Going back to the Drawing Board

Realism and the application of Buddhist wisdom to international relations.

By The Keyboard Diplomat

Realism and the world today

In a world characterised by bloody conflicts and humanitarian crises, the 21st century looks to be a bleak era for international affairs. The present war in Ukraine has solidified and revamped 20th century bipolar tensions, with the belligerent actions of Russia being feared by many as the start of something even more hostile and expansive.

Fears of history repeating itself are ubiquitous amongst statespersons and diplomats, with even the US President, Joe Biden, vocalising his hopes for avoiding a third world war.

In these circumstances, it may be necessary to go back to the drawing board and re-consider why wars happen and how we can prevent them. This discussion was famously impelled at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919, where the British and American delegations commissioned the establishment of university departments and institutes for the scientific study of international relations. After the First World War, there was a vehement desire to reflect on interstate conflict and where possible, seek its prevention. This led to the birth of international relations theory (Spindler, 2013), a school of academic study which now comprises several different approaches to explaining state behaviour.

The dominant theory in this school is realism; a perspective which, to this day, is valued as "probably the most distinguished school of thought in the history of international relations" (Hoffmann, 1988, p.6). Realism argues that sovereign states, who are the key players in the international arena, exist in a system of anarchy, where, given the absence of a global sovereign, they are forced to

fight for their survival and accumulate material power for security and defensive purposes. According to realists, states are rational and unitary actors, who operate in a field of uncertainty and imperfect information, whereby the intentions, capabilities and policies of other actors cannot be fully known. As such, in order to achieve their main goal of survival, states will increase their security and offensive capabilities and balance the power of stronger states where possible. In such a system, war is inevitable and is the product of a struggle for power rooted in human nature and the instability of the anarchic global order.

Realism and the notion of international relations as a science draws intellectually upon the European tradition of 'philosophy of science', which holds its origins in ancient Greece. The development of international relations into an academic discipline after 1919 is closely tied to the philosophy of science discussion, in which thinkers concern themselves with the methods, foundations and implications of science (Spindler, 2013). Empirically, realism is grounded within the history of the European states system. The provenance of the sovereign state is dated back to the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the Thirty Years' War (1618-48) (Spindler, 2013), and the realist characterisation of modern state intercourse is often related back to the Italian city states system. From the Peace of Westphalia, realists assert that a new order was established whereby states had sovereignty over their own territories, to the exclusion of other states. In this system, non-interference was crucial.

Finally, realism finds its theoretical origins within a number of Western political philosophers. Among the most notable are Thucydides (*History of the Peloponnesian War*), Machiavelli (*The Prince*) and Thomas Hobbes (*Leviathan*), all of whom dictated the contents of what is now termed Classical realism (the normative precursor to modern realism). Later theorists include Hans Morgenthau, the putative founder of 20th century realism and prominent neo-classical realist; and Kenneth Waltz, prominent neorealist who propounded the scientific characterisation of international relations.

The prominence of the Western worldview

It is clear from the above that the intellectual, empirical and theoretical origins of realism are largely western. This means that, fatefully, realism as an international relations theory rooted in Western history, Western philosophy and Western political philosophy, fails to account for the heterogenous histories, worldviews and cultures it claims under its purview. It comes as no surprise then, that as a theory it is failing to achieve what was mandated at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference - to build a science upon which statesmen could understand and ultimately prevent war.

Modern theorists are starting to realise that building a science of international relations, to explain the behaviour of countries across the globe, requires a depth of analysis which considers the contexts, worldviews and "human natures" of people beyond just one sphere of experience. This is not to deny the diversity of the West, nor to challenge the achievements of realism, but rather to acknowledge the extent to which Western hegemony of thought (which we see across a number of academic subjects), debases the dignity of what would otherwise be a strong and honorable discipline. In testing the premises and findings of realism against non-Western philosophy and political experience, and expanding its perspectives accordingly, we could devise a far more viable international relations theory, which no longer yields to its own precariousness, and potentially even endeavours to achieve the 1919 mandate.

A notable challenge brought against this Western complex in realism was provided by Jawaharlal Nehru, former Prime Minister of India. Nehru attacked the realist assertion that moral values such as fairness, justice and tolerance, are only pursuable by statespersons to the extent that they support or do not compromise the power objective. Nehru also challenged the prescription that the post-war international system should comprise a number of alliances each within a great power orbit. He perceived this as a continuation of the old tradition of European power politics, and consequently criticised realism for remaining mired in the past and refusing to understand the realities of the present. Ultimately, for Nehru, realism failed to recognise the economic and physical decline of Western colonial powers after WWII, and the advent of nationalism within their former colonies (Acharya & Buzan, 2007).

