies highlight similar constitutive elements of German "political culture," sources which can be considered similar to the sources of "shame" which I posit in this chapter.
 55 Schroeder addressing SPD conference on April 11, 1999, quoted in "A Look into the Void: Kosovo as Holocaust Analogy," *Washington Post*, 04.16.1999: A29.
 56 Schroeder in "Ich bin kein Kreigskanzler" ("I am not a war chancellor"), *Der Spiegel*, 04.12.1999: 17, emphasis added.
 57 Schroeder in "Ich bin kein Kreigskanzler" ("I am not a war chancellor"), *Der Spiegel*, 04.12.1999: 17, emphasis added.
 58 Schroeder reiterated the argument on German "responsibility" during an address to the German Bundestag on April 22, 1999, during the fiftieth anniversary of the NATO:

In participating in the NATO operation in Kosovo, Germany has assumed its share of the overall responsibility. Our contribution is not just a normal

expression of Alliance solidarity. As part of the democratic community we Germans, *also in the light of our history*, have an obligation to stand up for peace and security and against repression, expulsions and the use of force.

(<http://www.germany.info/relaunch/politics/speeches/042299.html>, accessed January 7, 2007, emphasis added)

- 59 "Pacifist German Turns Hawkish on Serbs," *Washington Post*, 04.11.1999: A23. At the Green Party conference on May 13, 1999, Fischer made what the *Financial Times* described as "the speech of his political career" and Kaarbo and Lantis termed the "most important speech of his life" (Kaarbo and Lantis 2003: 37). This implies that the debate over self-identity, and the recollection of painful collective memories, has domestic "second-image reverse" consequences, as detailed by Kaarbo and Lantis:

Through extreme efforts, Fischer garnered a majority vote for a compromise resolution that authorized a continuation of the air war. . . . What is important to note, however, is that Fischer's leadership in this situation and possibly his courage over taking a stand against many in his party and his party's constituency increased his credibility and won him a great deal of influence over German participation in Kosovo.

(Kaarbo and Lantis 2003: 37)

- 60 Ramet and Lyon note:

[A]ny student of German foreign affairs cannot be struck with the frequency with which the term "normality" comes up, as a standard against which to measure Germany, generally with the unspoken assumption and implication that Britain, France, Greece, Spain, Italy, and perhaps also Canada and the US are all "normal" countries. *And this, in turn, is very much a legacy of World War II, the Third Reich, and notions of collective German guilt.*

(Ramet and Lyon 2001: 101)

- 61 "Ich bin kein Kriegskanzler," *Der Spiegel*, 04.12.1999: 17.
 62 Interview in *Deutschland*, August/September 1999: 18.
 63 Germany had dispatched peacekeeping forces to Somalia in 1992 and to Bosnia in 1995, but these forces could not be considered combat equipped.
 64 The *Economist* noted on April 24, 1999, that Germans supported the Kosovo action by a 63 to 34 percent margin. But by the end of May the number supporting German action had dropped to a smaller majority of 51 percent (*New York Times*, 05.26.1999: A12).
 65 Boyer and Butler echo this assessment: "Kosovo offered a potential opportunity for a unified Germany to finally shed its confining historical legacy and assume a place within the pantheon of major military powers" (Boyer and Butler 2006: 87).
 66 "Knowledge without action is perhaps even more tragic, and certainly more painful, than the most profound ignorance," (Freeman 1993: 43).
 67 (Lamizet and Debras 2001: 109).
 68 Lamizet and Debras, quoting journalists Jacque Almaric and Jean-François Helvig in *Liberation*, May 9, 1999.
 69 March 28, 1999.
 70 Jacques Chirac: "Aucune raison de changer de stratégie" (Jacques Chirac: "No reason to change strategy"), *Le Figaro*, May 4, 1999.
 71 Emphasis added. Speech available at: <http://www.ambafrance-us.org/news/statmnts/1999/conflict1.asp>, accessed January 7, 2007.

- 72 Although there were economic security reasons for Italy's more measured stance, as noted by Morelli (2001).
- 73 This is the argument of Boyer and Butler (2006: esp. 85).
- 74 See, in this context, Robert Putnam's "Two Level Games" thesis (Putnam 1988).
- 75 Liberia was founded by an abolitionist group for freed American slaves in 1822. Approximately 5 percent of Liberia's inhabitants are descendants of slaves – half of those are descendants of American slaves, the other half are Caribbean slave descendants. Descendants of these slaves have often constituted the ruling class in Liberia.
- 76 Since 2000, rebel groups struggled with Liberian President Charles Taylor to re-establish a democratic form of government. In short, the situation on the ground in Liberia deteriorated to such a point that by June of 2003 civilians were regularly caught in the crossfire even in the large cities of Buchanan and (the capital) Monrovia. Although the American media, preoccupied in Iraq and elsewhere, provided little coverage of the crisis during the summer of 2003, a few moving images were beamed back to American households. Some images included shots of pro-American demonstrations by Liberian civilians and Liberians piling their dead relatives at the gates of the American embassy in Monrovia. (See *New York Times* issues during June and July of 2003, and also the documentary *Liberia: An Uncivil War*, by Jonathan Stack and James Brabazon (2004)).
- 77 Essentially:

[T]he Doctrine expresses that military action should be used only as a last resort and only if there is a clear risk to national security by the intended target; the force, when used, should be overwhelming and disproportionate to the force used by the enemy; there must be strong support for the campaign by the general public; and there must be a clear exit strategy from the conflict in which the military is engaged.