Nehru's criticism addressed principally the empirical bases of realism. However, as we have seen above, the philosophical bases are just as primordial to its assertions. For the purpose of exploring the viability of realism, this blog will henceforth test those assertions against one of the most seminal and longstanding schools of philosophy, which adopts largely similar premises to realism, but paints a far more encompassing, comprehensive and consequently realistic picture of the human experience.

How can Buddhism help to enhance Realism?

Buddhism is a spirituality which was founded in India in the 6th century BCE. Having spanned thousands of years and cultures all over the world, Buddhism's longevity and global resonance provides testament to its viability as a philosophy. Like realism, Buddhism is built on the observation that 'life is suffering'. According to the Buddha, any pleasant experience is temporary and will eventually be lost. As such, to cling onto any such event or object in the hopes of attaining fulfilment will inevitably lead to disappointment. In Buddhist thought, three types of suffering (or 'duhkha') can be identified: suffering as pain, change, and conditions (Gethin, 1998). The first is self-explanatory and stands alone. The second and third - suffering as change and conditions - are interlinked and reflect realist observations. According to the Buddha, anything worldly which arouses pleasure or enjoyment is liable to change. In fact, change pervades all experience. This is duhkha as change. In this context, just as in the realist paradigm, the world is a place of uncertainty and unpredictability, where conditions are unstable and one can never feel entirely at ease. This is duhkha as conditions (Gethin, 1998). Consequently, if we were to anthropomorphise states, whereby, as in the realist realm, states become 'actors' or 'persons' with attributes rooted in human nature (such as rationality, identity and interests) (Wendt, 2004), it becomes clear that the Buddha's view of the world, applied to the international political sphere, is realist. Specifically, uncertainty pervades reality, individuals form perceptions of 'self' (and resultant identities), greed and delusion become principal defilements upon which to act, and life is a brutish struggle. This reality is best captured by Hobbes' famous aphorism, "the state of nature is a state of war".

However, the Buddha's analysis of human nature and the state of the world, unlike realism, propounds an optimistic dimension. This is expounded powerfully in the Buddha's 'four noble truths', which aim to capture concisely the predicament of humanity: 1) life is suffering, 2) suffering has a cause (ignorance), 3) the cessation of suffering is possible and 4) there is a pathway leading to the cessation of suffering. If realism is correct to personify states in the way that it does, it may be fitting to apply these four noble truths (which deepen human potential beyond the antagonistic accounts of Machiavelli and Hobbes), to the potential of states. In doing so, Buddhism would actually paint a more realistic picture of international relations, whereby states become more than just one-dimensional tyrannical forces, operating solely on the basis of fear. As the Buddha correctly identified, the human experience is not just one of fear and survival-instincts. With the cultivation of benign qualities, such as wisdom, generosity and friendliness (that are necessary for emancipation from suffering in a world of unstable conditions) amongst other practices, states can learn to conduct a more emotionally intelligent statecraft where (as we will see) power and abundance do not need to be compromised, stability may be crafted, peace between states may prevail and survival can be accounted for. It is with this statecraft that the mandate of the Paris Peace Conference may be met.

The state as a personified actor

It must be acknowledged that realism does not generally draw explicit links between the state and individual. It does not, for instance, centralise the idea that the survival objective of the state is rooted in human instinct; rather, that the anarchic international system prompts it to prioritise its survival, and that's just how the world is.

However, through its attribution to the state of human faculties (reason, self-interest, survival instincts), human faults (misperception, miscalculation) and selfhood (the state as a unitary actor), we can see that personification lies undeniably at the heart of realist thinking. And with this being the case, it thus follows that the realist interpretation of the 'reality' of state behaviour is suffused with underlying beliefs about the reality of human behaviour. For example, the realist contention to liberal portrayals of a cooperative and

prosperous statecraft, is that alliances (economic, security or otherwise) are simply matters of convenience. More powerful states will monopolise such arenas and cultivate submission to their values, such as through international law. States can also withdraw from security alliances where these no longer serve their power objectives. According to realism, the purported proposition of mutual defense and cooperation can therefore not be relied upon.

Whilst these realist assertions may seem inerrant when we look at the world today, if we account for there being a particular interpretation of human nature embedded in realist calculation - one which is notably one-dimensional (fear-driven, selfish and defensive) - we may wish to re-consider the veracity of these claims. More explicitly, we might ask whether it is possible that this ostensibly objective portrayal of the world as it is, stems from a school of thought which interprets rather than describes reality, and does so using only one worldview. And that that worldview, in turn, stems from one particular understanding of human nature, stemming from one perceived version of the human experience. This is not to discount from the accuracy of realism's assertions, nor the variation amongst its thinkers and their life experiences, but rather, to consider that we may wish to bolster these with more heterogenous interpretations of human nature, to create a more emotionally intelligent science.

According to Buddhism, human beings, depending on their stage of spiritual development and other causal factors, will operate from a variety of emotions, or detachment from these emotions, to create conditions of peace or instability. Thus, human beings are more complex than to simply operate from a space of fear at all times. However, fear does play a role in much of our decision-making and this induces suffering. Identified in Buddhist thought are three fundamental defilements of the mind: greed, aversion and delusion (Gethin, 1998). It is through the interaction of these defilements that suffering is manifested. From this, it is clear that the main focus of Buddhist philosophy is the inner-workings of the mind. It is the processes by which the mind responds to various external factors that bring about either suffering (the first noble truth) or the path leading to its cessation (the fourth noble truth).

If we look at the first option - suffering brought about by the interaction of greed, aversion and delusion - we can use Buddhist philosophy to investigate the source of these defilements. This is where the third noble truth (suffering has a cause) comes in. In Buddhism, the condition for the arising of duhkha is "the thirst for repeated existence which, associated with delight and greed, delights in this and that" (Gethin, 1998, pp.69-70). The suggestion is that deep within the minds of individuals lies a greed or unquenchable thirst, which causes suffering to arise. This thirst or craving takes different forms, such as craving for objects of the senses, for existence and for non-existence, and it can never wholly be satisfied. Our craving is based on a fundamental misapprehension of the situation; an apprehension which assumes that when this craving is satisfied, we will be happy. But such an apprehension in turn assumes a world of permanent, stable, unchanging, and reliable conditions. However, the world is simply not like this.

Applied to a realist context, this interpretation of the human condition would similarly acknowledge the existence of survival and fear-based statecraft, whereby states, in thirsting for sustained existence, delight in the procurement of offensive weaponry. However, Buddhism delves more deeply here by postulating suffering as an outcome of this cognition. It may seem counter-intuitive to consider a state as being able to suffer (or perhaps not if we explore the impact of this incessant fear on statespersons and civilians), but in doing so we remain in keeping with the anthropomorphic tendencies of realism, and open up the debate to a broader portfolio of human attributes, all of which can perhaps be attributed to states. To name a few: contemplation, conscious awareness and the quest for deliverance from suffering.

Buddhism celebrates the ability of individuals to contemplate not just the external realities of the world they find themselves in, but the internal realities of their mental and emotional temperaments. By setting out a pathway for the cessation of suffering (the fourth noble truth), Buddhism identifies and builds upon the primordial ability of individuals to recognise their own suffering and respond with compassion. Through this journey to freedom (from suffering), usually commenced by a surfacing awareness of the futility of

fulfilling one's desires, individuals unmask an array of otherwise subordinated emotions and qualities which, in turn will manifest in their behaviours and attitudes. The extent to which these qualities prevail depends on the extent to which one is trapped in worldly illusion (notions of self and ownership, and desire-driven activities). This pathway to freedom and the qualities which accompany it can be set out as follows:

Conditioned by (1) suffering, there is (2) faith, conditioned by faith, there is (3) gladness, conditioned by gladness, there is (4) joy, conditioned by joy, there is (5) tranquillity, conditioned by tranquillity, there is (6) happiness, conditioned by happiness, there is (7) concentration, conditioned by concentration, there is (8) knowledge and vision of what truly is, conditioned by knowledge and vision of what truly is, there is (9) disenchantment, conditioned by disenchantment, there is (10) dispassion, conditioned by dispassion, there is (11) freedom, conditioned by freedom, there is (12) knowledge that the defilements are destroyed. (Gethin, 1998, p157).