(quoted at http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/teachers/lessonplans/iraq/powelldoctrine_short.html)

- 78 *Washington Times*, July 23, 2003: A1.
- 79 The Liberian intervention was too limited to be that successful. While America moved two ships carrying 2000 Marines to just off the Liberian shores in July, and while a "vanguard" force of 200 Marines was deployed into Monrovia on August 15, the troops were pulled back out of the city in mid-September. One editorial appearing in the *Washington Post* in September interpreted the deployment as "the United States sen[d]ing its forces 99 percent of the way to Liberia – close enough to claim credit for acting, but not so close as to assume risk or responsibility" (Tom Malinowski, "Broken Promises to Liberia," *Washington Post*, September 24, 2003).
- 80 For the first time an American official used the term "genocide" to describe an ongoing humanitarian crisis. In this case, it was Powell who stated in front of the American Senate Foreign Relations Committee on September 8, 2004: "Genocide has been committed in Darfur. The government of Sudan and the Janjaweed [militias] bear responsibility and genocide may still be occurring."
- 81 <http://www.debat.es.org/pages/trans2004a.html>.
- 82 The Act called for a number of measures, short of American intervention with force, which included:

a new UN Security Council resolution with sanctions; concerted U.S. diplomacy to achieve an effective UN Security Council resolution; an extension of the current arms embargo to cover the Government of Sudan; the freezing of assets and denial of visas to those responsible for genocide,

crimes and humanity, and war crimes; accelerated assistance to the African Union mission; a Presidential Envoy for Sudan; and a military no-fly zone in Darfur.

(http://corzine.senate.gov/press_office/record.cfm?id=232683)

83 Accessed from Corzine's Senate website on March 10, 2005: http://corzine.senate.gov/press_office/record.cfm?id=232683, emphasis added.

84 *New York Times* columnist Nicholas Kristof observed in July 2005, regarding American coverage of Darfur:

The real failure has been televisions. According to monitoring by the Tyn-dall Report, ABC News had a total of 18 minutes of the Darfur genocide in its nightly newscasts all last year – and that turns out to be a credit to Peter Jennings. NBC had only 5 minutes of coverage all last year, and CBS only 3 minutes – about a minute of coverage for every 100,000 deaths. In contrast, Martha Stewart received 130 minutes of coverage by the three networks. Incredibly, more than two years into the genocide, NBC, aside from covering official trips, has still not bothered to send one of its own correspondents into Darfur for independent reporting.

(Jennings, "All Ears for Tom Cruise, All Eyes on Brad Pitt,"

New York Times, July 26, 2006.

85 The story was reported in several major newspapers throughout the United States in August 2003. It was first reported on August 17, 2003, in the *Los Angeles Times*, by Maggie Farley, Ann Simmons, and Paul Richter, in "Team in Liberia Sought Fast Aid; Pentagon Specialists Called for Rapid U.S. Intervention to Restore Order, but the Report Was Revised before It Reached the President," p. 1, added. The story notes that the Pentagon "sat" on the report before American President George W. Bush could see it.

86 Wheeler quotes Clark, saying that he believed "in an unguarded moment at a press briefing [that] 'air power alone cannot stop paramilitary action'" (Wheeler 2000: 270).

87 Shelton and many in the Pentagon, according to David Halberstam, debated the use of helicopters in Kosovo, but the debate was not "about heliborne warfare; it was always about ground troops. What the Pentagon suspected was that Clark wanted the Apaches as a Trojan horse for ground troops." And then, when Clark did request the troops he "requested forty-eight of them; the army sent twenty-four." And even at that point the helicopters never made it into service (Halberstam 2001: 464–466).

7. The future of ontological security in International Relations

1 McSweeney's view on this subject:

[S]ocial action is reflexive: this does not refer to the self-conscious and deliberate *reflection* on self, of which most actors are capable to varying degrees. It refers, rather, to the unconscious and taken-for-granted skill which all display of necessity, in drawing on and producing the routine which makes action comprehensible to oneself and others.

(McSweeney 1999: 140)

This understanding of reflexivity may apply to individuals, but in states the primary way actions can be "comprehensive" is through self-reflection. Thus in the latter case self-reflection is an integral (although by no means sole) condition of reflexivity.