It is clear then, that individuals are capable of possessing, and in fact do possess (to varying degrees), benign qualities which align with benevolent action. It must be emphasised that whilst some may consider this portrayal of human potential to be idealistic and as wishful thinking, similarly to realism, it stems from empirical investigation. The Buddha observed the world as it was to find that human nature is dynamic and human potential vast. The immense fecundity of this contemplation further led him to devise an explanation for the nature of all suffering. Comparing this to realism, which rather houses one-dimensional notions of fear-based and survival-driven statecraft, we may be able to see that such surface-level portrayals of international relations are not sufficient to effectively analyse the world stage. With emotional intelligence, we can see that the cognitions of individuals (and therefore states) are more sophisticated and dynamic than this, and to suggest otherwise would be entirely unrealistic.

Overall, whilst proponents of realism (in particular neorealism) such as Kenneth Waltz maintain that it is the structural forces of international anarchy, as opposed to human nature, which are the sources of inevitable war and conflict (Theiner, 2021), expanding

our philosophical library can help us to see that specific interpretations of human behaviour (such as fear-based power accumulation) have been insidiously normalised by realism as the only possible responses of rational agents. And that this de facto personification is based on a Western worldview. However, by integrating Buddhist wisdom into our realist analysis, we can consider that states may in fact possess broader faculties and richer emotional states, all of which realistically will have manifested themselves in the world at present. By acknowledging this more dynamic state of affairs, we can turn to exploring how these observations (of which realism is bereft) may be used to enhance political probity and potentially even sow the seeds of peace.

Normative realism and the Eightfold Path

The fourth noble truth of Buddhism - the path leading to the cessation of suffering - is the crux of all Buddhist practice. Through his ‘noble eightfold path’, the Buddha set out practical steps with which individuals could transcend their suffering. This state of transcendence or freedom is termed 'nirvana'. The eightfold path comprises three key elements, each of which can be broken down as follows: (1) wisdom - right view, right intention; (2) conduct - right speech, right action, right livelihood; and (3) meditation - right effort, right mindfulness, right concentration (Gethin, 1998). As such, the Buddha's teaching was largely instructive, in that it prescribed a normative code of behaviour, and this was to heal the affliction of suffering.

It would be too lofty an exercise to fully explore the application of these instructions to states here. However, in order to summarise what this would look like, taking states to also be afflicted with suffering, we would need to explore whether the eightfold path may be similarly followed for their liberation, and consequently for their more peaceful operation in the world (as would be the case with individuals). This would require analysis into whether or how states suffer and if so, what their liberation would look like. Using the realist paradigm, the most obvious source or example of suffering is the perpetual fear felt by states concerning security.

A classic paradox of international relations raised within realism is 'the security dilemma' (Theiner, 2021). This envisions a situation where states increase their offensive capabilities in a bid to boost security, with the result being no more stable than the original situation. We may consider a two-state circumstance: State A feels threatened by its neighbour given the anarchic landscape it resides in. It will then increase its military spending (thereby increasing its power) in a bid to protect itself from any potential offensive action by State B. State B will then respond by also expanding its military spending out of concern for State A's actions, thereby also increasing its power. The paradoxical outcome of this situation is that neither states are in a safer situation than the starting point. According to realism, these situations generally involve some degree of misperception, where one or both states have misperceived the other's intentions, resulting in the proliferation of weaponry. And this misperception arises due to a lack of complete information regarding the other state's military capabilities and intentions. This means that, for realists, such proliferation is exogenous, in that it is caused by the external factors of incomplete information and anarchic conditions. The proliferation of weaponry is therefore the natural consequence of multiple rational actors pursuing survival in an anarchic international system.

However, whilst it may indeed be rational and natural for actors to nurture their defensive capabilities, Buddhism may help us to understand this type of tense scenario from a different perspective. And this perspective could in turn lend itself to the development of a normative realism comprising more complete and stability-inducing responses by states. As we have already stated, the realist interpretation of the security dilemma involves exogenous proliferation of weaponry, whereby this proliferation has external causes, namely incomplete information and the anarchic international system. We have previously ascertained that Buddhism places the innerworkings of the mind at the centre of its doctrine. Ultimately, whether individuals/actors suffer or transcend their suffering is due to their perceptions of life and the world around them and these perceptions in turn influence their actions and experiences. Therefore, both realism and Buddhism centralise perception in their theories. However, if we take a Buddhist approach to the security dilemma, the misperceptions arising in this type scenario, rather than being exogenous as they are in realism, are caused by the innerworkings of the mind, and hence are endogenous. It is the actor's limited thought processes which result in the mental

defilements of greed, aversion and delusion (Gethin, 1998) we see manifesting in the security dilemma as expansionism, mistrust and miscalculation respectively. And these limited thought processes result in suffering, as the state ends up consumed by fear. It is also noted in Buddhism that, regardless of external realities, individuals have the power to cultivate cognitions which ultimately lead to the cessation of their suffering.

As such, by using the eightfold path, the state should be able to free itself from suffering by transcending this state of fear and consequently operating in the anarchic system more peaceably. Acting in accordance with the eightfold path would see the state operating as an emotionally intelligent actor as well as a rational one, as increasing its wisdom as well as its power and ultimately as creating more positive externalities in a world otherwise characterised by tension and fear.

As stated above, this blog will not endeavour to develop a complete normative realism underpinned by Buddhism. However, some initial ideas as to what this might look like, using the first three items of the eightfold path (right view, right intention and right speech), are presented as follows:

[Table developed from p.81 of Gethin (1998)]

Practice	**Eightfold Path item**	**Attribute of Eightfold Path item**	**Equivalent state behaviour (in security dilemma)**	**Detail**
Wisdom	Right view	Seeing the four truths	Recognising the truths that (1) states suffer, (2) this suffering has a cause, (3) this suffering can end, and	By (1) recognising that it is experiencing incessant fear, State A can identify that its ability to act rationally is compromised. With wisdom, State A should be able to observe that this state of fear is (2) caused by its perceptions about the possible hostile

			(4) a path can be followed which brings about the end of this suffering.	intentions of State B. With further wisdom, State A should (3) recognise that this suffering can end by it first acknowledging that it is self-inflicted and thus choosing to (4) embark on the eightfold path. State B should also follow the same process.
	Right intention	Desirelessness	Detaching from the desires of expansion, power accumulation and even survival, to act from a more empowered place where wisdom is enhanced and fear minimised.	In Buddhist philosophy, desire is a root cause of suffering. In craving certain outcomes to obtain happiness, we act from a place of ignorance or misperception about the reality of the world as it is – uncertain, unpredictable and unstable. To act with wisdom, one should remove desire from their intentions. In the security dilemma scenario, states should act from a more balanced place in which the four noble truths are apparent and therefore the illusion of separation (and subsequent antagonisation) between the states is shattered. In this situation, the maintenance of military capabilities becomes routine and friendliness and compassion between states can arise.
		Friendliness	Nurturing good relations with diplomacy and soft power tools.	States A and B should endeavour to forge a relationship using diplomatic and soft power tools whereby the intentions of each actor become better known to their counterpart. Whilst this information can never be assumed complete, friendliness can help mitigate the level of misperception which would otherwise arise.
		Compassi	Allowing compassion to	Upon witnessing State A increase its offensive capabilities, State

		on	arise from observing fear-based behaviour by other states.	B would be wise to take into account the first and second noble truths when forming its perceptions. Rather than focusing (out of a fear-based consciousness) on the possibility of State A having aggressive intentions, State B should recognise that suffering is prevalent in the world and State A may be acting out of fear. It is also possible that State A is routinely nurturing its military capabilities. With emotional intelligence, State B should endeavour to discern State A's intentions and act accordingly. In the first instance, observing State A suffer a fear-based consciousness should spark compassion in State B and lead it to provide reassurance using diplomatic or soft power tools to prevent escalation. State B may simultaneously nurture its military capabilities.
	Right speech	Refraining from false speech	The statespersons of States A and B should speak with wisdom to convey the highest truth of any given situation. This is generally captured by the four noble truths. Speech which propagates beliefs and notions rooted in misperception and fear-	When speaking publicly it is important that statespersons forbear to promote ideas rooted in worldly illusion. As we have previously explored, with the right conditioning anyone can tap into their emotional intelligence and distinguish truth from falsehood: "*conditioned by concentration, there is … knowledge and vision of what truly is"* (Gethin, 1998, p157). In an anarchic system, where the responses of states in any given situation are not regulated by a global sovereign, self-regulation and restraint are particularly important. As falsehood is conducive to suffering, states A and B must speak with wisdom if they are to live in