- 2 Williams writes of neoconservative Robert Kaplan's work that it celebrates

an heroic choice to accept that there is no choice but to act decisively in conditions of emergency when others – or even society as a whole – have become too soft, too secure, too “decadent” to recognize the imperatives of responsibility and power politics.

(Williams 2005a: 201)

- 3 See Keck and Sikkink 1998; Tarrow 1994; Risse, Ropp and Sikkink 1999. For an engaging examination of the influence of early twentieth-century peace movements upon international society (specifically the transition from the League of Nations to the United Nations), see Cecilia Lynch's (1999) book.

- 4 Neta Crawford calls social movements “organized publics,” groups who

deploy arguments based on principled beliefs, and shape the political context or conditions of acceptability within which states and other social actors try to act. Through direct action, [social] movements may also make large-scale behavioral change, without direct involvement of governments, desirable, possible and a fact on the ground.

(Crawford 2002: 57)

- 5 An example of a reference to the nation-state self in the context of international organization legitimacy comes from California Senator Dianne Feinstein's op-ed in the *San Jose Mercury News* on April 27, 2003:

After 9/11, the world was supportive of the United States. But we have lost a lot of that goodwill largely because of the way the administration approached the war in Iraq, but also because of a wider perception that the attitude has become “the American way or the highway.” With the refusal to sign the Kyoto Treaty on global warming, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and the International Criminal Court – to name but three examples – the attitude has been one of unilateralism: that *the United States* knows better than the rest of the world. Now, in the reconstruction of Iraq, the United States can repair some of this damage by working with our allies and the United Nations.

- 6 Barnett and Finnemore list the sources and forms such IO authority takes: (1) rational-legal (Barnett and Finnemore 2004: 21–22); (2) delegated authority (Barnett and Finnemore 2004: 22–23); (3) moral (Barnett and Finnemore 2004: 25); and (4) expert authority, derived from the “scientific” expertise and specialized knowledge which IOs provide (Barnett and Finnemore 2004: 24–27).

- 7 Besides Benedict Anderson's (1991) study, Giddens also proposes that the media in “late modernity produces a situation in which humankind in some respects becomes a ‘we,’ facing problems and opportunities where there are no ‘others’” (Giddens 1991: 27).

- 8 A bevy of recent publications, too many to name here, have focused on the role news networks played by providing “friendly” coverage for the Bush administration's claims of weapons of mass destruction and al-Qaeda connections in Iraq. (For a general review, see Rieder 2004.) Many articles recently appearing in the journals *American Journalism Review* and *Cultural Studies/Critical Methodologies* provide a critical perspective on the relationship between the Western media and the American military prior to and during the Iraq War. More generally, James der Derian has focused upon the “Military–Industrial–Media–Entertainment Network”

- in his book (see der Derian 2001), and in many subsequent articles which have appeared in more public periodicals.
- 9 Additionally, human rights NGOs can also provide information which can be used to “discipline” deviant actors through prosecution (see Steele and Amoureux 2005: 413, esp. fn. 34).
 - 10 Examples of such criticism abound. William Korey notes how the 1998 Human Rights Watch *World Report* “scathingly criticized the United States for its ‘Great Power Arrogance on Human Rights.’ On a host of human rights issues, the NGO community is and will continue to be critical of the United States” (Korey 1998: 22).
 - 11 See the contributions in Risse *et al.* 1999.
 - 12 See andrewsullivan.com. Fein’s exhibition, which recreates the scenes of the Abu Ghraib prison scandal, was displayed at the Toomey Tourell Gallery in San Francisco from January 4–30, 2007.
 - 13 http://time.blogs.com/daily_dish/2006/09/this_is_an_actu.html, accessed January 11, 2007.
 - 14 “Conflict is the fountainhead of progress . . . conflict and its incumbent violence impel and justify both the emergence of republican governments and the greater peace necessary to their survival and improvement” (Huntley 1996: 61).
 - 15 One American army officer characterized “the stakes” of this tension in a letter to an American Senator, asking:

Do we sacrifice our ideals in order to preserve security? Terrorism inspires fear and suppresses ideals like freedom and individual rights. Overcoming the fear posed by terrorist threats is a tremendous test of our courage. Will we confront danger and adversity in order to preserve our ideals, or will our courage and commitment to individual rights wither at the prospect of sacrifice? My response is simple. If we abandon our ideals in the face of adversity and aggression, then those ideals were never really in our possession. I would rather die fighting than give up even the smallest part of the idea that is “America.”

(“A Matter of Honor,” reprinted in the *Washington Post*,
September 28, 2005: A21)

- 16 As Williams notes, in Hobbes’s theory the escape from the “state of nature” arises from the “prevalence of *error*,” rather than “rational calculation” (Williams 2005a: 30).

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