Good Conduct			based consciousness constitutes false speech.	peace.
		Refraining from divisive speech	Recognising the highest reality as dharma and transcending the illusion of separation.	Divisive speech is an example of false speech, whereby illusory notions are embedded in the rhetoric of statespersons. The key illusory notion translated in divisive speech, is the illusion of separation. The Buddha's ontology of dependent arising is a theory of causation which maintains that our lives are not separate but deeply interdependent (Long, 2021). This proposes that a 'person' subsists in a state of causal connectedness – an idea which can be seen as a 'middle way' between eternalism and annihilationism. In eternalist notions of individual existence, a 'person' subsists in a constant unchanging self which underlies experience. In annihilationism, there is no connection between the person at one point in time and any other point in time (there is no 'I'). Buddhism argues that neither is true, but rather that there is a 'middle way' where no unchanging self exists, yet there is still connectedness between events whereby that which is conventionally known as a 'person' or the 'self' dependently arises (Gethin, 1998). This notion can be observed in all aspects of life, whereby transformation and causal connectedness lie at the heart of existence, to the point where interdependence supplants individual existence, and separateness between people and things becomes an illusion. A simple example is that

				of a cloud which becomes rain, which then becomes a stream on a mountain, which then becomes a river, which then becomes the sea, which then evaporates to become a cloud again (Plum Village, 2014). In statecraft, the conventional truth of nations having unique selves will of course be alluded to in speech, but any speech which creates divisiveness between nations contains notions which do not reflect the universal truth of interdependence ('dharma', or the ultimate truth), as it serves to draw attention to differences which are ultimately illusory. The result of such divisive speech is instability and exacerbated security dilemma type scenarios.
		Refraining from hurtful speech	Recognising the highest reality as dharma and transcending the illusion of separation.	Similarly to divisive speech, hurtful speech contains notions of separateness where judgement is spewed about the other based on haughtiness and disdain. Through seeing the reality of interdependence as well as knowing the first noble truth (that persons suffer), agents can speak with compassion and friendliness, to better build alliances and avoid antagonisation. On a state level, this in turn prevents conflict.
		Refraining from idle chatter	The statespersons of states A and B should think carefully about the intention of their words before speaking publicly.	The Buddha taught his son, Rahula, to be aware of his intentions before he speaks. It is useful to ask oneself: "What's going to happen as a result of this? Am I going to be harmed? Is someone else going to be harmed? Are we both going to be harmed?" (Bhikkhu, 2019, May 28). In another sutta, the Buddha advises a

				prince to consider three checkpoints before speaking: whether something is true, beneficial and timely. If something is true, beneficial and timely (i.e. the right time to say something pleasant, or even the right time to say something harsh), then the Buddha encourages it be said. However, if it is true but not beneficial or timely, or true and beneficial but not timely, one should not say it. These three checkpoints must be met if speech is to be in line with the Dharma (Bhikkhu, 2019). In a realist world, therefore, avoiding idle chatter in diplomacy is pertinent to good conduct. This is to ensure that signals are clear and misperceptions minimised. Considering whether harm to individuals may result is particularly important in an anarchic world order. This is because states possess offensive weaponry which may be used externally and hierarchical power which may be exercised domestically.

In order to develop this into a complete normative realism, the analysis of the three eightfold path items above must be expanded upon and the final five items (right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration) must also be applied to the realist paradigm. The application of some may seem more straightforward than others, whereby, for instance, right action, which commands refraining from harming living beings and taking what is not given, can be applied directly to real-world events (such as genocide and expansionism); but right mindfulness, which commands contemplation of body, feeling, mind and dharma, requires a depth of understanding of meditation (the practice category under which right mindfulness falls) in order to successfully be applied to statecraft.

This latter exercise may be achievable within the realist discipline by more actively including thinkers from non-Western backgrounds and cultures, particularly those which place emphasis on emotional intelligence and the cultivation of wisdom. As we have seen above, in a descriptive sense, it is with these techniques (as well as by examining non-western history and political experience), that the present shortcomings of realism may be overcome, and the ineluctable failures of studying international relations solely from a Western viewpoint may be recognised.

It is also with these techniques, that a comprehensive normative realism can be devised, with which states can learn to introspect and understand more deeply the peace and suffering they have created in the world, and use this knowledge to craft a more emotionally mature statecraft. Through this statecraft, countries may learn to recognise their footprints in others and their habits in others, and they may learn to cultivate peace through more empathic and contemplative leadership. And it is with this statecraft, that fear-based consciousness in international affairs may be transcended and the peace-building mandate of the 1919 Paris Peace Conference may be met.

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